

Products | by Patrick McCombe



Falling Water. Savvy builders have long known that siding installed in a rain-screen fashion is one of the secrets to a low-maintenance, long-lasting home. Conventional rain screens, however, take a lot of time and require some creative detailing — which is why DuPont and several other manufacturers have introduced housewraps with vertical channels that drain moisture without the complicated details of conventional rain screens. DuPont says its *Tyvek DrainWrap* works with most siding products, including wood, fiber cement, EIFS, and one-coat synthetic stucco. A 9-by-125-foot roll sells for \$130 to \$160.

DuPont, 800/448-9835, www.construction.tyvek.com.

Sharp Screws. Many deck screws are described as self-drilling, but Starborn's *Headcote* and *Deckfast Razorback Stainless Steel Screws* are in a class of their own. The manufacturer claims, and my own test confirms, that these screws have threads and an auger point so sharp they'll go into hardwood decking — even ipé — without predrilling. Made from 305 stainless, the screws have nibs on the underside of the head for better countersinking. They come with brown trim heads (1⁵/₈- and 2¹/₄-inch #7s; 2¹/₂- and 3-inch #8s), uncoated trim heads (1⁵/₈- and 2¹/₄-inch #7s; 2¹/₂- and 3-inch #8s), and uncoated flat heads (2¹/₂- and 3-inch #10s). Prices range from about \$45 to \$145 per 1,000 screws.

Starborn Industries, 800/596-7747, www.headcote.com.



Better Roof Clip. One complaint I have with 24-inch truss and rafter spacing is that the technique often requires the use of those little metal H clips. My experience with sheathing clips hasn't been particularly positive, so I'm hoping the *Grip H Clips* work as well as their manufacturer says they do. Successfully tested in temperatures from 0°F to 160°F, these connectors are made from nylon 66, a plastic commonly used for high-strength plastic parts in automobiles. They're shaped to fit together more easily and to hold on more tightly than metal clips, and the same size works with both 1/2- and 7/16-inch sheathing. Although Grip H Clips are a little thicker than steel clips, they don't show up on the finished roof. A 250-count bag sells for about \$25.

M & O Products,
608/742-6565,
www.griphclip.com.



Products | Flashings



Ledger-Specific. An improperly flashed deck ledger can lead to very serious problems, including rot and mold and even catastrophic failure of the entire structure. Pro-Trim's new *Hand-Bendable Seamless Flashing* is designed specifically for flashing this important structural member; the manufacturer claims it makes the whole process fast and easy. The vinyl product — unlike its aluminum counterparts — works fine with the new pressure-treating formulas and it's preformed, so you don't have to break out the brake. A 25-foot coil sells for about \$30.

Pro-Trim, 800/421-2586, www.pro-trim.com.



Sloped Sill Pan. Most site-built — and some prefabricated — sill flashings don't have any slope, which results in a tendency to hold water. *EZ Pan* sill-pan flashing, though, uses a flexible membrane combined with a sloped "sill wedge" to get water moving in the right direction. Preformed corners and an easy-to-cut, self-adhering membrane make the flashing easy to install on any size opening, says the maker. EZ Pan components cost about \$9 for an average-sized window.

Carlisle Coatings & Waterproofing, 800/527-7092, www.carlisle-ccw.com.



Compatible Sealant. Choosing the right sealant to use with your window flashing is as important as the flashing itself. *Moistop E-Z Seal* and *Moistop Sealant* are designed and tested to work together. Made with a fiberglass-reinforced membrane and coated with polyethylene, Moistop E-Z Seal flashing has a 3-inch strip of adhesive on the back. Since the sticky stuff doesn't cover the entire surface, you can easily integrate the flashing into the rest of the drainage plane. Polyurethane-based Moistop Sealant seals the nailing flange and works with wood, metal, and vinyl windows, says the manufacturer. A 75-foot roll of 6-inch E-Z Seal costs \$18; Moistop Sealant costs \$4.50 per tube.

Fortifiber, 800/773-4777, www.fortifiber.com.



Products | Closet & Garage Storage Systems



Franchise Free. Unlike most closet-system manufacturers, *ProClosets* does not require a franchise arrangement from its installers. Once the company verifies that you're a business owner and not a DIYer posing as a pro, you can order directly from its New Jersey warehouse. ProClosets offers a variety of product lines and finishes for spaces ranging from master bedrooms to garages. It promises to ship orders within 24 hours and offers professional design services and Web tools to help with layout.

ProClosets, 877/289-2776, www.proclosets.com.

Garage Ready. There's a problem with most garage storage systems: They cost too much. Stanley's new *Garage Workshop* doesn't have as many bells and whistles as some of the higher-priced products I've seen, but at a third of the cost it brings garage cabinetry closer to the mainstream. Made from steel and polypropylene, the modular storage cabinets have full-extension ball-bearing slides, adjustable shelves and legs, and no-sag recessed pulls. A 30-inch, three-drawer base cabinet sells for \$120; a 30-inch two-door base cabinet sells for \$100; and a 30-inch wall cabinet sells for \$80. A second-generation version should be in Home Depot stores by the end of October.

Stanley, 800/782-6539, www.stanleyworks.com.



Closet Specialists. ClosetMaid — which started out in 1965 manufacturing and selling wire shelving — is now practically synonymous with closet-organizing systems. The company's professionally installed *MasterSuite* comes in three finishes — warm cognac, natural maple, and white — and includes everything from belt and shoe racks to kitchen pantries. Among the line's newer offerings are 8-foot-tall storage towers, full-height raised-panel doors, and freestanding center islands. Subbing out a closet design and installation means you have one less thing to worry about.

