

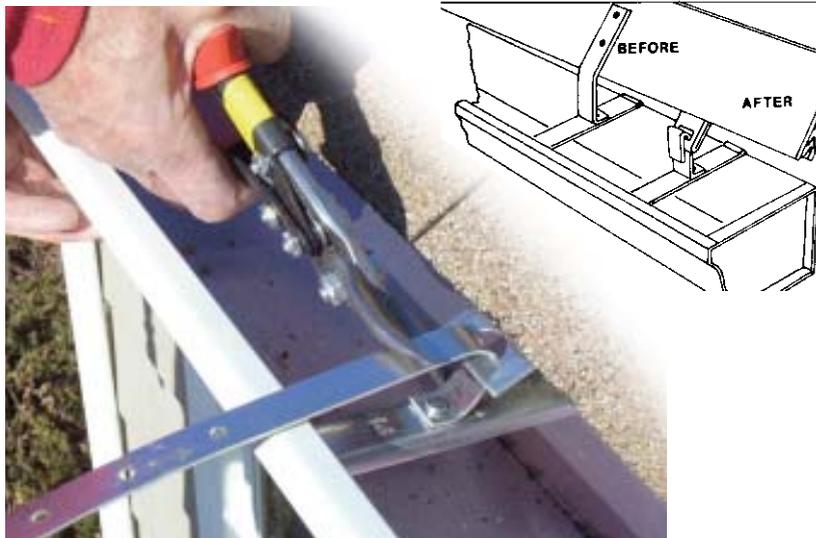
# Products

by Patrick McCombe

## Hidden Hanger

Roof-mounted hangers are usually the only option when installing gutters on a house with angled fascia or crown-molding detail on the overhangs. But roof hangers have a couple of significant drawbacks. First, the brackets are right out there in the open where they detract from an otherwise uncluttered roof. Second, they're fastened through the shingles that handle the most water. Yost Manufacturing has come up with an alternative. The *Mole Hidden Hanger Attachment* works with the company's standard strap hanger for roof mounting. The self-flashing mole slips under the shingles and attaches with nails. The design makes the hanger less visible and reduces the possibility of leaks.

**Yost Manufacturing**, 800/872-9678, [www.yostmfg.com](http://www.yostmfg.com).



## Bigger Is Better

If you're in need of a wider composite trim board for column wraps, friezes, water tables, or arches, you might consider *MiraTEC*. The company's newly introduced 5/4-inch (1-inch actual) by 16-inch board joins the 4/4-inch (3/4-inch actual) by 16-inch offering introduced last year. The two boards should be a real timesaver compared to multiple pieces and glue-ups, and the 16-foot length means fewer seams than with 8-foot panel stock. According to the manufacturer, MiraTEC machines and fastens just like wood, and a zinc-borate treatment gives it greater moisture and insect resistance. MiraTEC is primed on four sides and features one smooth side and one "cedar-textured" side. It sells for about \$1.40 per board foot.

**CMI**, 800/255-0785,  
[www.miratectrim.com](http://www.miratectrim.com).



## Two for One

It might not be the right product for a million-dollar spec home, but for more modest projects, the *Fiber Care Tub and Shower* seems like a winner. The fiberglass unit includes a 5-foot or 6-foot tub and a 42-inch shower molded in one piece. The combined unit makes installation and plumbing hookups easy and practically eliminates caulk joints and owner maintenance. The shower has molded shelves and soap dishes, and the tub can be outfitted with spa jets. The 5-foot model sells for about \$840 (plus shipping) and the 6-foot model sells for \$100 more. A glass shower enclosure is sold separately.

**Fiber Care**, 760/246-0019, [www.fibercarebaths.com](http://www.fibercarebaths.com).

## Products

### On Track

A damaged patio door track can be a tough fix, and with workers carrying heavy objects in and out all day long, it's often just a matter of time before an accident happens. The *FlipGard* protects that vulnerable component with a sturdy temporary threshold. The yellow plastic guard mounts in front of the door, creating a small ramp to protect the track. When you want to close the door, the hinged guard flips up out of the way. It sells for about \$20.

**Protective Products**, 800/789-6633,  
[www.protectiveproducts.com](http://www.protectiveproducts.com).



### No-Frills Furnace

If you're looking for a quiet, dependable 90%-efficiency furnace with a minimum of frills, the *Comfortmaker PS90-DV* fits the bill. According to the manufacturer, the unit is only 40 inches tall and can be installed in up-flow, down-flow, and horizontal configurations. A preassembled condensate system and factory-made hose and clamp connections speed installation. The unit carries a 20-year warranty on the aluminum-steel heat exchanger, and it has electronic ignition for safety and energy efficiency.

