



A small foredeck awning configured to catch rain is an easy way to augment your water supply



Photo by Tor Pinney (left); by Peter Nielsen (right)

Carry both a left- and right-handed palm in your ditty bag—that way no one can beg off plying a needle when the time comes

PROVISIONING

Foredeck Rain-Catcher

Sometimes it can be difficult to refill water tanks while cruising. Local water may be unsuitable, expensive or simply unavailable. Watermakers can also come up short, as you shouldn't run harbor water through them. That's why it is smart to carry a rain-catcher. I've always had a large deck awning for my ketch, *Silverheels*, that doubles as a high-volume rain-catcher. However, it's too cumbersome to put up and take down again during short layovers.

To solve this problem I devised a small easy-to-deploy Sunbrella awning/rain-catcher that I can string up over the foredeck in a minute. What it lacks in capacity it makes up for in frequency of use. I often put it up right after anchoring, just for the night, or even when a single rain squall is approaching. Of course, it also shades the forward deck hatch when the sun is shining. Mine measures 5ft 6in x 6ft, with a half-dozen tie-down grommets, battens and lift rings at each end, and a hose barb fitting secured through a reinforced hole. —TOR PINNEY

SAIL REPAIR

Palming It

Every cruising boat should carry a sailmaker's palm along with a kit of essential sail-repair tools. Most people are right-handed, hence the palms you find in most sailors' kits are for right-handers. But there may well come a time when you have to stitch up a long tear in a large sail—and if the only other person on board is a leftie, then you've just sentenced yourself to a long and tedious stint with the needle. As a leftie myself, I added a right-handed palm to my kit to make sure that no one has any excuse not to join in the sail-repair fun. —PETER NIELSEN



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ANCHORING

Anti Chain-Pyramid Rod

Like most long-range cruisers I carry a lot of anchor chain, but I was having a problem with pyramids in my chain locker. When weighing anchor my chain piled up beneath its deck pipe, sometimes reaching up high enough to block it, so that the chain being fed in would suddenly jam the windlass gypsy. This locked the windlass so solidly it could not turn in either direction, often just as my anchor was breaking free from the bottom. With my boat thus adrift, I had to scramble to unlock the blockage, which usually entailed removing the windlass deck pipe cover with a pair of Allen wrenches.

To prevent this, I first cut a small access hole in the deck just abaft the windlass and installed a deck-fill fitting with a cap. This allowed me to ram a wood dowel in there to knock down the chain pyramid while weighing anchor. After breaking several sticks, I devised the perfect anti-pyramid rod instead. A local machine shop wanted \$100 to fabricate a stainless steel rod, so instead

I did some scrounging and found a perfect rod in a scrap pile outside a rigging shop—a 5ft 6in x 5/8in thick-walled galvanized pipe. The friendly shop-owner wouldn't take any money for it.

I tapped and threaded the inside diameter of the pipe to accept a case-hardened bolt I had laying around in a spares can. I also found a heavy galvanized washer that just fit through my access hole at the windlass. I bolted the washer to the rod end to serve as a little claw to help push, rake and swipe the chain pile forward, aft and sideways



Photos by Tor Pinney

to spread it more evenly around the locker. This simple device has been a godsend, enabling me to weigh anchor quickly and confidently every time. —TOR PINNEY

A rod is a useful tool for knocking down chain piles while weighing anchor; a washer bolted to the end provides a better grip (inset)

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