

Coastal Contractor

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Water Woes

I just finished reading "Water Woes" (*Breakline*, September/October 2006). Within our lifetime (for boomers, anyway), the issue and importance of fresh-water availability (or scarcity) will outpace that of reliable energy sources. Coastal areas (particularly Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina) can seasonally count on an overabundance of freshwater in the form of precipitation during the summer months and hurricane season. Why not capture this water from roof runoff and store it in cisterns, like they do in Bermuda, or the way they did in Florida in the early 20th century? If you look at the amount of roof area in existing and developing communities, there is massive potential for water capture. While the article mentions re-use, I'm not sure it includes water capture.

This problem isn't going to go away. With the volume of new development in coastal regions, perhaps some simple and cost-effective methods for water capture and conservation are needed.

*David Plant
Toronto, Ont., Canada*

Foundation Resource

Where can I find the publication *Recommended Residential Building Construction for the Gulf Coast: Building on Strong and Safe Foundations* (mentioned in "Strong, Safe Foundations," September/October 2006)?

*John Darnell
Insurance Restoration Services
Pensacola, Fla.*

The complete publication is now available from FEMA's Information Resource Library at www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1853.



We want to hear from you!

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Please include the city, state, and a daytime phone number with your correspondence.

Durable Decks?

I always like to read the many informative articles in your publication regarding techniques for building durable outdoor structures. This being the case, when the November/December 2006 issue featured an article on deck building, I turned directly to it. What shocked me was the choice of highlighting fir decking as a durable decking material. I have been a deck designer for the past 10 years and have had the opportunity to see hundreds of old decks that are deteriorating and need to be replaced. One constant that I see is the consistent rotting of fir decking after only 8 to 10 years. Fir has very little natural resistance to rot and (in my experience) if installed with little to no space between the boards (as was pictured) will rot faster than any other deck material. The same is true of the area of the railings where the 4x4 posts meet the horizontal 2x4s. The ease of availability and workability of fir doesn't justify using it rather than more durable woods like cedar, mahogany, or ipe.

*Larry Cohen
Archadeck of Suburban Boston
Burlington, Mass.*

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