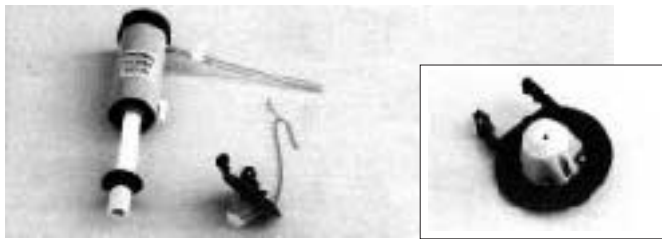


## Water-Saving Flapper

by Sal Alfano



Lowering the water level in a toilet tank saves water, but it also reduces the force of the flush. Often this means you have to flush twice, so any savings go, well, down the drain. The cone-shaped *Frugal Flush Early-Closure Flapper* solves the problem with an adjustable inlet hole that allows water to displace trapped air. As water fills the flapper, it becomes non-buoyant and rotates closed. Consequently, only part of the tank is drained, but at full force.

Another device called the *Frugal Flush Fill Valve* reduces waste in the refill cycle. Standard fill valves run continuously until the tank is full, diverting about 25% of the fill water to the bowl. This is more than enough when the whole tank must be refilled, so the excess water flows down the drain. But some low-flow

devices shorten the cycle so much that a wasteful second flush is needed just to seal the trap. The *Frugal Flush Fill Valve* solves this problem by diverting more water (36%) to the bowl.

Both *Frugal Flush* products are standard equipment on all 1.6-gallon toilets produced by Coast Foundry and Manufacturing Company, the largest supplier of toilets to brand-name plumbing manufacturers. According to the manufacturer, the two components can also be used to retrofit 95% of the toilets in the U.S. Used together, they reduce water usage from 7, 5, or 3 1/2 gallons to just over 2 gallons. The flapper sells for \$15.95; the flapper with valve sells for \$29.95. For more information, contact *Frugal Flush*, 1209 E. Washington, Suite 4, Phoenix, AZ 85034; 602/253-6275.

## Protected Power

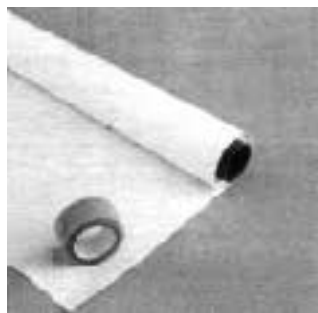


If you've ever had a GFCI trip because of moisture around the plug, you'll appreciate the *Protect-A-Plug* weather-protected outlet cover (Intermatic, Intermatic Plaza, Spring Grove, IL 60081; 815/675-2321). The backing plate mounts

on single or double-gang electrical boxes, in either a vertical or horizontal position. Two plastic coverplate inserts fit either duplex or GFCI outlets, and a clear plastic cover closes against a gasket to seal moisture out. The cover hinges at the top for easy access to the plugs, and the power cords exit through a slot in the bottom. The *Protect-A-Plug* is available in two different cover depths, one for 14-gauge and smaller cords and another for 12-gauge or larger cords. Cost ranges between \$20 and \$45.

If you leave your tools overnight on remodeling jobs, you might want to get ahold of a *PlugHugger* (Unique Products, 2228 S. El Camino Real, Ste. 175, San Mateo, CA 94403; 415/358-1930). A turn of the key locks it onto the end of any two- or three-prong 110-volt power cord to prevent it from being plugged in. At \$10 each, I can't think of a cheaper or easier way to protect against unauthorized or accidental power-up of electrical equipment.

## Durable Poly



As an above-grade vapor barrier or below-grade moisture barrier, *DuraTuff* is hard to beat. According to the manufacturer, the high-density polyethylene sheeting is flexible to -40°F and UV stabilized, so it can be used for protection from the weather, too. The standard 10x100-foot rolls are seamless and come in three colors — clear, white, and black. The stock thicknesses of 3, 3 1/2, and 4 mil resist tearing, and other thicknesses can be special ordered. Costs range between 5¢ (3 mil) and 6 1/2¢ (4 mil) per square foot, less in quantities over 25 rolls. As companion products, the company also makes two kinds of tape that it claims are waterproof. Both come in rolls up to 3 inches wide by 36 yards long. Like the sheeting, *DT-Tape* and reinforced *MTW-Tape* are made of high-density, UV-stabilized poly, and have flame-retardant adhesives whose bond is said to improve with age. Single rolls sell for \$23.50 and \$38.60 respectively, with substantial discounts for case lots. Order directly from Yunker Industries, Plastics Division, 200 Sheridan Springs Rd., Lake Geneva, WI 53147; 414/248-6232.

## Sandable Setting Compound



Many drywall tapers steer away from setting compounds because they're difficult to sand. But the manufacturer of *Easysand* claims it can be sanded almost as easily as

readymix. The new, lightweight setting compound is a powder that you mix by hand with water. Its chemical driers and low shrinkage allow same-day joint finishing even in high humidity, and make it a good choice for skim coats, plaster patches, or specialty dry-wall joints and accessories. It's available in five setting times (from 20 minutes to 6 hours) from U.S. Gypsum Co., Dept. 122-ZZ, 101 S. Wacker, Chicago, IL 60606; 800/874-4968.

## Nailless Deck Clip

A small, heavy-gauge, galvanized steel fastener called the *Deck Claw* makes it possible to fasten 5/4 or 2x deck boards to joists without leaving a lot of exposed nails or screws. Installation is easy: drive one of the "claws" into the edge of the decking, apply



downward pressure on the board to make sure it's tight to the framing, and nail the fastener to the side of the joist. On subsequent courses, repeat the process after first tapping the board into the exposed claws from the previous course. Right- and left-hand versions are useful at butt joints and allow you to conceal the fastener on the outermost joist in the frame (a case contains 50 each of right- and left-hand fasteners). The fastener is not made to be used on diagonally-laid boards, although builders have been known to twist it to fit. At 25¢ each, the *Deck Claw* is more expensive than nails or screws, but leaves a completely unblemished deck surface.

To find a source of supply, contact The Blind Nail Co., Box 782, Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, S9V 1C1, Canada; 403/875-3325. ■