

Innovative Products 2002

by Patrick McCombe

Innovative Products 2002 **ON THE HOUSE**

Like Water off a Duck's Back

Furring out exterior siding helps paints and materials achieve their maximum life span and allows infiltrated water a way to get back outside the building before it can do any damage. Traditionally, the problem with including a drainage plane has been the tedious and time-consuming process of furring out windows, doors, and trim and the associated headaches of dealing with odd-sized extension jambs. Benjamin Obdyke's *Home Slicker* provides a fast and easy way to integrate a drainage plane into modern home building methods. It's a nylon matrix with vertical channels that promote rapid drying of siding and allow infiltrated water to run out the bottom. The best part is that Home Slicker is only 1/4 inch thick, so windows, doors, and trim can be installed without furring. The slicker goes over the building paper or house wrap and is secured with staples. A roll is 39 inches wide and covers 150 square feet. Using Home Slicker adds about \$45 per square to the siding cost.

Contact: Benjamin Obdyke, 199 Precision Dr., Horsham, PA 19044; 800/346-7655, www.benjaminobdyke.com.



This year's roundup of problem-solving tools and materials will help you build better and work smarter

Wait a Minute, Mr. Postman

It might be the first thing the prospective buyer sees on your new spec home. The UltraLast *vinyl mailbox mount* includes a 4-inch PT post and a decorative vinyl sleeve designed to slip over the wood post and mount the mailbox of your choice. The vinyl mount is maintenance free and includes everything but the mailbox. The manufacturer claims that a shovel and a drill are the only tools required for complete assembly. The mount is available in white and tan and costs around \$160.

Don't you wish everything was this easy?

Contact: UltraLast, 1702 London Line, Sarnia, Ontario N7T-7H2; 800/282-9346, www.ultralast.com.



Shake It Up With Vinyl

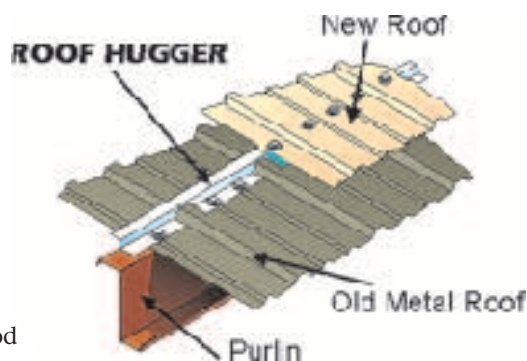
The one benefit of vinyl siding that everyone seems to appreciate, except maybe painters, is that it puts an end to scraping and painting. The main problem has been that vinyl products tend to look fake. Nailite's comprehensive line of *shingle panels* really does look like cedar shingles, and the colors available are deeper and brighter than those on most plastic siding products. According to Nailite, a special formula of resin additives keeps the panels from fading and losing their good looks. Accessory pieces match the texture and finish of the shingles and make installation faster and easier than installing traditional cedar. Prices vary with color and style but start around \$200 to \$250 a square.

Contact: Nailite International, 1111 N.W. 165th St., Miami, FL 33169; 305/623-8227, www.nailite.com.



Have You Hugged Your Roof Today?

If you ever need to replace a large metal roof, you'll want to know about *Roof Hugger*. The beauty of this product is its simplicity. Roof Hugger fastens to the purlins through the existing roof panels and allows you to install a new steel roof without the considerable time and expense of removing the existing one. The old roof protects the stuff in the building during construction, and the new roof profile isn't raised significantly. Although you may be tempted to use wood purlins or metal hat sections fastened on top of the existing



roof, that method tends to fail catastrophically in storms because purlins and hat sections rest on the ribs of the underlying roof. The ribs deflect under high winds, and the fasteners are quickly loosened. Roof Huggers are made to work with the most

common roof profiles, and custom shapes are available. The common profiles cost about \$35 a square.

