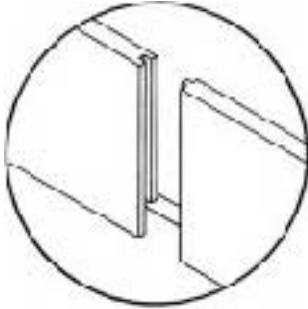


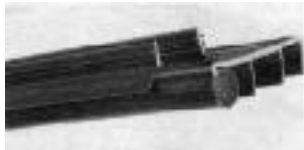
Improved Lap Siding

by Clayton DeKorne



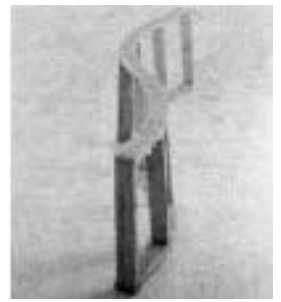
Plylap offers the stability of plywood and the natural beauty of wood. This horizontal lap siding is manufactured from APA-approved 303 siding panels so it won't swell or warp like hardboard or molded-fiber sidings. Each 8-foot length is rabbeted for the lap and back-kerfed to help reduce cupping. Tongue-and-groove ends (back-cut like on hardwood strip flooring) allow for tight butt joints and eliminate the need to locate joints over a structural member. Plylap is available in redwood, cedar, MDO, and douglas fir. For more information, contact Laco Lumber, Inc., P.O. box 1130, Woodland, CA 95685; 916/661-0812.

Slip-Coated Sweep



Many door sweeps are made of thermoplastic elastomers (TPEs) these days. You know the kind: they make the door hard to open and close and sound like firecrackers as they break over the threshold. Yet this material is preferred because it won't shrink or become brittle in cold weather. The Intek Door Sweep is also made of a composite TPE, but it is covered by a fused slip-coating that reduces friction by over 60 percent, according to the manufacturer. This will reportedly make the door easier to open and close and also improve the life of the sweep. It can be installed into a double kerf or stapled on the underside of the door. For more information, contact Intek Weatherseal Products, Inc., 800 East 10th St., Hastings, MN 55033; 612/437-7700.

Bendable Boards



For framing curved arches and spirals, Billee-Board may be the answer. The flexible polyurethane lumber is reported to feel like soft rubber erasers and can be cut, nailed, painted, screwed, and drilled like conventional wood. The 1 1/2-inch-thick framing material can bend into a 2-foot radius, and is available in a range of widths from 3 1/2 to 6 inches, and in 4 to 10-foot lengths. For more information, contact Imaginative Materials Group, 1580 Industrial Ave., Norco, CA; 714/279-8033.

A Wrist's Reach Away



This magnetic wrist band conveniently holds small screws, washers, pins, and other tiny metal parts. The Handy-Dandy Wrist Magnet has been developed by an audio engineering company to ease the aggravation of working with small, electronic parts. Electricians and carpenters may also find it useful, especially for keeping parts near at hand when working on a ladder or in a crawl space. The thin, square magnet is set on an adjustable, nylon-web band. It is available for \$5.49 plus \$1.25 shipping (in the U.S.) and can be ordered directly from Yale Audio of Florida Corp., P.O. Box 2661, Tampa, FL 33601; 813/876-6789.

Drywall Gasket



Airtight Drywall Approach (ADA) construction can be simplified using the ADA Gasket. This soft, EPDM rubber gasket can be easily stapled between the drywall and interior framing surfaces where cold air can get in. It is also an economical and environmentally safe alternative to using CFC foam sealants around doors and windows. The gasket will compress to less than 1/8 inch and reportedly will not bow the drywall or pop fasteners. ADA Gasket is imported from Sweden, yet it is still competitively priced (18 cents per foot) with many building gaskets. For more information, contact Resource Conservation technology, Inc., 2633 N. Calvert St., Baltimore, MD 21218; 301/366-1146.

Well Screened



If it's old-style wooden doors you're after, check out the New England Screen Door Company. The company manufactures premium-quality wooden screen doors in a variety of traditional styles. They are made of South American cedar, a clear, straight-grained, and durable hardwood. No laminations of finger joints are used and the joinery is a deep mortise and full tenon that is glued and pegged. Removable screen/storm panels are used instead of the old-fashioned tacking method, however. Prices—ranging from \$300 to \$400—include spring catches, ceramic pulls, and a roller catch, all in a variety of finishes. For more information, contact New England Screen Door Co., P.O. Box 128, Bristol, Maine 04539; 207/563-1588.

Copper Shakes



Attractive copper roofing installs like asphalt shingles. Reinke Shakes Solid Copper Shingles have a small 1/4-inch corrugation that, the manufacturer claims, makes the shingles resistant to severe wind and hail. In fact, the shingles have reportedly passed the hurricane test of the South Florida Building code on a building with a 2:12 pitch. The corrugated surface is safe to work on and the shingles require no crimping or soldering. Lap lines and nail holes are stamped out on each 10x12-inch shingle. Costs (between \$825 and \$875 per square) are comparable to the installed price for standing-seam roofs in the Northeast. Prices for the shingles include copper nails. For more information, contact Reinke Shakes, 4415 Lover's Lane, Dallas, TX 75225; 800/228-4315.

Non-Toxic Solvent



An organic cleaner can make washing up from messy jobs safer. United Parts Cleaner 692 is a citrus-based solvent that is completely non-toxic, according to the manufacturer. United claims it can cut through tough grease, tar, dirt, and gummy residues including oil-based paints and construction adhesives and can be disposed of safely without special precautions. It is a safe alternative to mineral spirits for cleaning paint off your hands. Mineral spirits emit noxious fumes and can be readily absorbed through your skin, causing health problems. For more information, contact United Industries, Inc., 155 S. Route 53, Addison, IL 60101; 800/323-7137. ■