

PRODUCTS

Modular Concrete Columns

For the look of quarried stone without the weight

by Scott Gibson



A kit of interlocking concrete modules from Ply Gem promises to make short work of sprucing up deck posts, privacy fencing, and even mailbox posts.

The Column Collection is manufactured with molds taken from a Civil War-era stone fence, the company says, making the face of the blocks look much like quarried stone.

Each module is 6 inches high and 14 inches square, with a hollow center shaped to slip over a 5x5 wood column. The modules stack on top of one another without mortar — interlocking profiles on the top and bottom faces of the blocks help keep them aligned.

Rather than cast the entire block in concrete, the manufacturer uses a foam insert at the core to reduce the weight to between 28 and 30 pounds.

Ply Gem also makes a second version, called privacy columns, in which blocks have been grooved to receive fencing panels.

The modules come in just one color, called “canyon,” which is intended to complement any color in Ply Gem’s Kroy fence and ranch rail line. A column consisting of 13 blocks and a cap piece costs about \$900, the company says.

■ **Ply Gem**, 877/386-5769, kroybp.com.

Scott Gibson is a freelance writer in East Waterboro, Maine.

Low-Maintenance Fence

Cellular PVC components carry 30-year warranty



Enduris cellular PVC fencing carries a 30-year prorated warranty for stain and fade resistance, and according to the manufacturer, is as much as 40% lighter than its wood-composite competitors. The fence components — rails, 6-inch-wide pickets, and posts — are designed to be assembled together on the job site.

Rails measure 1 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches by 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. To help stabilize the fence and prevent sagging, the center rail has two channels for steel tubing, which can be ordered from Enduris or purchased locally.

Pickets are typically attached to the rails with ring-shank nails painted to match. Because the PVC has better nail-holding strength than wood, nail pops aren’t a problem, the company says.

For posts, there are four options: square vinyl post sleeves that fit over treated 4x4 wood posts, 5-inch-square posts designed for placement in concrete in the ground, and two styles of metal posts.

Fencing comes in 6- and 8-foot heights; when assembled, each fence section is 8 feet long, but rails can be cut to make shorter runs.

Available through distributors nationwide, the fencing comes in three colors — copper, agate, and granite — and costs between \$26 and \$30 per foot, depending on post style and where the fencing is purchased. — S.G.

■ **Enduris**, 888/329-7428, enduris.com.

New Fasteners

Simpson and Starborn roll out new screws



SIMPSON STRONG-TIE

STARBORN

Simpson Strong-Tie's new fastener is the XEQ self-tapping screw (photo, left). Designed specifically to attach Simpson connectors to cold-formed steel framing, it's the only fastener, the company says, that's load-rated for the L70Z and Ls70Z connectors used with Trex Elevations steel deck framing.

What makes the fasteners unique, Simpson says, is a dual heat-treating process. Screw tips are hardened so they can penetrate steel, but the core of the screw is softer and so less apt to fail from embrittlement, according to the company. Fasteners also have a proprietary corrosion-resistant coating for use outdoors.

The #10 x 3/4-inch hex-head screws come in boxes of 100 and 1,000. A box of 100 costs between \$18 and \$22.

Starborn's new entry is the white Headcote Cap-Tor, an auger-point #10 x 2 1/3-inch stainless steel screw with a star-recess drive (photo, right). It's designed for use with capstock decking and trim from Azek, Versatex, Kleer, Trex, CertainTeed, and others. Using a Smart-Bit depth setter to install the screws will prevent marring or scuffing the work surface, the company says.

The Starborn fasteners are available in lots of 100, 350, 1,050, and 1,750; pricing wasn't announced. — S.G.

■ **Simpson Strong-Tie**, 800/999-5099, strongtie.com.

■ **Starborn Industries**, 800/596-7747, starbornindustries.com.

Cable Railings

Aluminum railings that pair with wood posts



Feeney DesignRail aluminum railing can be installed between wood deck posts as an alternative to wood or plastic-composite railings.

The aluminum components are designed to create a 36-inch-high residential railing with a maximum distance of 6 feet between posts, and have a black, powdered-coated finish for impact and weather resistance. Intermediate pickets are drilled for Feeney's steel cables.

Stair-rail components can handle spans of up to 6 feet, and slopes of between 29 and 34 degrees.

Feeney may eventually make the railing available in pre-packaged kits, but for now components can be ordered individually, by contacting the company.

The full DesignRail line includes a number of other products (available in eight colors), including posts that can be surface- or fascia-mounted and a half-dozen cap-rail choices. Infill options include pickets, horizontal or vertical cable, and glass.

Feeney says its aluminum parts contain a minimum of 70% reclaimed materials and are fully recyclable. They come with a 10-year warranty.

For pricing, contact the company or visit its website. — S.G.

■ **Feeney**, 800/888-2418, www.feeneyinc.com. ♦



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