Contact: Roof Hugger, Inc., P.O. Box 1027, Odessa, FL 33556; 800/771-1711; www.roofhugger.com.

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DOORS & WINDOWS

Venting by Remote Control

It used to be that when you wanted an electronically controlled ventilating skylight, you bought the skylight and a separate motor kit. Then there was a tedious process of retrofitting the motor to the roof window and a complicated multistep wiring process. Velux's new *VSE electric venting unit* comes with the whole works preinstalled.

Wiring the unit is as easy as running the 20-foot power supply to a junction box.

The remote control can operate multiple skylights and their shades, and you can program the units to close automatically after a predetermined amount of time. Rain sensors are standard and close the skylight in the event of a shower. Prices start around \$625 for the smallest unit (R.O. 21½ x 28 inches), including a step flashing kit.

Contact: Velux America Inc., Dept. M, P.O. Box 5001, Greenwood, SC 29648; 800/283-2831, www.velux-america.com.



French Swing Door Goes Both Ways

Stanley's new *French swing patio door* offers a tilt-in option for ventilation, even when the door is closed and locked, a feature popular in Europe for years. Besides the hinged unit, Stanley is offering a new *sliding patio door*. The slider's stainless-steel track and heavy-duty rollers should provide a lifetime of trouble-free service. Both doors are prefinished in white but can be painted any color; fiberglass construction makes them rustproof and resistant to dents. The hinged door has a multipoint locking system and comes with white or brass hardware. Both doors are available in low-E glass or low-E with internal grille. Sizes include 5-0 and 6-0 widths and 6-8 and 8-0 heights. Sidelights, transoms, and fixed units are also available, but the tilt-in feature is an option on only the French swing model. Slider retail prices start at \$740; French swing doors start at \$1,440.

Contact: Stanley Works, 1000 Stanley Dr., New Britain, CT 06053; 800/782-6539, www.stanleyworks.com.



Screen Dream

An ugly screen door can really detract from a beautiful view. With a *Dreamscreen*, the screen door is visible only when it's being used. When it's not needed, it rolls into a low-profile housing attached to the door's side jamb. With the screen retracted, it won't obscure either the view outside or your nice-looking entry or patio door. Before the Dreamscreen, screens for French patio doors were less than ideal. Two-panel sliding screens make only half of the opening usable, while hinged units take up a huge amount of outdoor living space. Now the



screen can be tucked away without encroachment on valuable deck space, and the entire opening is available. Dreamscreens fit standard entry and patio door sizes (both sliding and hinged), and custom sizes up to 8 feet wide by 9 feet tall are also available. The screens don't require any floor space to operate, and they're less expensive than a quality wood or aluminum unit. They're available in six colors to complement most cladding; a 3-0 x 6-8 unit costs about \$200.

Contact: Dreamscreens, Inc., 2033 Princeton St., Sarasota, FL 34237; 888/757-0929, www.dreamscreens.com.

PLUMBING, HEATING & VENTILATION

Elementary, My Dear Watson

It is elementary: Because today's homes are built tighter, good ventilation is the key to healthful indoor air. The *Watson* by Tamarack Technologies is a high-quality, wall-mounted, in-line exhaust fan. The nearly invisible external hood measures only 1x 9¹/₄ inches. The *Watson* is made entirely of stainless steel and uses only 26 watts of electricity. Don't let the miserly energy consumption fool you, though; the *Watson* can move up to 100 cfm of air. The remote-mounted unit includes mounting brackets, and several intake grilles are offered. *Watson's* services can be purchased for about \$300.

Contact: Tamarack Technologies, Inc., P.O. Box 490, West Wareham, MA 02576; 800/222-5932, www.tamtech.com.



