

Retrofit Window Vents

by Charles Wardell



Although older homes often get much of their fresh air supply from air leakage around windows, most new windows are just too tight for that. *Trickle Ventilators* can be retrofitted to almost any window to permit a controlled air exchange between the living space and the outdoors. The manually controlled vents are installed at the top of the window near the ceiling so incoming air mixes with rising warm air to prevent uncomfortable drafts. The vent is installed over a series of holes drilled through the sash or frame. Costs average between \$7 and \$8. Order them direct from the manufacturer.

Contact: Titon Inc., P.O. Box 6164, South Bend, IN 46660; 219/271-9699.

Mortarless Glass Block

Last October's review of a mortarless wooden frame for glass block (see "For What It's Worth," 10/92) concluded that while it was simpler to install than mortar-based systems, the wood frame's dimensional instability made it inappropriate for wet bathrooms and exterior walls.



The company has responded with a snap-together aluminum frame called *AlumaBlock*. Rather than using silicone as a weather barrier, the frame's 1/2-inch-wide hollow vertical mullions serve as an internal weepage system that directs water to the base of the frame. The mullions will accept steel reinforcements for added wind resistance or security, or can be fitted with specially designed lighting strips that illuminate the blocks themselves. If a block gets damaged, it can be removed and replaced with a new one. The frame comes in five standard colors: black, white, gold,

chrome, and aluminum. Radius mullions are also available that yield a 4-foot radius (the shortest radius possible) with an 8-inch-square block.

The company also manufactures prefabricated glass block windows that are installed like standard windows. The system sells for \$9 to \$15 per block, depending on price and style. Windows go for \$12 to \$14 per block.

Contact: Italian Glass Block, 3911 S. Mariposa St., Englewood, CO 80110; 303/762-9330.



A competing product is the *IBP Glass Block Grid System* (above). The IBP system also uses a metal frame but it's assembled differently. Before insertion in the frame, the blocks are wrapped with foam strips to create a thermal barrier. The outside of the frame is made weathertight with a silicone sealant.

The manufacturer also makes a glass block door. The *Grid Entry Door* (above right) is available in a variety of colors and stock sizes, and with various combinations of glass block transoms and sidelights. According to the manufacturer, costs should roughly equal that of a premium quality insulated wood door of the same size.

Contact: Acme Brick Company, P.O. Box 425, Fort Worth, TX 76101; 800/932-2263.

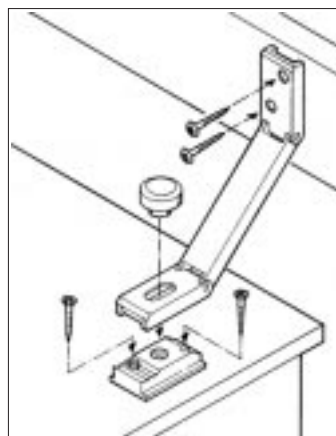
Mildew-Proof Paint



Chalk up a win in the war against fungi. A new water-based bathroom wall and ceiling paint called *Perma-White* goes a step further than other interior coatings. The manufacturer claims that the paint is mildew-proof, rather than just mildew-resistant. It's formulated so that it simply can't support mildew growth, even in a damp, poorly ventilated bathroom. Perma-White is also self-priming: it seals porous surfaces and will adhere to gloss paints without presanding.

Contact: William Zinsser & Co. Inc., 39 Belmont Dr., Somerset, NJ 08875; 908/469-4585.

Earthquake Ready



Falling cabinets and flying objects are real dangers during an earthquake. To keep bookshelves, china cabinets, armoires, and the like from toppling over, some people fasten them to the wall with rigid L-brackets. The problem is that during an earthquake floors and walls can move in different directions and at different speeds, amplifying the stress on cabinets and knocking over everything that's on them.

Safety-Z Brackets are designed to protect the shelves as well as their contents. The brackets, which are fastened to the top of a cabinet, include built-in shock absorbers. A pair of brackets can be installed in

about an hour. They come in ivory and dark brown and cost \$12 a pair. The distributor says that one San Francisco area contractor he knows installs them as a move-in present.

Contact: CBIS, One Glenview Drive, San Francisco, CA 94131; 415/641-1006.

Enviro Goo



I used my sample of *Solvent-Free Wood Putty* to fill some countersinks. Though I can't vouch for its long-term durability, the stuff was a pleasure to use. There was no smell — the water-based formulation makes it nontoxic and nonflammable, according to the manufacturer. It went on smoothly, and it didn't shrink or crack as it dried. It was also easy to plane and sand.

Solvent-Free Wood Putty consists of wood dust in a resin base. It's available in birch, fir, maple, oak, walnut, and white. My tube happened to be birch, so I used it on a piece of birch, then finished it with a water-based polyurethane. The colors didn't match exactly, but were as close as anything else that's out there. The putty comes in 1.4-ounce tubes that cost about \$4.95.

Contact: Eclectic Products, Inc., 1111-B Watson Center Road, Carson, CA 90745; 800/767-4667.

Moss Fighter



Algae, moss, and mildew are tipoffs that a roof is having trouble shedding moisture. The problem is most common on shaded roofs, but in humid climates, fungi may grow on unshaded north-facing roofs as well.

Shingle Shield won't remove moss from an old roof, but it will prevent it from growing on a clean one. The product consists of a zinc strip that's installed near the ridge. When it rains, small amounts of zinc oxide — a natural fungicide — leach from the strip and wash over the roof. The zinc is then absorbed by the roof

surface, where it remains to inhibit the growth of moss and mildew.

The strips are 3 feet long and come with predrilled holes for nailing. For most roofs, a single strip near the ridge will do the job. Steep roofs, such as those with a 12/12 slope, require a second row at the middle course.

Contact: Chicago Metallic, 6750 Santa Barbara Ct., Baltimore, MD 21277; 410/796-8220.

Cedar Strip Shingles



I once spent my summer vacation nailing cedar shingles to the walls of a behemoth custom home, one shingle at a time. If I'd had the *R&R Sidewall Panel System*, I could have stolen off to go fishing while still completing the job on schedule. R&R Sidewall Panels are 41-inch-long single-course panels that are designed to be installed by a lone worker. They weigh 2½ pounds, and consist of rebuted and rejoined red cedar shingles. They're held together by two red cedar wood strips — a "nailing bar" at the top of the shingles' face and a "hurricane bar" on the backside just above the butts — that have been let into the surface of the shingles. Self-aligning ridges lock one panel to the next. Costs average \$160 per square.

Contact: Shakertown, P.O. Box 400, Winlock, WA 98596; 800/426-8970.

If you have a helper and want to cover even more ground, check out Cedar Valley's Shingle Panels. The panels consist of Number 1 grade red cedar shingles bonded to a 5/8-inch-thick plywood substrate. They're 8 feet long, 2½ inches wide, and weigh 22 pounds. Costs run between \$150 and \$170 per square.

Contact: Cedar Valley Shingle Systems, 943 San Felipe Road, Hollister, CA 95023; 800/521-9523. ■