

Non-Corrosive Pressure-Treated Wood

Arch Treatment Technologies, of Wolmanized Wood fame, has developed a new, metal-free preservative that it claims creates “treated wood that is no more corrosive to metal hardware than is untreated wood.”

Most pressure-treating preservatives use metallic compounds (CCA contains chromium, copper, and arsenic — all metals — and ACQ relies on copper) to make wood unpalatable to decay organisms. A downside to the metallic preservatives, though, is they corrode steel and aluminum, via a galvanic reaction.

This is particularly true of ACQ, which lacks chromium and arsenic,

the elements that made CCA’s copper component less corrosive. Depending on climate and location, even galvanized fasteners and connectors meeting the code-required ANSI standard might not outlast ACQ-treated wood.

Because Arch’s new preservative, dubbed L³, contains no metals, it should not accelerate the corrosion of fasteners and connectors. It’s formulated from three unpronounceable, EPA-registered organic (that is, carbon-based) chemicals — two fungicides and an insecticide — and can treat the same wood species that deck builders are accustomed to using. It also contains an integral water repellent.

Like most ACQ-treated (.25 rating) lumber sold today, Wolmanized L³ Outdoor Wood is not intended for ground contact.

Huck DeVenzio, marketing manager for Smyrna, Ga.-based Arch Treatment Technologies, says that L³ Outdoor Wood comes with a limited lifetime warranty, and should cost about the same as other treated lumber. Availability is currently limited to the Chicago area and parts of South Carolina, though DeVenzio says he expects demand will convince wood treaters in other regions to begin producing L³. For more information, go to ww.wolmanizedwood.com. — *Andy Engel*

May the Most Dilapidated Deck Win

Big prizes are at stake in two manufacturer-sponsored competitions for owners of ramshackle backyard architecture. A deck makeover valued at up to \$10,000 goes to the winner of the “Ugliest Deck Contest,” and a new 12-foot-by-12-foot composite deck valued at \$5,000 will be awarded to the owner of the “World’s Worst Deck.” In both contests, the winning homeowner selects the contractor.



2006 winner of the “Ugliest Deck Contest”

“Ugly” decks must be made of wood to qualify for the contest run by Sikkens/Akzo Noble Coatings, a maker of wood finishes. If the winning deck needs to be demolished, the replacement deck must also be built with wood. Contestants should submit color photos of their monstrosity and a short essay (75 to 100 words) answering the question, “Why is your deck the ugliest deck in America?” Entries may be mailed to Sikkens/Akzo Noble Coatings Ugliest Deck Contest, c/o Marketing Department, PO Box 7062, Troy, MI 48007; or submitted online at www.ugliestdeck.com. The contest runs from May 15 through July 15. For more details, go to the Web site.

Decks made of any material, not just wood, are eligible to be named the “World’s Worst Deck” in the contest run by Monarch Composite Deck & Railing Systems. Owners of decrepit decks may upload their deck photos at www.worldsworstdeck.com, or mail them, along with their name and address, to The World’s Worst Deck Contest, c/o Peake Marketing, 28588 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 200, Southfield, MI 48034. This contest has already begun and runs through August 31. — *Laurie Elden*

New National Dig-Safe Number

Dial 811 from anywhere in the country, and you should now be connected to your local “call before you dig” center. The FCC-designated number was launched this May to offer contractors and homeowners an easy-to-remember way to contact utili-

ties before digging. It does not mean, however, that there is a new national center; the number 811 simply routes callers to their existing local one-call center, which in turn will notify the utility companies. The utilities are then responsible for sending someone around to the proposed excavation site to mark the location of underground lines at no charge. Although state regulations vary, many require that you call at least two days before digging.

Some 680,000 accidents in 2004 involved underground utilities, estimates the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), an association of 1,400 excavators, utilities, public works departments, and others that was formed seven years ago to study and promote prevention of damage to buried lines.

A new Web site at www.call811.com has more information about CGA and 811, along with links to state-specific information. — L.E.

Upcoming Shows & Events

May 15–18, 2007

JLC LIVE So. California Residential Construction Show
Hanley Wood Exhibitions
800/261-7769
www.jlclive.com

September 11–14, 2007

JLC LIVE Midwest Residential Construction Show
Hanley Wood Exhibitions
Minneapolis, Minn.
800/261-7769
www.jlclive.com

October 9–12, 2007

Remodeling Show
Hanley Wood Exhibitions
Las Vegas
800/261-7769
www.theremodelingshow.com

October 30–November 2, 2007

JLC LIVE Pacific Northwest Residential Construction Show
Hanley Wood Exhibitions
Seattle, Wash.
800/261-7769
www.jlclive.com

November 27–30, 2007

International Pool & Spa Expo/Backyard Living Expo
Hanley Wood Exhibitions
Orlando, Fla.
800/261-7769
www.poolandspaexpo.com

Marketing With Purple Cows

by Kim and Linda Katwijk

Every night, I grab a marketing book to read for a half hour before my eyes involuntarily close; I manage this way to get through some four or five marketing books a year.

My latest pick was *Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable*, by Seth Godin. It turned out to be a short, light, fun read that can teach you how to stand out in your field.

Godin's premise is this: If you've seen one cow, you've seen them all. But a purple cow would be truly unique, and if you saw one standing in a pasture, you would definitely tell other people about it.