Put Your Ducts in a Row

Rutland Corporation has a new temporary cover to keep dirt and tools out of the heating and cooling system during construction. The *Pro-Vent* cover takes the place of the normal diffuser and incorporates a filter to keep most dust and debris out of the ductwork. The *Pro-Vent* can be custom printed with your company's name and logo, to



remind your customers of how thoughtful you are. At the end of the job, you just swap the temporary cover with the normal floor diffuser. Prices for 100 or more run about \$3.50 each, including custom printing.

Contact: Rutland Corporation, P.O. Box 3056, Olathe, KS 66063; 866/782-8862, www.pro-vent.com.

Get off the Roof

Installing the vent stack is one of those jobs that everybody hopes someone else will do. It involves setting up a ladder and maybe roof jacks, all for a process that takes only a few minutes. With the *Kozy Kollar*, plumbers and remodelers can install the vent flashing from inside the building. After a hole is cut in the roof, the flashing boot is slipped through the hole and secured from the inside. As the soft rubber flashing is tightened, the rubber gasket conforms to the roof, creating a watertight seal.

The product works with roof pitches from flat to 14/12 and can be used with a variety of roofing materials, including architectural and traditional shingles, roll asphalt, and metal roofing. The manufacturer claims that one person can install a *Kozy Kollar* in about 10 minutes. *Kozy Kollars* are available in 2-, 3-, and 4-inch sizes and cost about \$40.

Contact: Kozy Kollar Manufacturing, Inc., 1 Industrial Dr., Unit 25, Pelham, NH 03076; 603/432-0887, www.kozykollar.com.



The Hole Story

If you have ever struggled to get the mandrel or plug out of a hole saw, you will undoubtedly appreciate the innovation behind Bosch's new *Power Change Hole Saw System*. Power Change Hole Saws use a quick-release mandrel that grips the saw tightly but allows changes or plug removal by means of a sliding collar. With the saw released, the mandrel can be used to push out even the most stubborn plugs. The saws feature bi-metal construction and come in sizes up to 6 inches. The only drawback is that the quick-release mandrel won't work with the hole saws you already have. The price for a 2¹/₈-inch saw and mandrel runs about \$33.

Contact: Bosch Power Tools, 4300 W. Peterson Ave., Chicago, IL 60646; 877/267-2499, www.boschtools.com.



Look, Ma, No Hose

No hose, no fuel cell, and no on-board compressor. Senco's new *AirFree finish nailers* rely on a rechargeable battery pack and a spinning flywheel to drive fasteners. This is the latest offering from the company that invented the pneumatic nailer 50 years ago. The new tools feature an easily adjustable depth-of-drive control, a no-mar pad, and an easy-clear nosepiece. The battery can drive 500 fasteners between charges, according to Senco. By eliminating the expensive disposable fuel canister used on other guns, Senco should have a big hit with these nailers. The AirFree 41, a 15-gauge finish nailer, lists for \$369; the AirFree 25, an 18-gauge brad nailer, lists for \$319. See *Toolbox*, page 103, for a review.

Contact: Senco Products, Inc., 8485 Broadwell Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45244; 800/543-4596, www.senco.com.

Keep Your Panels On

Once watched a remodeler leaving our local lumberyard with an unsecured stack of OSB in the back of his 6-foot bed. He tromped on the gas to merge onto the



busy road and his load slid out like a deck of cards. The Bed Bonez *load-securing system* is designed to prevent such a mishap. According to the manufacturer, the lightweight aluminum bars keep materials as long as 12 feet secure, when used in an 8-foot bed. The adjustable stops are covered in reflective red tape that alerts following motorists that you're carrying extended cargo. The Bed Bonez are installed without drilling and can be easily removed. The cargo-securing system retails for about \$130 and carries a lifetime warranty.

Contact: Bed Bonez, 22548 Berdon St., Woodland Hills, CA 91367; 818/348-2669, bedbonez@socal.rr.com.



