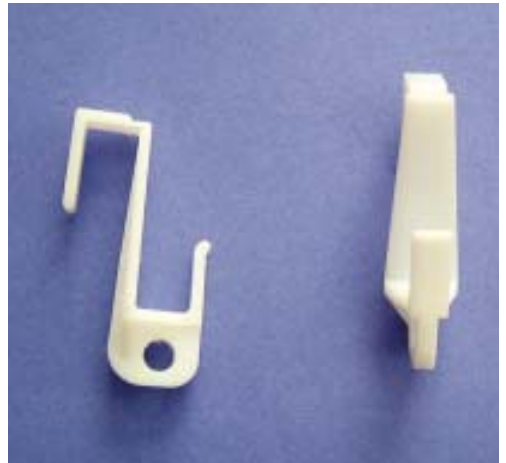


Products | by Patrick McCombe

Extra Pair of Hands. Managing a 12-foot piece of fiber-cement siding by yourself isn't the easiest task, so most installation crews rely on a cut man and a pair of installers. However, the *Bear Clip's* inventor — a longtime fiber-cement installer — says that his product allows one installer to do the work of two, reducing labor costs by as much as 40 percent. Not only do these small S-shaped plastic hooks hold the siding in position, they also create the correct lap without measuring. Once the siding is nailed off, the visible part of the hook is broken off with a special tool. By creating a small gap between laps, the remaining part of the clip improves ventilation and drainage behind the siding, says the maker. Clips are available for all major brands of fiber-cement siding; they sell for about \$160 per 1,000.

Bear Clip, 866/360-2547, www.bearclip.com.



Shining Bright. Many deck lights are cheaply made, with steel and aluminum housings that weren't designed for the new formulas of pressure-treated lumber. *Highpoint Deck Lighting*, a new company founded by a custom-deck builder, is improving quality and increasing the number of options in this category of lighting. The surface-mounted, recessed, and post-cap fixtures come in a choice of 10 finishes and feature brass and copper construction compatible with the new PT formulas. All of this company's lights look better than anything you'll find at the home center. Prices start at around \$40 each.

Highpoint Deck Lighting, 888/582-5850, www.hpdlighting.com.



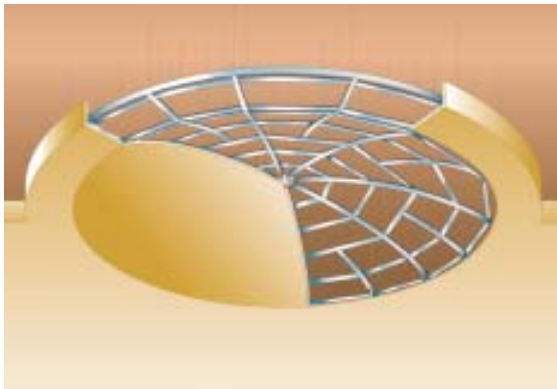
Dune-Friendly Decking. Trying to grow grass or other vegetation under an elevated deck is usually an exercise in futility — unless you're using *ThruFlow Interlocking Panels*. Made from high-density polyethylene or reinforced polypropylene, this unique decking has a perforated surface that allows light to penetrate, making it the perfect material for ecologically sensitive areas like sand dunes and wetlands. Available in 3- and 4-foot-by-1-foot sizes, the interlocking panels require 16-inch joist spacing. Prices run about \$3.75 to \$4.75 per square foot.

Thruflow, 888/478-3569, www.thruflow.com.

Products | Drywall & Accessories

Drywall Crown. Crown molding used to be the exclusive domain of finish carpenters, but now, with Trim-Tex's *Drywall Art Crown Molding*, drywall crews can get in on the fun. Available in 2½- and 3½-inch sizes, the crown installs with spray adhesive and staples, after which the perforated leg is coated with joint compound — same as with the company's other vinyl drywall accessories. In terms of time, Trim-Tex says installing and finishing the crown takes about as long as conventionally finishing an inside corner. Both sizes come in 10- and 12-foot lengths. A Vermont dealer quoted me a price of \$.73 per foot for the 2½-inch profile (6110) and \$1.03 for the 3½-inch profile (6210).

Trim-Tex, 800/874-2333, www.trim-tex.com.



Drywall Hanger. Domed and barrel-vaulted ceilings — which are popping up in more and more high-end homes — can be tricky and time-consuming to execute. With its preformed and precut components, USG's *Drywall Suspension System* simplifies the complex process of framing and finishing these ceilings. Its pieces fit together much like those of a conventional suspended ceiling — and, according to the manufacturer, the technique reduces labor costs by as much as 50 percent. USG's Web site contains an estimating program that can help generate drawings and material lists.

USG, 800/874-4968, www.usg.com.