ClosetMaid, 800/874-0008, www.closetmaid.com.

For more product information, visit ebuild, Hanley Wood's interactive product catalog, at www.jlconline.com or www.ebuild.com

Products | Paints & Coatings

Low-Odor Oil Primer. Oil-based primers are often the best option for stains caused by smoke, nicotine, or plumbing leaks, but the odors associated with oil-based products can be a problem in occupied buildings. To remedy that, Zinsser recently introduced oil-based *Bulls Eye Odorless Primer Sealer*, which it says has less odor than many water-based primers. The tintable, bright-white primer purportedly dries in 30 minutes and can be used under or over any conventional oil-based or latex top coat. A gallon costs \$22.

Zinsser, 732/469-8100, www.zinsser.com.



Primo Latex Paint. When my wife brought *Accolade* paint chips home from our local hardware store, I was skeptical that we needed paint costing \$35 a gallon. But even though I never stopped asking myself “Why does it cost so much?” I knew \$35 was a small price for maintaining marital bliss, so I kept my mouth shut. Now, after painting with it, I can say with certainty that it’s the best latex paint I’ve ever used. It has a high-build formula that doesn’t sag, and although we chose a dark-blue color, I probably could have gotten away with a single coat over a tinted primer. Plus it comes in a great screw-top plastic container that’s easy to pour and doesn’t drip. I’m glad I bit my tongue.

Pratt & Lambert, 800/289-7728, www.prattandlambert.com.

All-Purpose Deck Stripper. Not sure which deck stripper to use? It would help, of course, to know what sealer or finish is on the deck — but that information isn’t always easy to come by. With Thompson’s *Water Seal Maximum Strength Deck Stripper*, you can skip the forensic work. Thompson’s says the product removes just about any protective sealer you’d find on wood or composite decking, as well as solid and semitransparent stains (oil- and water-based), dirt, mildew, algae, and fungus. A one-gallon container treats about 150 square feet and sells for \$13.

Thompson’s, 800/367-6297, www.thompsonswaterseal.com.



Safer Spray.

Water-based paints have been around for decades, yet a water-based spray paint has proved elusive — until now. *H₂O* spray paint from Krylon is safe to use indoors and cleans up with soap and water. According to the maker, it’s environmentally friendly, has little odor, and dries in 15 minutes. It comes in 14 colors and sells for about \$4 per can.

Krylon, 800/457-9566, www.krylon.com.



Products | Garage Doors

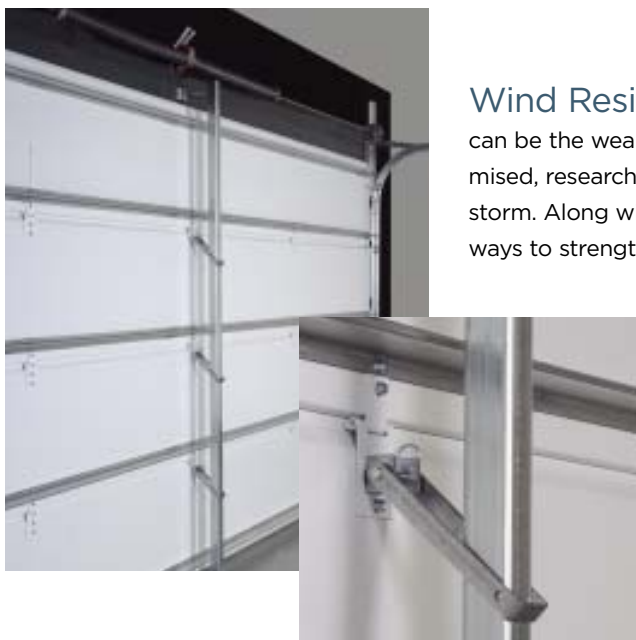


Copper Clad. So your high-end customers want a completely different look for their garage? Show them Martin's *Copper Garage Door*. Offered in five styles, the copper-clad models measure up to 24 feet wide and 20 feet tall. According to the maker, their beauty is more than skin deep: Their high-quality hardware — including springs designed for 30,000 cycles — should help them last a lifetime. Prices start at \$1,500.

Martin Door, 800/388-9310, www.martindoor.com.

Get Your Fiber. Fiberglass entry doors are becoming quite popular, and for good reason — they require little maintenance, they're strong, and they hold up well in harsh climates and difficult exposures. Think about it: Those same qualities should make for a terrific garage door. Wayne-Dalton says its 9800 is the industry's first fiberglass garage door. It's virtually indistinguishable from a wood unit but doesn't require wood's upkeep hassles. Available in 8-, 9-, 16-, and 18-foot widths and in 7- and 8-foot heights, the door costs between \$1,300 and \$1,700.

Wayne-Dalton, 888/827-3667, www.wayne-dalton.com.



Wind Resistance. During hurricanes and tornadoes, garage doors can be the weak link in residential structures. Once the door is compromised, research shows, the house stands little chance of weathering the storm. Along with several other companies, Raynor has been working on ways to strengthen garage doors during high-wind events. The *Hurricane Reinforcing System* uses a removable metal bar held in place with a bracket at the top and a steel pin at the bottom. Metal straps connect the bar to the door panels. Raynor says it can be installed in about a minute whenever a hurricane is expected. With the bar in place, most 16-foot models can withstand a 170-mph sustained wind. The Hurricane Reinforcing System adds about \$200 to the cost of a 16-foot door.

Raynor, 800/472-9667, www.raynor.com.