

Products

by Pete Young

Customizable Tool Belt

Combine this tool belt with an accompanying bucket organizer and you've got the *TASK* storage system. The belt (\$129) comes with four small pouches that attach to two larger pouches; pouches can quickly be switched between the bucket and the belt. Built into each



large pouch are two tool loops, one large interior pocket, and exterior sleeves for utility knives, nail punches, and pencils. Up to nine pouches can be stored on the outside of the bucket organizer (\$65, including two pouches). This nifty system uses marine-style metal fasteners that positively lock with a simple twist. Optional accessories include holsters for a drill and a chisel or flat bar. Both the organizer and the belt are made with a durable nylon fabric, and the large pouches, tape holder, and accessories are padded for comfortable wear.

Contact: Task Corporation, 221 Pine St., Northampton, MA 01062; 800/819-3456.

Efficient Downlight Retrofits

Two new retrofit downlight kits for 6-inch-diameter recessed cans use efficient compact fluorescent bulbs and are rated for direct contact with insulation. Lumatech's *Reflect-A-Star* (\$65 to \$75, including bulb) has a cool-running, encapsulated electronic ballast for instant start, flicker-free light. The *Reflect-A-Star* comes in 26- and 32-watt models. W.L. Gore's *Aspen System* (\$59 without bulb) exceeds 70% luminaire efficiency with an innovative reflective housing that requires no lens. The *Aspen* System is suitable for either 15- or 20-watt bulbs, but does not work with all compact fluorescent bulbs. Both manufacturers claim quick and easy installation into existing standard recessed cans.

Contact: Lumatech Corporation, 5900 Christie Ave., Emeryville, CA 94608; 800/932-0637; www.light-link.com/lumatech.

W. L. Gore & Assoc., Inc., 100 Airport Rd., Elkton, MD 21922-1010; 800/455-4680.

Cold Weather Paint

Ever read the back of a paint can in early spring or late fall only to find that it's too cold to paint? A new exterior latex paint widens the margin of acceptable painting weather to temperatures as low



as 35°F. According to the manufacturer, *LowTemp 35* (about \$22/gallon) is suitable for use on wood, masonry, brick, stucco, plywood, manufactured wood siding, and exterior drywall. Available in flat or satin finishes, 400 standard colors or custom mixed colors make this paint line versatile in look as well as in weather.

Contact: Sherwin-Williams Company, 101 Prospect Ave. NW, Cleveland, OH 44115-1075; 800/336-1110.



Reflect-A-Star



Aspen Light

Reinforced Felt Underlayment

Looking for felt underlayment that's stronger, more water-resistant, and less slippery to walk on? *Roofers' Select* is a 15-lb. felt that's reinforced with fiberglass and injected with higher-than-normal levels of asphalt. The manufacturer



claims this underlayment will not tear away from fasteners in a strong wind or when walked on, and that it is highly resistant to wrinkling. A four-square roll (36 inches wide x 144 feet long) costs about \$20.

Contact: CertainTeed Corp., 750 E. Swedesford Rd., Valley Forge, PA 19482; 800/782-8777; www.certainteed.com.

Solar Reflective Glass Block

In the past, coatings or films have been applied to the exterior of glass blocks to protect against solar heat gain. But damage from scratching, dulling, and delamination have been common. *NEG Solar Reflective glass blocks* solve all three problems with a metal oxide reflective coating that's baked on to the more protected interior surface. The coating reflects heat out during the summer and in during the winter. Available in brown or gray and in clear or fantasy (wavy) patterns, these metric blocks come in two sizes (approx. $5\frac{3}{4}$ and $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches square) and cost about \$7 more per square foot than standard glass block.

Contact: Glashaus Inc., 450 E. Congress Pkwy, Suite E, Crystal Lake, IL 60014; 815/356-8440; www.glashaus.com.



Good Low-Flow Toilet

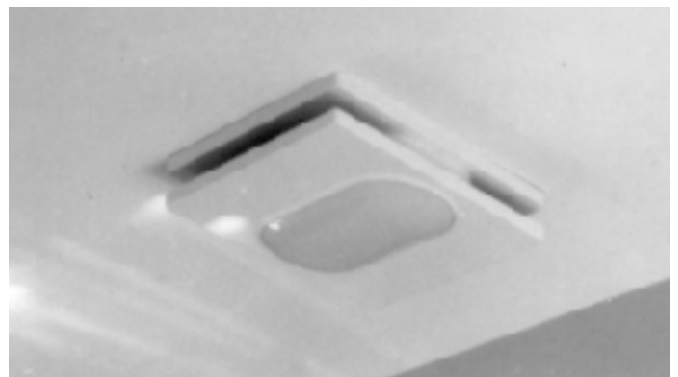
If you're tired of fielding complaints about poorly performing low-flush toilets, take a look at the high-performance, 1.6-gallon *Briggs Vacuity*. Unlike other low-flow toilets, which rely on either unassisted gravity or high-maintenance pressure assistance tanks, the Vacuity uses a tank insert that creates a gravity-induced vacuum to assist in pulling water from the bowl during flushes. The design also uses an enlarged $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch trapway and full rim water discharge. The manufacturer states that the units are quiet and not prone to splashing.

