

Products

by Dave Holbrook



Safe Scaffold Plank

With all those knots, and the prospect of hidden defects, are you sure you want to be standing on a regular 2x10, 20 feet off the ground? Instead, consider using a *Microllam LVL Scaffold Plank*, specifically engineered to make sure live loads stay that way. Each piece is proof-loaded by machine to ensure that the plank meets OSHA deflection limits. Simple span ratings for a 1½ x 9½-inch plank allow 10 foot 6 inches for one person, 8 foot 6 inches for two people, and 6 feet for three people. A 16-foot plank should cost about \$52.

Contact: Trus Joist, 200 E. Mallard Drive, Boise, ID 83706; 800/628-3997; www.trusjoist.com.



Stepladder Saddlebags

Have you ever had a forgotten tool fall on you when you moved the stepladder? Maybe you could use *Hi-Pockets*, a heavy-duty, weatherproof organizer that straps 14 handy pockets to the top of the ladder, and handles up to 25 pounds of tools and supplies. It even hangs down in front of that step you're not supposed to stand on or above, as a safety reminder. The bright yellow nylon organizer costs \$38.50.

Contact: Louisville Ladder, 1163 Algonquin Parkway, Louisville, KY 40208; 800/666-2811; www.louisvilleladder.com.



Self-Storing Urinal

Scowling women coming out of the bathroom, and the rusty radiator next to the toilet, are most likely the unfortunate victims of "male spatter pattern." To the rescue comes the *Mister Miser Urinal*, a stealthy fixture that installs in a standard 14½-inch stud bay, and folds away when not in use. Made of ABS plastic, the unit can be installed in unconventional locations, such as a workshop, office, or laundry room. The unit requires only a ¼-inch supply line and a 1½-inch waste pipe, and flushes automatically when the lid is closed. The contractor price for the urinal, including the flush valve and trap, is \$250.

Contact: Mister Miser Urinal, 4901 N. 12th Street, Quincy, IL 62301; 888/228-6900; www.mistermiser.com.



Nonslip Adjustable Wrench

An adjustable wrench is an indispensable tool in a builder's arsenal, but the jaws have a tendency to loosen during use, causing them to slip and round off the edges of a hex-nut. With the lever-action of a locking plier, the *MaxGrip Wrench* locks on to the fastener with more than 300 pounds of force, eliminating slippage. Replace "Old Sloppy" for about \$25.

Contact: The Stanley Works, 1000 Stanley Drive, New Britain, CT 06053; 800/262-2161; www.stanleyworks.com.



Grommet Killer

Instead of using the cheesy grommets in everybody's favorite blue plastic tarp, try a set of *Tarpslips*. Because the glass-filled polycarbonate gizmo takes full advantage of jammin' wedge-o-matic technology, the harder you pull on it, the tighter it holds. I'll go out on a safe limb and predict 1001 uses — hey, they're holding my pants up. A six-pack costs \$6.95.

Contact: Three D Products, P.O. Box 590023, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33359; 888/827-7554; www.tarpslips.com.

Fluorescent Fixtures

With the NEC and dedicated fixtures on their side, all those funny looking compact fluorescent bulbs that don't fit in the old fixtures are finally coming into their own. The *Avante* family of fixtures includes three sconce designs for interior wall lighting. The AVSP, AVSC, and AVSR



models all include 1/8-inch-thick acrylic diffusers, and use bulbs from 18 to 32 watts. The fixtures are sold through distributors; call your local lighting outlet for pricing.

Contact: Lithonia Lighting, P.O. Box A, Conyers, GA 30012; 770/922-9000; www.lithonia.com.

Polyethylene Panel Door

A garage door is an up-front feature on thousands of homes, and constitutes one big pain of a paint job. The *Freedom 9001 Series* high-density polyethylene garage door sandwiches EPS foam inside a skin of the same material used



to make truck bed-liners and heavy-duty garbage cans. The all-aluminum framework eliminates rust as a concern. The doors are available in white or brown, with a woodgrain texture, and include a full range of window options. Doors range in width between 8 and 18 feet, and come in four heights from 6 feet 6 inches to 8 feet. Retail prices fall between \$750 for the 8-foot door and \$1800 for the 18-foot model.

Contact: General American Door, 5050 Baseline Road, Montgomery, IL 60538; 800/879-4232; www.gadco.com.



15-Year Stain Warranty

Most builders like nothing better than finding a good shortcut that gets them to the finish line without compromising quality. Zar Rain Stain and Cemplank's Fiber-Cement Siding, team up to introduce a line of factory prefinished

siding, available in five textures and a variety of colors. On-site painting is eliminated, and, if factory-applied, the solid-body stain is covered by a 15-year warranty. The cost compares favorably with high-end vinyl siding.

Contact: United Gilsonite Laboratories, P.O. Box 70, Scranton, PA 18501; 800/272-3235; www.ugl.com.

Cemplank, Inc., Excelsior Industrial Park, P.O. Box 99, Blandon, PA 19510; 877/236-7526; www.cemplank.com.

The Cutting Edge

You can't have too many utility knives. Two new ways to distinguish yours from the pack include Warner's *Rasp'n'Knife* (at left, under \$5), and Alltrade's *Lighted Utility Knife* (below, \$14 suggested retail). The first one features a serrated surface on the solid-cast grip (no moving parts, nothing to break), intended for smoothing the rough edge of a drywall cut. The teeth are angled toward the user's wrist, so they'll only rasp if the blade points safely in the other

direction. With its cartoonish look and tiny flashlight, the second knife may seem like a novelty piece, but it's got a nice hefty feel to it. It illuminates the cut in dark places, and the rubber-grip handle opens with a quick-release lever.

Contact: Warner Manufacturing Co., 13435 Industrial Park Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441; 877/927-6371; www.warner-tool.com.

Alltrade, 1431 Via Plata, Long Beach, CA 90810; 800/368-6653; www.alltradetools.com.



Greywater Heat Exchanger

If there's competition at shower time, hot water can get scarce, while the water heater is slow to recover. The *GFX* drainwater heat exchanger is claimed to recapture up to 85% of the heat from greywater running down a tub, shower, dishwasher, or sink drain. Installed vertically, the solid copper fit-



ting can redirect captured heat to condition cold water entering the shower or water heater, reportedly reducing energy demand and turnaround time. Model S-360 (shown) retails for about \$175.

Contact: Doucette Industries, 701 Grantley Road, York, PA 17405; 800/445-7511; www.endlessshower.com.



Vinyl Goes Vertical

Mixing siding styles adds visual interest and a sense of character to a home's exterior. Vinyl *Board & Batten* siding features a 5 1/2-inch-wide board profile offset by 1 1/2-inch battens, recreating a classic look with strong shadow lines, suitable for traditional or contemporary designs. Use it alongside horizontal siding to create variety, or all by itself. The .044 mil siding comes in white or slate grey in 10-foot lengths, and costs \$65 to \$70 per square foot, installed.

Contact: Kaycan Limited, 11 Boyer Circle, Williston, VT 05495; 800/885-0114; www.Kaycan.com.