**International Comfort Products**, 800/315-4370,  
[www.comfortmaker.com](http://www.comfortmaker.com).



### INTERIOR DOORS

**Louwer Maneuver.** Louvered closet doors are a great idea. Not only do they prevent clothes from getting musty, but they also look great and give bedrooms a relaxing cabana-like feel. The only drawback is the time it takes to prime and paint all those little slats. But you can make the process go a little faster with pre-primed *Miami Louver Doors* from Masonite. They're available in full and half-louver designs in both passage and bi-fold models. Passage doors are available in widths from 1/0 to 3/0 and bi-fold units are available in widths from 2/0 to 6/0. All Miami Louver Doors (including bi-folds) are 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches thick and feature doweled joinery. The company also makes a clear pine version for staining.

**Masonite**, 813/877-2726, [www.masonite.com](http://www.masonite.com).



### Precious Metal.

While most MDF doors have traditional styling, some

customers crave something a little different. In addition to more typical four- or six-panel offerings, TruStile makes a line of MDF doors that definitely goes beyond the ordinary. Their *TruCLAD* product line features a skin of real metal over an MDF core. It's offered in several finishes, from antique pewter to textured copper. All TruStile doors feature a wood insert on the stiles for easier hinge and lock prep, and better screw holding. Standard interior offerings start at \$200, while Truclad models start at \$8000.

**TruStile Davis**, 303/286-3931, [www.trustile.com](http://www.trustile.com).



**Chalk Line.** Adding some character to a kid's bedroom or a kitchen space could be as easy as installing a new *Chalkboard Panel* door from Simpson. The unique product replaces the wood panel(s) on one side with a 1/4-inch-thick magnetic chalkboard. The doors come in widths from 2 to 3 feet in 6/8, 7/0 and 8/0 heights. Standard offerings include Douglas fir, hemlock, red oak, maple, and cherry. Custom species are also available. While prices are determined by individual dealers, 2/0 fir versions should start around \$310; oak prices should start at \$480.

**Simpson Door**, 800/952-4057, [www.simpsondoor.com](http://www.simpsondoor.com).

**Custom Cut.** If you or your customer is looking for completely *custom MDF interior doors*, Bollection Door Company can make just about anything you or your designer can come up with. Besides the company's custom capabilities, they also have an extensive catalog of standard designs. According to the manufacturer, the face-grain MDF used in the door edges holds screws better than the poplar used by other manufacturers. Prices start at about \$100 plus shipping.

**Bollection Door**, 336/851-5208, [www.bollectiondoor.com](http://www.bollectiondoor.com).



## Products

### AC PRODUCTS

**Zone Defense.** Effective zoning is one of the drawbacks of forced-air heating and air-conditioning systems. If your customers are complaining that they're heating or cooling unused spaces, you might suggest the easy-to-install *retrofit dampers* from Arzel

Technologies. Matching control panels can operate between two and eight zones using standard thermostats. The air-actuated dampers install in a diamond-shaped hole cut in the duct and have a thick foam gasket to prevent leakage. The company makes round dampers from 4 to 16 inches in diameter and rectangular models from 8 by 8 inches to 12 by 24 inches. A 6-inch round damper has a list price of \$73 and their most popular two-zone control panel lists for \$674.

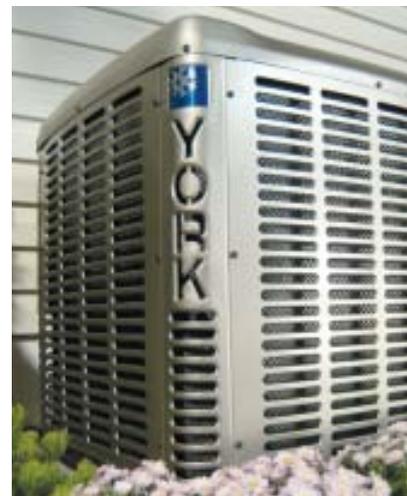
Arzel, 800/611-8312, [www.arzelzoning.com](http://www.arzelzoning.com).



