

Wood Deck Is Built In Modular Sections

A handsome wood deck built recently in Santa Barbara, Calif., can be duplicated readily in almost any yard space, large or small, because it's a highly versatile modular system. Yet the average home handyman can build it.

This deck's checkerboard design looks far from simple, but it really is. The secret lies in 4x4 foot squares or pallets, which make up the entire deck, placed over a lumber gridwork.

Some squares may be left out in favor of trees and shrubs, fish pond or barbecue pit. These openings can be changed at any time to vary appearance and uses of the deck area.

Sections of the deck may be elevated to furnish contrast, or it all can be laid on one level, with benches and privacy screens or railings to bring in vertical visuals.

LUMBER framing makes it possible to assure a level deck, regardless of the ground slope. Length of the posts can be adjusted from where they stand on concrete piers.

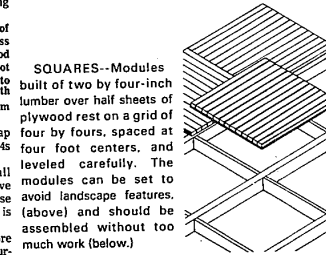
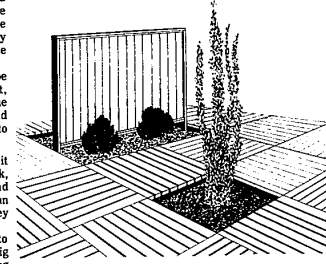
The squares are a snap to build. In fact, a homemade jig can get them out.

Just as 4x8-foot panels of exterior grade plywood across the middle, cut western wood 2x4-inch lumber into 4-foot lengths, then fasten the 2x4s to the plywood squares with nails or screws driven from the panel side.

Leave a one-eighth inch gap between the side-by-side 2x4s for drainage.

Soaking or brushing all wood parts with preservative before assembly will increase durability. If a color finish is desired, apply stain.

The underframing is more difficult to build, but stur-



SQUARES--Modules built of two by four-inch lumber over half sheets of plywood rest on a grid of four by four posts, spaced at four foot centers, and leveled carefully. The modules can be set to avoid landscape features, (above) and should be assembled without too much work (below).

The Green Thumb

By GEORGE ABRAHAM

Summer mulches: Although summer is just about over, many home gardeners still use a variety of mulches to conserve moisture and cut down on weeds. Here are a few materials used during the summer, and some comments as to their effectiveness:

COCOA BEAN SHELLS: Have chocolate odor, may form a mold on surface (harmless). Some say these attract rodents, but we doubt it.

BUILDING PAPER: Long-lasting, not attractive, may be used year after year.

ALUMINUM FOIL: Repels aphids, due to reflected light. Expensive.

BURLAP CLOTH: Used between rows to save water. Unattractive.

COFFEE GROUNDS: Good as soil conditioner, nontoxic, ideal for acid-loving plants.

FIBRE GLASS INSULATION: Repels rodents, allows air and water to enter, does not contribute any humus to soil.

CORNCOBS: Good for rose beds and flower beds, if you can get them ground up.

EVERGREEN BOUGHS: All kinds suitable, useful for summer mulch, better for winter use.

EXCELSIOR PACKING: Free from weed seed, insects, difficult to apply. May be a fire hazard.

GRAVEL: Marble chips, crushed stone, etc. Very attractive. Do not use marble on acid-loving plants as it makes soil alkaline. Children may scatter the stones.

LEAVES: Makes poor mulch because they tend to pack down.

NEWSPAPERS: Place four or five thicknesses around plants, cover with soil. Slightly alkaline and should not be used around acid-loving plants such as blueberry, blackberry, rhododendron, holly, gardenias, etc.

SAWDUST AND WOOD CHIPS: Ideal for fruit trees, shrubs, perennials, around evergreens and in border plantings. May turn plants yellow due to nitrogen shortage, but this can be overcome by plastic sheets are less liable to be extra feeding of nitrogen frost injury than those fertilizer.

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