

# Products

by Leland Stone

## Fast Footer

The hardest part of pouring a concrete pier is attaching the tube form to a cobbled-together lumber footing form. One solution is *Bigfoot*, a recycled plastic footing form that adjusts to fit 8-, 10-, or 12-inch tubes, and that easily connects to the tube with a few screws. The assembly works like a single piece, so it's easy to set and level,



and the form can be left in place after the pour. The flared design shapes a smooth, cone-shaped footer on the pier, and you can even turn a spare form upside down and use it as a funnel while pouring mud into the other forms. Bigfoot has been spotted in most areas for about \$15 each.

**Contact:** F&S Manufacturing, RR 1, Chester Basin, Nova Scotia B0J 1K0, Canada; 800/934-0393.

## Steel Pocket Door Frame

Hinged doors devour about 10 square feet of floor space when they swing open. That can be real trouble when your new building is cramped for space. The *1500 Series Pocket Door Frame Kit* offers a solution to this problem that avoids typical pocket door pains. For starters, the steel frame is beefy enough to give a more solid feel to the finished wall. It's also capable of supporting up to 125 pounds, so you're not limited to using a flimsy hollow door. Because the rollers are captive in the track, the door will stay put once you've hung it. Unlike standard doors, the new pocket door is readily accessible to people confined to wheelchairs. Suggested retail is \$74.



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**Contact:** L.E. Johnson Products, P.O. Box 1126, Elkhart, IN 46515; 800/837-5664.

## Hi-Tech Wedge

If you're tired of expensive cedar shims that split when they're nailed or can't be used because they're too knotty, maybe it's time to think about switching to *E-Z Shim*. These recycled plastic shims are both split resistant

and easy to nail. Plus they're scored every 1/4 inch, so instead of hacking at them with a razor knife, you can just snap them off after installation. E-Z Shims run about \$2 for a pack of 20, but the manufacturer will sell you a case of 360 for \$24.68.

**Contact:** Earhart Technology, 123 Santa Barbara St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101; 805/963-8786.



## Easy-Cleaning Spray Foam

Polyurethane foam is great for filling gaps in the frame, especially holes in the plate around plumbing vents. But it sticks all over everything, and it's a real bear to clean up. *DAPtex* is a foam sealant that works just like any spray foam product, but with a couple of surprising exceptions. It won't collapse when it's touched, so you can actually tool the foam after spraying it in place. Because it's paintable, you can use DAPtex for finish work (like where a new pipe pokes through the siding) as well as framing. Unlike polyurethane, this foam doesn't expand after placement — what you spray is what you get. There's no solvent smell with DAPtex, either, and it cleans up with soap and water. A 12-ounce can costs \$3.99.

**Contact:** DAP, 855 N. Third St., Tip City, OH 45371; 937/667-4461.



## Solid Soybeans

**G**enuine stone tiles have a rich, bold look unmatched by any other surfacing material. But they're pretty costly, and proper installation demands an absolutely rigid substrate. *Take It For Granite* wall panels have taken the fuss out of installing stone veneers. These granite look-a-likes are actually made from recycled paper and soybean derivatives, so they're easily cut with standard woodworking tools. The panels are prefinished with an acrylic top-coat, and the self-adhesive backing makes them as easy to

install as contact paper, but they're suitable only for dry,



interior installations. Wall prep is simple, but a clean surface is critical to getting a good bond. It's also a good idea to paint the walls a dark color, to avoid

highlighting the joints between panels. Available only in multiples of ten, the 12-inch square panels are \$5 each; 18-inch panels cost \$11.25 per piece.

*Contact:* Phenix Biocomposites, P.O. Box 609, Mankato, MN 56002-0609; 800/324-8187.

## The Heat Is On

**S**olar heat gain plays havoc with the cooling bill in Sunbelt states, forcing builders to find innovative ways of cutting energy usage. One very appealing solution to that problem is a roof sheathing called *TechShield*. Described by the manufac-



turer as a "radiant barrier overlay," TechShield looks a lot like aluminum foil. It's laminated to a sheet of grade-stamped plywood or strand board, then perforated so the substrate can breathe. Nail this product off just like you would any sheathing, but make sure the foil

faces down, away from the sun. The manufacturer claims the reflective sheathing will reduce attic temperatures by as much as 30°F. Plan on spending about \$11.50 per sheet of 1/2-inch OSB TechShield.

*Contact:* Louisiana-Pacific, 1 E. First St., Fifth Floor, Duluth, MN 55802; 800/648-6893.

