

Products

by Dave Holbrook

Speedy Suspenders

Hanging just about anything overhead, including conduit, ducts, and air handlers is a no-brainer with *Gripple Hang-Fasts*. Wire rope, inserted into a channel in the zinc alloy block,



passes under a serrated, one-way locking wedge. Passed back under another wedge through the opposite end, the rope can be continually adjusted under load in one direction, but cannot move back. Tensioning is as easy as pulling the rope farther past the wedge. With the working load removed, the wire may be backed out, using the provided setting key to decouple the wedge. It's lighter, faster, simpler, and cheaper than threaded rod or a perforated angle. Kits are available in 1/16-inch to 1/2-inch rope diameters for working loads from 77 to 4,000 pounds,

priced according to size from \$3 to \$18.

Contact: CooperTools, P.O. Box 30100, Raleigh, NC 27612; 919/362-1670; www.coopertools.com.

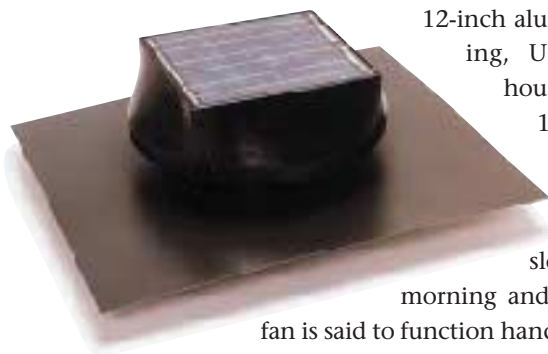
Solar Wind

Overheated attics tax cooling systems, and therefore your utility bill and your pocketbook. The *Fan-Attic* puts the sun to work cleaning up some of its own mess, by moving up to 800 cfm of stagnant air out under solar power. An 11-watt

12-inch aluminum fan in a self-flashing, UV-stabilized ABS plastic housing installs easily over a 13-inch-diameter hole in the roof. Fan speed increases with direct overhead sun and slows in the lower, cooler morning and evening light. The \$350

fan is said to function hands-off, year-round, with no switches or controls, although a preset thermostat is available.

Contact: Sun Tunnel Systems, 786 McGlincey Lane, Campbell, CA 95008; 800/369-7465; www.suntunnel.com.



Vanity Vent-Boot

Conscientious builders try to place plumbing stacks in an inconspicuous location on the roof. The *Color Flash* sleeve counter-covers the primary flashing seal for added protection, and is available in four colors — black, gray, brown, and terra cotta — to help the stack blend in with the roof covering. Made of heavy-duty UV-protected polyethylene and either .023 aluminum or 24-gauge galvanized steel, the counter-flashing comes in two sizes, for 1 1/4- to 3-inch-diameter pipe and for 3- to 4-inch-diameter pipe. The list cost is \$9 and \$11.50 in aluminum, \$8 and \$10.50 for galvanized.



Contact: Arfco, 11535 Reeder Rd., Dallas, TX 75229; 888/671-7886; www.oatey.com.

Spray-On Roof Patch

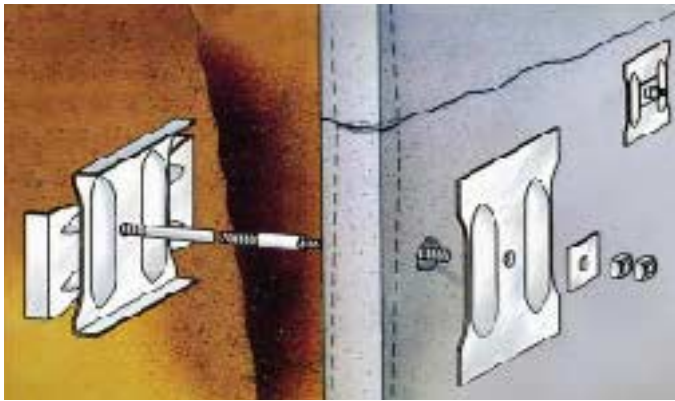
No one's going to guarantee your success with this approach, but you may be able to stop a drip with a squirt. Yep, head on up to that old roof with your can of *Flex Seal*, aim at the trouble spot, and shoot. The thick, black asphaltic mastic sprays as a liquid and flows into low spots, cracks, and crevices. Once cured, the coating is said to form a stable, rubberized shield that stays put and pliable in winter cold and summer heat. A 14-ounce can covers 2 to 12 square feet, depending on the application thickness, and costs \$10.30, or \$117 per dozen.

Contact: Anchor Maintenance Systems, 1855 Dr. Andres Way, Delray Beach, FL 33445; 800/383-6666.



Disaster Relief

When soil pressure plus weak masonry equals a buckled foundation wall, help may still be available. The *Dura-Grip Wall Repair System* can stabilize a cracked and bulging wall, or even restore it to its original position. Heavy-gauge galvanized steel components pull the walls back against plate



anchors buried in undisturbed soil well away from the wall. Soil analysis, engineering, and system installation are provided by manufacturer-certified installers, which takes the pressure off the wall, and you, too.

