

OUTSIDE • Lanai Screen Rescue

For the past few years you've had your eye on your outdoor enclosure. Then Ian came along and made your mind up for you: time to replace the screens.

After picking a contractor, the whole project really comes down to these two items: a choice of screen material, and the spline to hold it in place.

Choosing the screen material:

There are several types of screen materials available for pool lanais, including the fiberglass, aluminum, and polyester. Fiberglass is the most economical. Having young, active cats who'd taken just recently to climbing the screens however, we opted for 'pet mesh': an extruded polyester that, while it added 20% to the project cost, added 4 years to the usual 1 year warranty. While the fiberglass we were replacing had held up pretty well, we were not taking chances, given our pets' acrobatics.



Remarkably, they seem to have lost interest in climbing, no doubt due to something to do with the size of the openings, or the 'feel' of the polyester. Not sure, but a welcome benefit.

Choosing the spline:

There are several types of splines available, including vinyl, foam, and rubber. More commonly, the choice is either between 'flat' or 'round'. Our old screen had both, given its history of many repairs. I noticed the flat-splined sections had held up much better than the round; since our installer, with almost 30 years' experience swore by flat spline, and would only do the job with it, that was decided.

Next, remove the old screen: The old screen is cut away from the frame and any splines that hold it in place are removed.



Clean the frame: Once the old screen is removed, the frame should be thoroughly cleaned to remove any dirt, debris, or old spline that may be stuck to it. This is done with a pressure washer and elbow grease. This is not a step done casually or quickly: see

'thoroughly', above.

Install the new screen: After the screen material and spline have been chosen, the new screen can be installed. At this point, any rusted screws or bolts should be replaced. Not all, necessarily: just the worst-looking ones. Remember that replacing fasteners will widen the hole, so keep the decent ones right

where they are. The screen material is cut to size and then stretched over the frame. The spline is then pressed into the groove around the frame to hold the screen material in place.



Trim the excess screen material: Once the screen material is in place, any excess material is trimmed away using a utility knife or scissors.

Door hardware, latches, closers, and sometimes the hinges, are always replaced in a project of this scale, completing the project.

Photos: Editor