Contact: Briggs Industries, 4350 West Cypress St., Suite 800, Tampa, FL 33607; 888/973-5874.



Quiet Fan-Lights

Bathroom fan-lights are getting quieter and more energy efficient. The *WhisperLite* line of ceiling-mounted fan-lights comes in three models, with capacities of 70 cfm, 90 cfm, and 110 cfm. The large fan blades make for smoother motor rotation, resulting in sound ratings of .5, 1.0, and 1.5



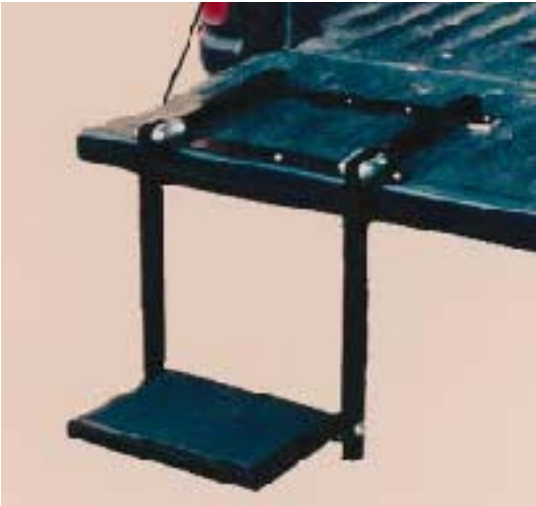
sones respectively. All models use efficient fan motors and two 13-watt quick-start compact fluorescent lamps (the equivalent of two 60-watt incandescent light bulbs), and consume less than 50 watts overall. The units are designed for use with 4-inch round duct and have built-in backdraft dampers. The WhisperLite series is available only through professional distributors at a suggested retail price between \$284 and \$308.

Contact: Panasonic Home and Commercial Products Company, One Panasonic Way 4A-4, Secaucus, NJ 07094; 800/553-0384; www.panasonic.com/building.

Truck Tailgate Step

Instead of crawling in and jumping out of your pickup truck bed, consider using *Easy Step*. The \$85 attachable step screws to the inside of 16- and 19-inch-high tailgates, and can be folded out of the way when not in use. The non-skid tread is attached to a durable powder-coated steel frame.

Contact: Bick & Associates, Inc., 13830 Kingsride Lane, Houston, TX 77079; 800/365-6934; www.edbick.com.



Flexible Hearing Protection

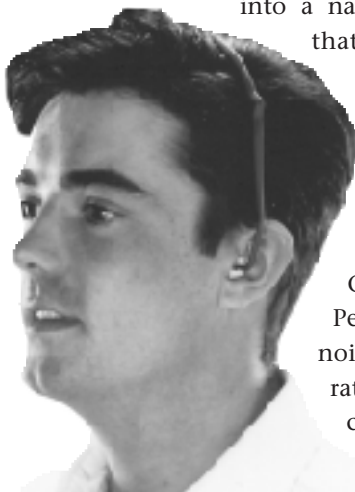
When it comes to hearing protection, the choices are limited. Loose earplugs work well, but can be lost easily; earmuffs are harder to misplace, but they can be hot and can sometimes get in the way. The *PerCap* hearing protector combines the best of both

into a narrow headband

that folds into shapes suitable for over the head, behind the head, and under the chin positioning.

Cheap at \$3, the *PerCap* has a noise reduction rating of 21 and can be folded up and stored in your pocket.

Contact: Dalloz Safety, 2nd & Washington Sts., Reading, PA 19603; 800/345-4112; www.cdalloz.com.



Adhesive Roofing Underlayment

Two new self-adhering roofing membranes have recently been introduced for use beneath single-ply roofing, metal, slate, tile, and asphalt shingles. The *CCW-707* line of roofing underlayments are said to stick to clean wood, plywood, metal, and, if used with a primer, concrete. The 40-mil version (35¢ per square foot) consists of a skid-resistant polyethylene film laminated to a layer of adhesive rubberized asphalt. The heavier 60-mil version (26¢ per square foot) has a granular surface and is reinforced with an inorganic glass fiber mat. The manufacturer claims that these products will seal around nails and fasteners.

Contact: Carlisle Coatings & Waterproofing Incorporated, 8810 West 100th Street South, Sapulpa, OK 74066; 800/338-8701.



Hvac Extras

Whole-house humidifiers, air cleaners, and complex differential zone temperature regulators are increasingly common accessories to conventional hvac systems. The *Aprilaire* humidifiers (around \$350, installed) come in six models and have easy-to-set control systems that automatically adjust to outdoor weather changes. The *Space-Gard* air cleaner (around \$400, installed) is mounted in the main return air duct and reaches 99% efficiency on particles



5 microns or larger. The *PerfectTemp Zone Control System* (around \$1,200, installed) uses automatically adjusting supply duct dampers installed in up to three heating/cooling zones. Thermostats relay temperature settings to a central control system, which then adjusts the air supply to each zone to maintain constant temperatures.

Contact: Research Products Corporation, P.O. Box 1467, Madison, WI 53701-1467; 800/545-2219; www.resprod.com.