Contact: A. B. Chance, 210 N. Allen, Centralia, MO 65240; 573/682-5521; www.abchance.com.

Pre-Beveled Trowel

Experienced plasterers know that a new trowel has to be broken in before it'll give satisfactory finishing results. The *PermaShape* trowel comes with a fatigue-reducing *DuraSoft* handle, and its long edges already beveled. There's a slight overall bow to the blade, which is a nice touch. The "broken-in" edge can be used right out of the box, although it will still be improved by many hours of plastering. The short edges are not broken in, but that's easily fixed. The trowel is available in carbon-



steel or "golden" stainless-steel. Professional plasterers consider stainless a must-have. Available in 17 models, the golden stainless trowels retail for \$39 to \$54.

Contact: Marshalltown Trowel, 104 South 8th Ave., Marshalltown, IA 50158; 800/987-6935 ext 138; www.marshalltown.com.

Landscape Masonry

When properly designed and built, simple CMU retaining walls can hold back a whole lot of earth. The *Mosaic Retaining Wall System* stacks stone-like concrete blocks



without mortar, using noncorrosive pins and gravity to make immovable block-to-block connections. Random shapes and a rough texture give the wall a "natural" look. Flat backfilled walls can stand 4 feet high without additional reinforcement or loading, and system walls as high as 40 feet are possible with appropriate soil reinforcement and design. Unit cost varies by region.

Contact: Versa-Lok Retaining Wall Systems, 6348 Hwy. 36, Suite 1, Oakdale, MN 55128; 800/770-4525; www.versa-lok.com.

Quiet Underlayment

Any inhabitants below can and should be buffered from human-generated thumps, bumps, grunts, and opera lessons overhead. Promoted as a lighter-weight, nondusting alternative to a pumped-in, lightweight concrete sound-isolation barrier, *Homasote 440 SoundBarrier* can provide an STC-52 rating (loud speech not audible) when used as a carpet underlayment over a 3/4-inch plywood subfloor, wood I-joist floor system. The fiberboard, made from 100% post-consumer paper, purportedly also reduces sound transmission through walls when installed under gypsum wall panels. Available in lumberyards, the panels cost an average of \$19.50 for a 4x8-foot sheet.

Contact: Homasote, Box 7240, West Trenton, NJ 08628; 800/257-9491; www.homasote.com.



Flexible Curb Flashing

This premolded one-piece elastomeric polyurethane flashing seals curb-mounted skylights tighter than tight, claims the *SkyBoot* manufacturer. The 100-mil-thick membrane has a 9-inch-wide skirt and 6-inch-high curb walls. A 300%-stretch ratio memory enables the tough membrane to seal right around nail penetrations, eliminating the potential for leaks. Available in 2x2- and 2x4-foot sizes, the boot is oversized by $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch to make a snug but easy installation. Molded-in turnback and vertical diverters at the uphill corners redirect water around the skylight. Boots retail for \$78 and \$98, respectively.

Contact: MAGNA-Coat Industrial Coatings, 6915 Williams Dr., Georgetown, TX 78628; 512/930-1608; www.skyboot.com.



Hardy Hardwood

Hand-selected zero-defect ipe lumber is available for those willing and able to pay \$4 to \$6 per board foot for their deck surface. The naturally termite-, fire-, rot-, and wear-resistant tropical *Iron Woods Ipe* is an ideal outdoor-use material, which the manufacturer claims to be legally, responsibly, and sustainably harvested. The superior strength of the species enables 1x4 and 1x6 dimensions to easily span 24-inch framing centers under a 100-pound live load. Boards are sold at local lumberyards in straight 8- to 16-foot lengths, eliminating picking and waste.

Contact: Timber Holdings, 2400 W. Cornell, Milwaukee, WI 53209; 414/445-8989; www.ironwoods.com.



Mixed-Fuel Metering

If your gasoline-powered generator sputters and spews blue smoke, it may be attempting to consume a fuel mixture prepared for a chainsaw. Instead of killing off helpless machines, keep containers, mixes, and ratios straight with *EZ Dispensing Systems*. Select a preset ratio, or dial in a custom mix for any



gasoline engine. The two-chamber containers hold up to one gallon of gas and up to one quart of oil. The EZ Pumper can also be used in reverse to drain the gas tank or oil reservoir. Optional ID tags take memorization out of the mix. The dispensers cost from \$25 to \$30 each.

Contact: CCI Products, P.O. Box 176, New Hudson, MI 48165; 248/486-6901; www.msbproducts.com.

Clear Cement Caulk

One new technology begets another. Made to seal between cement board and windows, trim, and other material transitions, *Pro-Series Extend Sealant* is a urethane acrylic caulk claimed to have powerful adhesive qualities. Available in low VOC, for indoor use, and heavy-duty solvent-based varieties, the "water-clear" sealant is specially formulated for use with James Hardie fiber-cement products. The sealant is sold in 10.5-oz. cartridges for \$6, via local distributors.

Contact: OSI Sealants, 7405 Production Dr., Mentor, OH 44060; 800/624-7767; www.osisealants.com.