Drywall Clips. Many a contractor has euphemistically referred to drywall clips as a pain in the posterior. Still, these devices create more room for insulation and reduce material costs by eliminating a lot of extra wood. If you like the advantages provided by drywall clips but are unhappy with conventional designs, check out the *Stud Claw*. Because its wire backer grips the stud with barbed legs, it doesn't require the tedious alignment that conventional clips do. It comes in a standard 1½-inch size, plus a 3-inch size for ceilings; a 300-count box of either sells for \$40.

Stud Claw, 716/662-7877.



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

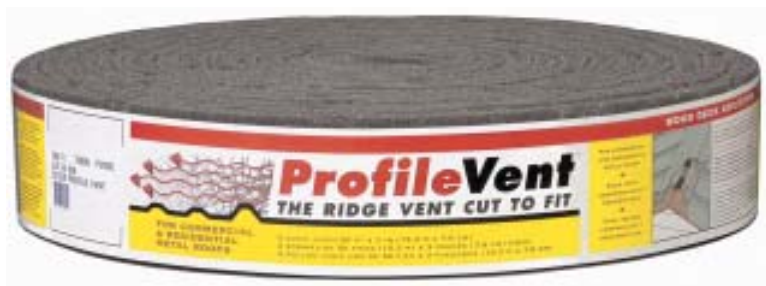


Vents for Metal Shingles. Metal shingle panels have a lot going for them: They're fire- and hail-resistant, they perform well in high-wind events and earthquakes, and they last a really long time. What a pity, then, that so few metal-shingle producers offer matching vents, which would save installers valuable time spent adapting vents designed for other applications. One exception is Metro Products, whose *Smartvent* line complements the company's Shake-II, Shingle, and Tile panels. The self-flashing, color-matched vents install quicker and look better than adapted vents. Depending on the panel, prices range from about \$100 to \$180 each.

Metro Roof Products, 866/638-7648, www.smartroofs.com.

A Perfect Match. Need to ventilate a standing-seam or screw-down metal roof? The *Profile Vent* from Ventco is a profile-matched, fibrous ridge vent that installs under a standard ridge cap and prevents insects and wind-driven snow and rain from entering the attic. According to the manufacturer, it works with roof pitches from 2/12 to 20/12 and is available for dozens of roofing profiles. A 100-foot package with two 50-foot rolls sells for about \$185.

Ventco, 800/300-9515, www.ventco.com.



Rapid-Fire Ridge. Coil roofing nailers are about as common as sunburn on residential roofs, but comparatively few roofers use them on the ridge vent. If you're looking to squeeze a little more production out of your roof crews, consider a ridge vent you can use a nail gun with — *Rapid Ridge*, for instance. This product provides approximately 12½ inches of ventilation per foot and has a hinged design for easier installation. The manufacturer must have noticed the scarcity of 1¾-inch collated roofing nails on most job sites, because they're included with the vent. Rapid Ridge comes in 20- and 50-foot rolls; a 20-foot roll sells for about \$45.

Tamko, 800/641-4691, www.tamko.com.

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

Products | Masonry

Slim Brick Veneer. One easy way to make a wood-framed building match an adjoining or neighboring brick structure is to use a thin-brick product. Stone Mountain Brick's 1/2-inch-thick brick looks and feels like its full-thickness counterpart, says the company, but doesn't require a brick ledge or ties — and weighs far less. With its slightly worn face, *Used Brick* is a particularly good choice for room additions on older buildings. It sells for about \$1.90 per square foot, not including shipping.

Stone Mountain Brick Company, 888/955-3571, www.stonemountainbrick.com.



Masonry Reinforcement.

Making structural repairs to a masonry building can be tricky work. The weight and unfamiliar, rock-hard materials associated with masonry construction often require specialized techniques. Cintec's proprietary *Reinforcing Anchor System* is designed to stabilize and repair faulty masonry structures. The process begins with a site inspection by a company engineer, and a computer-generated 3-D model of the building. Next, Cintec workers insert mesh-wrapped steel rods into holes drilled in the brickwork; the mesh is then filled with a nonpolymer, cementlike grout. To prevent water damage to the structure, the company relies mostly on dry-drilling and low-volume wet-drilling techniques rather than full-scale wet drilling.

Cintec America, 800/363-6066, www.cintec.com.

Jack for All Trades. Backfilling before there's some weight on the foundation can be risky, but waiting until the house is framed often means weeks of setting up ladders and slogging around in

knee-deep mud. It's a scenario all too familiar to builder Jerry Keith, who finally got fed up and invented *Jerry Jacks*. These steel brackets hang from the form ties used in poured-concrete foundations and provide support for a stable work platform. They can be used inside, too, to store materials or hold spools of cable, or to make a sturdy saw station or workbench. Just be sure to tell your foundation contractor not to break off the ties when he strips the forms. A pair of Jerry Jacks sells for \$99.

Jerry Jack, 740/260-3637, www.jerryjackproducts.com.