**Seal the Deal.** Sealing hvac ducts makes balancing systems easier and prevents the wasting of conditioned air inside wall cavities and chases. Most building scientists and conscientious hvac contractors agree that the best way to prevent air leakage is with duct mastic. But finding duct mastic at your lumberyard or home center is often a challenge. That might change with the introduction of *Polyken and Nashua Duct Mastic* from Tyco Adhesives. This industry giant might have the marketing clout to get their products more widely distributed.

According to the maker, the latex product is fast drying, sag free, and resistant to mold growth. It's available in bulk tubs and 10-ounce caulking tubes.

Tyco, 800/248-7659, [www.tycoadhesives.com](http://www.tycoadhesives.com).



**High Style.** While working as an apprentice in my uncle's heating and refrigeration business, I remember a discussion he had with a style-conscious customer. This educated woman was totally unconcerned with the brand of her new air conditioning system, its energy efficiency, or its performance, but she insisted that the beige condenser cabinet would clash with her home's color scheme. I suspect that there are many other customers like her and at least one manufacturer has heard their cry. The York Affinity is available in six colors and features a sleek modern cabinet. It's available in sizes from 2 to 5 tons in 12 and 13 SEER ratings. I think it's a better solution than the one my uncle came up with — painting those tiny louvers was awful.

York, 877/874-7378, [www.yorkupg.com](http://www.yorkupg.com).

ON THE JOB

## TrussLok Screws

by Jeff Davis

Like most builders today, I regularly use built-up LVL (laminated veneer lumber) beams in new construction and additions. For strength and straightness, they're unbeatable. But if there's one thing I hate, it's nailing them together. Gun nails just don't set reliably, and when you try to finish them off with a hammer, they're more likely to bend than sink in. What's more, nails don't have the ability to pull cupped LVLs tightly together. Sometimes I have to through-bolt to snug the plies together. So I was interested in checking out the new TrussLok screw (Olympic Manufacturing Group, Agawam, MA; 800/518-3569; [www.fastenmaster.com](http://www.fastenmaster.com)), which is designed for connecting LVL, parallel-strand lumber, and laminated-strand lumber. And, as it turned out, I wasn't disappointed.



**Figure 1.** The screw's red coating reduces friction and helps protect the corrosion-resistant coating underneath. The manufacturer approves the screws for exterior applications with ACQ lumber.

The screw has a  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch hex-drive washer-head (a flared build-up under the washer reinforces the head against snapping off under torque). It's made of hardened carbon steel and has a dual

coating — the red lubricating topcoat reduces driving friction and the electroplated undercoat protects against corrosion (see Figure 1).

The screws are available in three



**Figure 2.** TrussLok screws don't require predrilling and have a reinforced head to prevent snapping. The threads occupy the last  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches of the screw shank for drawing built-up layers tightly together.

### ON THE JOB

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lengths for connecting various ply-combinations together. Each screw has 1½ inches of thread at the end of a smooth shank to engage only a single 1¾-inch beam thickness which enables it to draw multiple members tightly together. But I had to check for myself the manufacturer's claim that the screw would pull a cupped LVL flat. I chose a few obviously cupped LVL cutoffs from the local lumberyard for testing (Figure 2, previous page). I drove the screws using the included hex-bit and my ½-inch drill and found they start and drive easily. The threads are designed to be deep enough to provide good holding power, while not so deep that they generate a lot of friction as they cut through the veneer layers. I found that it's quite easy to overdrive the screw

and strip out the hole. Once I realized that the screws are not meant to be countersunk, I adjusted my technique to just set the screw heads without overdriving. Projecting heads will interfere with wrapping the beam with finish lumber or drywall, but they only project ¼ inch above the surface, so it doesn't seem like a big deal.

Drawing the cup out of the lumber took more than one screw — I drove three across the face of a 14-inch beam and tightened them progressively. Sure enough, the beams drew tightly together and the cupping disappeared. When properly installed, the drawing power is truly impressive.

The screws are rated for exterior use in ACQ-pressure-treated lumber, and come in 3¾-inch, 5-inch, and 6¾-inch lengths for various combina-

tions. The .227-inch screw shanks have a posted bending yield of 160,000 psi and are claimed to provide 90% of the shear value of conventional ½-inch through-bolts, with no pre-drilling necessary. I know one thing for certain — I'm never going to nail another multi-ply LVL beam together.

Bags of 50 screws sell for \$25 (3¾ inches), \$29 (5 inches) and \$35 (6¾ inches). Tubs of 250 screws sell for \$89 (3¾ inches), \$103 (5-inch) and \$124 (6¾ inches). 

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*Jeff Davis is a framing contractor in Harwich, Mass.*