On a Bender

Hitachi's powerful new *rebar cutter and bender* (model VB16Y) is a lot more fun to use than 4-foot bolt cutters or a recip saw. The electric tool can cut up to $5/8$ -inch reinforcing rod in about 3 seconds. Bends up to 180 degrees can be made at the push of a button, and common bends are preprogrammed into the unit. The tool is approximately the size of a shoebox and weighs about 40 pounds. According to



Hitachi, this is the first portable tool that both bends and cuts rebar. It costs over \$2,300, but if you work a lot with rebar, it could pay for itself.

Contact: Hitachi Power Tools, 3950 Steve Reynolds Blvd., Norcross, GA 30093; 800/829-4752, www.hitachi.com/powertools.

Double-Jointed Recip Saw

Porter-Cable made quite a stir when the company debuted its *articulated Tiger Claw recip saw* at the International Builders' Show in February. The new saw has two adjustable pivots to make cutting in tight quarters easier and more com-



fortable. The front gear housing allows the blade to rotate 360 degrees, and another pivot, just in front of the motor housing, swivels through a 180-degree range of motion. With the back pivot perpendicular to the saw body, the Tiger Claw measures a mere $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. The new saw should be a real help to mechanical installers

and remodelers who need tools that fit in tight spaces. Unfortunately, Porter-Cable's excellent orbital action had to be left off. The engineers couldn't make it work with the many possible cutting positions. The Tiger Claw has a powerful 11.5-amp motor and an adjustable and removable shoe. It comes with a plastic case and sells for about \$280.

Contact: Porter-Cable Corporation, P.O. Box 2468, Jackson, TN 38302; 800/487-8665, www.porter-cable.com.

Membrane Drain

A waterproof membrane under tile is definitely a good idea in a shower or laundry room application. The difficulty is making a watertight transition from the membrane to the floor drain. Schluter has developed a floor drain with a large pre-sloped flange to attach the membrane. The *Kerdi-Drain* can accommodate tile from $1/4$ inch to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches and has a stainless-steel grate that can be shifted laterally to simplify the tile layout. The installed system virtually eliminates the possibility of structural damage from seeping water. A Kerdi-Drain lists for \$89.

Contact: Schluter Systems, 194 Pleasant Ridge Rd., Plattsburgh, NY 12901; 800/472-4588, www.schluter.com.



Shower Doors Promise Clean Installation

Installing a shower door is a job that most contractors would normally be happy to avoid, but Sterling has recently introduced a shower door that even a novice can install in about 10 minutes, the company claims.



The only tool required is the Allen wrench included in the kit. The *EZ Install mounting system* relies on turnbuckle-style tensioners that force the top and bottom tracks against the tub walls. Once the frame is up, the towel bars are secured to the glass doors and a bead of caulk is run around the perimeter — that's it. As an added plus, homeowners can take the door if they move. The shower door system is available in polished brass, silver, nickel, and white. List prices start at about \$300. The one thing the instructions don't tell you is how to get a decent-looking bead of caulk.

Contact: Sterling Plumbing, 2900 Golf Rd., Rolling Meadows, IL 60008; 888/783-7546, www.sterlingplumbing.com.

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INSULATION & ENERGY CONSERVATION

Easy Air and Weather Barrier

Preventing water and air infiltration around windows and doors has always been a slow and tedious job. Contractor Products International has introduced a unique combination product to make the process as painless and efficient as possible.

R.U. Seal is a vapor barrier, thermal insulation, and weather-barrier strip in one. According to the manufacturer, installation takes less than 10 minutes and eliminates the need for stuffing fiberglass or spraying foam around windows and doors.

R.U. Seal is available for both 2x4 and 2x6 wall constructions. A 200-foot roll costs about \$200.

Contact: Contactor Products International, P.O. Box 83, Quechee, VT 05059; 800/782-1932, www.ruseal.com.