Starbucks, Southwest Airlines, and Krispy Kreme are all examples of Godin's purple cows. They stand out by being different from the competition, and so they generate fantastic word-of-mouth advertising.

I can attest to this: When Krispy Kreme opened its first store in Washington state, my kids wanted me to drive them an hour and a half just to buy a stupid doughnut. Sure, Krispy



Kreme's fresh, warm doughnuts do melt in your mouth, but there was more to it than that.

My kids had been infected by a “sneezer,” Godin's term for someone who passes on an “idea virus,” or an infectious suggestion.

Godin writes about creating sneezers, and challenges everything you thought you knew about marketing. *Purple Cow* makes the case that old marketing standards such as the Yellow Pages and newspaper ads don't work anymore, and points business owners toward techniques that do work — purple cows.

As a deck builder, I try to put a purple cow into everything I build to make it noticeable. Curves, interesting railings, and trellises are all examples of a deck builder's purple cows. If you'd like to stand out, reading *Purple Cow* might be step one.

Kim Katwijk builds decks in Olympia, Wash. He and his wife, Linda, are regular contributors to Professional Deck Builder.

Sales of pressure-treated southern pine to contractor lumberyards were “steady” in April, though they slowed mid-month on the East Coast and in the Midwest thanks to spring storms, according to the *Random Lengths Report*. The newsletter for the wood-products industry also reported that decking and fencing products “led the way” in pressure-treated sales. What does manure have in common with rice hulls, recycled grocery bags, and wood flour? It can be used to make decking. Anaerobic digesters that capture methane gas from manure to make electricity also break the manure down into a sterile fibrous

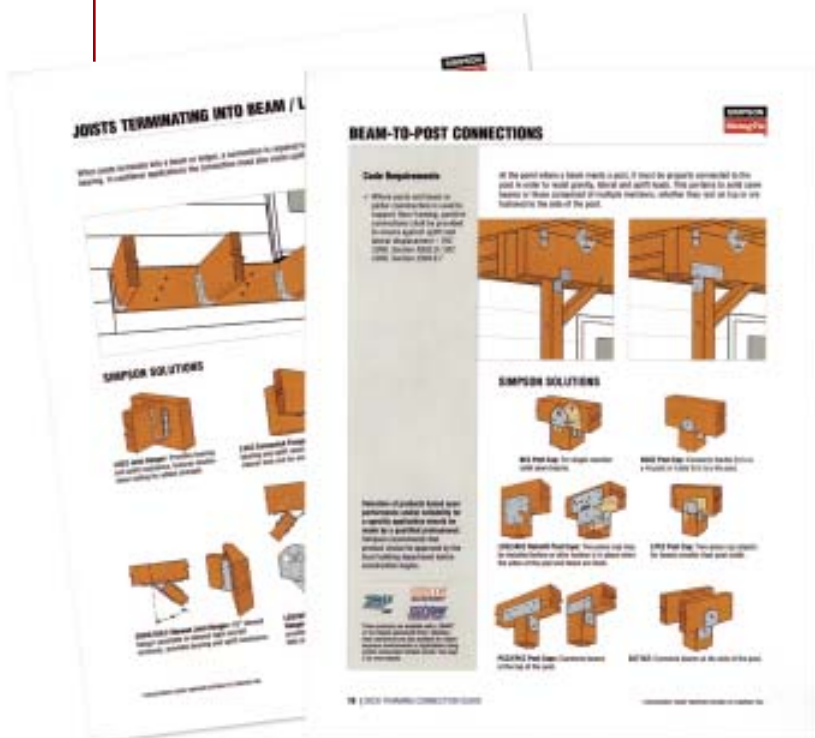
material. Researchers at Michigan State University Extension in East Lansing have combined this material with plastic to create a composite-decking prototype, which they say has met or exceeded industry standards for strength and stiffness. And, they say, it has no odor.

Thieves stole more than \$14,000 worth of new composite decking from a Habitat ReStore warehouse in Menasha, Wis., earlier this year. The decking had been donated to the store, which sells used and surplus building materials to fund local Habitat for Humanity (www.habitat.org) building projects. Although it seems that it would be difficult

to spirit away some 500 16-foot boards without detection, the crime remained unsolved as of the end of April. The Wisconsin store is one of more than 100 ReStores located throughout the U.S. and Canada.

The Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association

announced that 2006 was a banner year for the industry, with the shipment of more than 17 million grills — a healthy increase of 15 percent over 2005 sales. Looking ahead, among the trends that HPBA predicts will drive sales in 2007 is the continuing popularity of outdoor kitchens.



Free Booklet on Critical Deck Connections

Simpson Strong-Tie has just added the *Deck Framing Connection Guide* to its library of free fliers and training kits.

The 16-page booklet includes illustrations and descriptions of significant connections — such as ledger-to-house, post-to-footing, beam-to-post, joist-to-beam, and joist-to-ledger — as well as of the attachment of railing posts, stair stringers, and stair treads.

Each page features one attachment detail along with a sidebar citing the requirements of the IRC 2006 that the illustration meets. A one-page discussion of corrosion issues and another page with recommendations for retrofitting an existing deck may also offer some useful insight.

To download a copy of the guide, or to request a copy to be mailed, go to Simpson Strong-Tie's Web site at www.strongtie.com/safedeck. — L.E. ♦