

Cape Dormer Trusses

by Charles Wardell

A familiar sight in the northeast is the Cape Cod home with a shed dormer in back and full-length rafters at the front. This style is popular because it's fairly inexpensive to build. A Maine truss fabricator now offers *Cape Dormer Trusses* that can reduce the cost of these homes by speeding up the framing. The trusses, which are made as stock items, extend from the front edge of the shed roof all the way back to where the full-length roof meets the first floor wall. The trusses are framed 24 inches on-center, and come in 24-, 26-, and 28-foot spans. At about \$65 each, they're pricier than framing lumber, but the extra cost is offset by the labor savings.

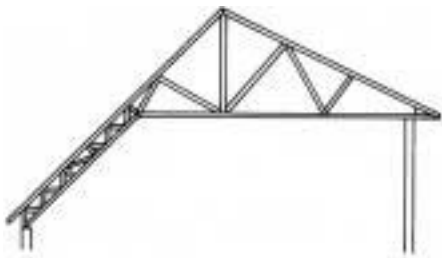
The trusses also eliminate the need for attic kneewalls (which usually help carry the full-length rafters at the front of the house) and can accept as much as 15 inches of blown-in insulation. They're available in the New England states with a three-day lead time. If you're in another part of the country, you may want to educate your local truss manufacturer about this kind of truss. For more information, contact Wood Structures, P.O. Box 347, Biddeford, ME 04005; 207/282-7556.

It Sure Beats Clothesline



I remember jumping into my pickup truck once in a big hurry to get who-knows-where. I revved up the engine and stepped on the gas only to hear the sickening sound of half-full paint cans sliding

Cape Dormer Truss



across my spotless plastic bed liner. Luckily, I now know what my problem was: I didn't have an *Adjustable Cargo/Retaining Bar* to hold the cans in place.

The bar will fit any pickup bed, and telescopes from 48 to 72 inches. It consists of a smaller diameter tube that slides into a slightly larger one, and a pair of adjustable, screw-threaded rubber pads on either end. The bar sells for between \$19.95 and \$24.95. According to the manufacturer, most major home center chains carry it; most hardware stores don't. For more information, contact Crawford Products, 301 Winter St., West Hanover, MA 02339; 617/826-8141; 800/225-5832.

Remote Control Skylight



You may never again have to put the VCR on pause while you rush across the room to crank open a Velux skylight or lower the blinds. The Velux WindowMaster KEZ 500 is a "point-and-shoot" infrared remote control system that will operate up to three devices from anywhere in the same room. It's designed as an accessory to the

company's KES 310 electric control system, and will work with all Velux skylights and sunscreening accessories, including roller shades and full-function electric Venetian blinds. It lists for \$199 from Velux-America, P.O. Box 50001, Greenwood, SC 29648; 803/223-3149, 800/888-3589.

Safe Lifting



When KEC Company, a 250-employee Corona, Calif., heavy construction firm, started requiring its workers to use *The LiftBelt* two years ago, it was averaging between seven and eleven workers comp claims per year for back injuries. During each of the two years the company has used the belt, it has had only one claim.

The LiftBelt works like the belts worn by professional weightlifters to protect them from lower back injuries. While lifting a heavy object, the semi-rigid nylon belt holds the wearer's lumbar vertebrae in alignment and reduces compression on the lower five spinal disks by as much as 50% (compression is the leading cause of disc deterioration). This lowers the risk of injury and makes it easier to lift a given load. The difference between this product and a standard weightlifter's belt is that the full width of a weightlifter's belt overlaps in the front, covering the wearer's back and stomach muscles. The LiftBelt, however, is narrower in the front so it takes pressure off the wearer's internal organs and lets the diaphragm move freely, which in turn helps prevent premature fatigue (fatigue makes you even more likely to get injured). This design makes the belt safe to wear for an entire workday, although the manufacturer suggests loosening it when not performing heavy lifting tasks.

LiftBelts sell for \$30 to \$40. For an extra charge, the company will print your firm's name and logo on the belt, or customize it with options such as suspenders, reflective safety strips, and even a hammer loop. For more information, contact The LiftBelt Company, P.O. Box 5713, Greenville, SC 29606; 800/995-5438.

Plastic Drywells



A concrete drywell consists of several courses of curved concrete block laid in a circular pattern. The blocks for a typical drywell weigh over 600 pounds altogether, and can be time consuming to transport and set in place. That makes most people think twice before messing with them.

The Flo-Well is a PVC drywell that weighs 20 pounds, and measures 2 feet high by 2 feet in diameter. When assembled, the three interlocking pieces can be stacked one on top of another to increase capacity. Circular knock-outs let you adjust flow rate. The manufacturer says the Flo-Well can be used to drain downspouts, floors, patios, driveways — even basement sump pumps. When used with the company's optional polyethylene liner, the Flo-Well can serve as a cistern to capture and hold rainwater for landscape irrigation. The Flo-Well retails for \$79 to \$89. To find a local distributor, contact O-Well Products Ltd., 80 Enterprise Rd., Hyannis, MA 02601; 508/790-3266. ■