Easy Fit for Fiberglass

Johns Manville has found that more than a third of stud cavities in an average house are not standard width. As a result, the company recently introduced a new *perforated insulating product* to speed the job of trimming and fitting batts in odd-sized cavities. Johns Manville says that the new insulation is not only faster to install, but also produces a better-performing and better-looking installation. The 8-foot R-13 batts are available faced and unfaced for 2x4 walls only. Additionally, the batts now use Johns Manville's new formaldehyde-free adhesive formula. The kraft-faced R-13 insulation should run about \$.26 to \$.29 a square foot.

Contact: Johns Manville Product Information, P.O. Box 5108, Denver, CO 80217; 800/654-3103, www.jm.com.

Hang On

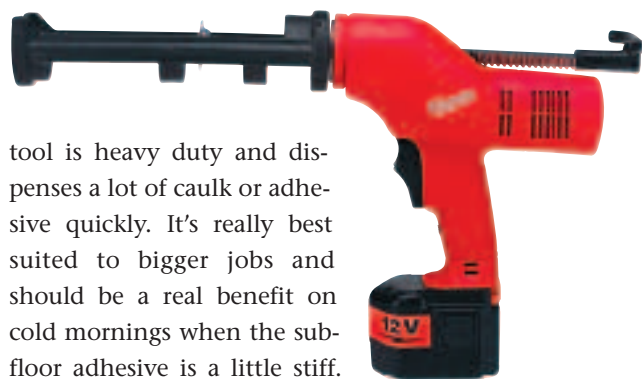
Insulated concrete form (ICF) walls present difficulties in fastening ledger boards for decks and porches. Simpson Strong-Tie has introduced a specialty connector to secure this critical element. The *ICFLC series of hangers* is placed in the form before the pour and is secured by the concrete around the hanger. Simpson makes three variations, one for steel framing, one for dimensional lumber, and one for LVL. Compared to 1/2-inch anchor bolts, fewer hangers will be required in most applications, and the labor-intensive marking and drilling of the ledger are eliminated. The connectors for steel framing list for \$8.40 each, and the wood and LVL series list for \$16.80 each. Fasteners are included with the hanger.

Contact: Simpson Strong-Tie Company, 4120 Dublin Blvd., Suite 400, Dublin, CA 94568; 800/999-5099, www.strongtie.com.



Super Caulking Gun

Caulking isn't one of the most strenuous jobs on a construction site, but squeezing out a couple of dozen tubes of subfloor adhesive can be a chore. Pneumatic caulking guns help lessen the burden, but the first time you drag an air hose through the wet adhesive, you realize their limitations. Now Milwaukee has introduced a *cordless power caulker*, which uses the company's standard 12-volt NiCad battery pack. The



tool is heavy duty and dispenses a lot of caulk or adhesive quickly. It's really best suited to bigger jobs and should be a real benefit on cold mornings when the subfloor adhesive is a little stiff. Model 6560-23 for quart-sized tubes costs about \$220. See *Toolbox*, page 112, for a review.

Contact: Milwaukee Electric Tool Corporation, 13135 W. Lisbon Rd., Brookfield, WI 53005; 262/781-3600, www.heavydutytool.com.

Fast-Acting Glue

With set times as short as 30 seconds, the new *hot-melt polyurethane adhesives* from Titebond are sure to grab your attention. At the heart of the system is a cordless hot-melt glue gun manufactured by Steinel. In combination with Titebond's HiPURformer adhesive, the gun creates a quick and easy way to fasten wood molding and trim. The gun takes about 10 minutes to heat up and can



be used away from its base for about 15 minutes, according to the manufacturer. Franklin offers three adhesive formulas: a 30-second wood glue, a 60-second wood glue, and a multi-purpose glue with a 75-second set time. The new adhesive should save time because it eliminates the need to fill and finish nail holes and minimizes clamping of glued surfaces. Street price on the gun kit, which includes one tube of each adhesive, is about \$100, and glue refills go for about \$8 a cartridge.

Contact: Franklin International, 2020 Bruck St., Columbus, OH 43207; 800/877-4583, www.titebond.com.

