

Products | Columns | by Patrick McCombe



No-Fuss Support. A lot of carpenters complain that too much of the exterior millwork used these days is made from plastic and other synthetics — yet synthetic materials are not always a bad thing. Keeping joints tight on square wood columns is a struggle, and few homeowners want regular painting and maintenance as part of their weekend routine. So it's good to know that synthetic millwork companies like Fypon make load-bearing columns in addition to strictly decorative ones. Fypon's *Plain Panel Square Column* comes in 6- and 8-inch widths and 8- and 9-foot lengths and can handle up to 12,000 pounds of load. Since it's made from high-density polyurethane, it should last forever. List price ranges from \$400 to \$450.

Fypon, 800/446-3040, www.fypon.com.



Rock Solid. Many stone columns are composed of small segments stacked together. If the budget allows, however, nothing beats the smooth finish found on Rhodes Architectural Stone's *One-Piece Stone Columns*. Made from granite, limestone, or sandstone, these beauties come in 7- to 14-inch diameters. For projects in seismic zones, the maker can drill out the column centers to accommodate steel reinforcing posts. Seven-footers range in price from \$4,000 to \$6,000.

Rhodes Architectural Stone, 206/709-3000, www.rhodes.org.



Good Fit. Wrapping a 4x4 or 6x6 with pine or some other flat stock is a fairly common way to finish off porch posts and other structural columns. A better approach comes from Advanced TrimWorks: First you slip the U-shaped PVC *Column-Wrap* over a wood post, then you glue the hinged fourth side shut. According to ATW, the product holds paint better than wood and can be installed in less than 30 minutes. In addition to the 9-foot wrap with cap and base, the kit contains the company's Bond and Fill adhesive and Velcro straps for clamping. The version designed for 4x4 posts costs about \$380; the one for 6x6 posts about \$430. Octagonal wraps are also available.

Advanced TrimWorks, 508/822-7745, www.advancedtrimworks.com.

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Products | Specialty Fasteners

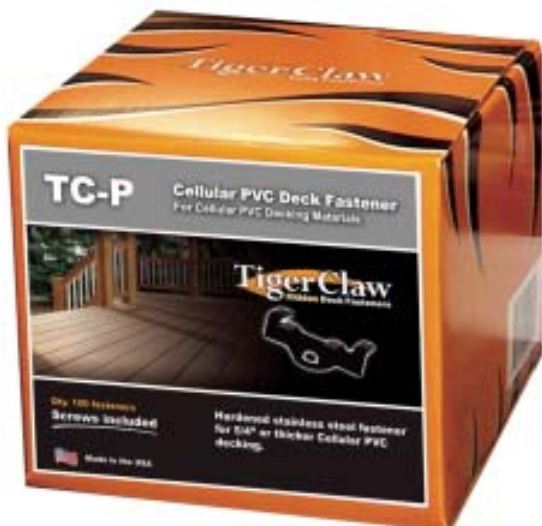
Easier Anchor. Corkscrew-style, self-drilling wall anchors are great: They hold well and go in fast. Their only shortcoming is the 1/2-inch holes they leave when you remove them. With the *WallDog*, you don't have that problem. This one-piece threaded wall anchor doesn't need a plastic insert; you screw it right into drywall. The fastener delivers 245 pounds of shear strength and 85 pounds of withdrawal strength in 1/2-inch drywall, says the maker, and leaves behind much smaller holes than other hollow wall anchors. It comes in white and chrome; a 100-count box sells for about \$13.

Grabber, 800/477-8876, www.grabberman.com.



Smarter-Than-Average Bit. Okay, so this product isn't a specialty fastener. Still, any tool that eliminates the *need* for specialty fasteners deserves equal consideration. Designed for deck screws, the *Smart-Bit* makes a pilot hole and countersink in one step, and boasts a rotating stop collar with a no-mar pad. Unlike most other all-in-one bits, the clever little gadget doesn't rely on set screws or impossible-to-find flat-shank bits. It's available for #7, #8, and #10 screws; a package of two costs about \$15.

Starborn Industries, 800/596-7747, www.smart-bit.com.



High-Grip Deck Clip. If your clients don't want a bunch of fasteners cluttering the surface of their hardwood or composite deck, consider using the *Tiger Claw*. This hidden fastener comes in four versions: the TC-2, for pressure-treated soft woods; the TC-3, for composites and soft hardwoods; the TC-4, for dense hardwoods like ipe and teak; and TC-P, for cellular PVC decking. Matte black coatings help each blend into its background. For 100-count boxes, prices range from \$40 for the TC-2 nonstainless to \$70 for the TC-4 hardened stainless. Figure on 200 Tiger Claw fasteners for every 100 square feet of decking.

Tiger Claw, 800/928-4437, www.tigerclawinc.com.



Dream Tape. One of my good friends once had a dream that workers were repairing a nuclear reactor with duct tape when he arrived on the scene as a DOE inspector. I thought of him recently when I heard about 3M's introduction of *Performance Plus Duct Tape 8979*. While it might not be suitable for nuclear containment, this high-performance tape allegedly lasts for up to a year outdoors without deterioration and can be removed cleanly from "opaque surfaces" for up to six months after placement. It comes in several widths in blue, black and olive. I found 25-yard rolls on the Web for about \$9 each.

3M, 800/567-1639 ext. 5095, www.3m.com/duct.

All-Weather, Low-VOC Construction Glue. Most carpenters like conventional solvent-based construction adhesives because they work in just about all temperatures and weather conditions. But solvent-based adhesives have a downside: They give off vapors that aren't good for you — or anyone else. Bostik claims its low-VOC, polyurethane-based *Heavy Duty Construction Adhesive* — part of the Bostik Home line — has all the advantages of conventional construction adhesives, including all-weather performance, freeze/thaw stability, and excellent bond on wet and frozen lumber, without the fumes. The low-solvent formula also means you can use this product with polystyrene. A 29-ounce tube sells for about 6.50.

Bostik, 888/603-8558, www.bostik-us.com.



Superior Glue. This isn't the first time *JLC* has covered *2P-10*, but the extra attention is warranted: *2P-10* is one of those products that I consistently hear carpenters say improves their quality of work and speeds production. Formulated much like Super Glue, the cyanoacrylate adhesive sets up in about 10 seconds without clamping when used with the companion activator. It comes in three viscosities: medium (for smooth surfaces), thick (for porous surfaces), and "jël" — which I'm told is best for trim applications because it doesn't run. You're not likely to find this product at every hometown lumberyard, so check the manufacturer's Web site for mail-order and local dealers. An 8-ounce bottle with activator sells for about \$45.

FastCap, 888/443-3748, www.fastcap.com.

