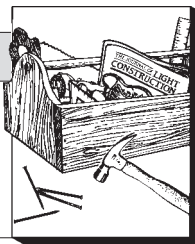


Builders' Accessories Solve Job-Site Jams

by Clayton DeKorne



Nail Biter



Freud recently introduced a space-age-looking *Deck and Framing Blade* that can cut through nails without slowing down. In fact, when it cuts through a nail, you don't even hear the familiar high-pitched whine that usually means you've just wasted another blade. According to the manufacturer, the teeth are made from a specially formulated carbide that is more resilient than conventional C-4 carbide and less likely to chip. The 7 1/4-inch thick-kerf blade has multiple slots, designed to keep the blade cool and reduce run out. A "reverse tooth" reportedly clears chips from the kerf, adding to the blade's ability to cut fast through pressure-treated, green, and wet or frozen framing lumber. For more information, contact Freud, P.O. Box 7187, High Point, NC 27264; 919/434-3171.

Steel-Toed High-Tops



Iron Age *Sport/Work Shoes* combine the comfort and support of a sneaker with the protection of a work boot. According to the manufacturer, these heavy-duty leather high-tops sport a cushioned heel which fits the contour of your foot, a padded heel strike and arch supports to absorb shock, and a low-profile steel toe that meets ANSI requirements. If white or black high-tops don't match your style, a low-top version is available. Iron Age makes a wide variety of protective shoes (yes, you can get steel-toed wing tips) and boots (how about a pair of protective cowboy boots?). For more information, contact Iron Age Protective

Company, 2406 Woodmere Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15205; 412/922-7000.

Fish Bit



Remodeling wiring might be a whole lot simpler with the *Fish Bit* — a long flexible drill bit made for fishing wires and cables through walls and ceilings. The bit has an aggressive self-feeding boring tip brazed to a 4 1/2- or 6-foot-long shaft. The bit is available in 3/8-, 1/2-, 9/16-, and 3/4-inch diameters. Working in a wall box opening, the bit can be "steered" with a guide horizontally through enclosed studs, or vertically through unseen plates and blocking. The bit has an eyehole at each end to attach wire or additional fish tape. The Fish Bit sells for between \$25 and \$40. The steering guide costs an additional \$20. For more information, contact Jack and Jill of All Trades, 51 Florida St., Farmingdale, NY 11735; 516/845-1029.

Simple Scriber



The McGrath *Scribing Guide* is a little-known English joiner's tool for scribing from woodwork and countertops to uneven walls and surfaces. This simple cast-aluminum jig replaces the grade-school compass frequently used stateside. The jig holds a pencil at a fixed angle and has an L-shaped leg, which extends up to 1 3/8 inches from the pencil-point. For longer

scribing, you can add a scrap of 1x in place of the leg. Unlike a compass, the Scribing Guide stays square to the wall as you draw a line. A thumbscrew holds the leg secure at an even distance, and won't collapse like the legs of an inexpensive compass. Using the \$16 guide, I've been able to scribe a perfect fit in one pass, where previously I would have spent time fine-tuning my line. For more information, contact Robert Larson Co., 33 Dorman Ave., San Francisco, CA 94124; 415/821-1021.

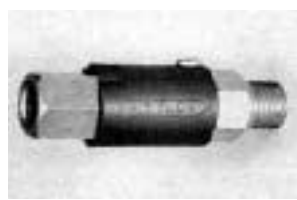
Piggy Backup Air



Carrying two air tanks on a rolling dolly, the *Thomas Air Pac* is made to boost the capacity of a small compressor. When a small compressor is strapped on, you gain an additional 7 cubic feet of stored air, which is enough to run an extra framing nailer with a typical small 1 1/2-hp compressor. (Without the Air Pac, a 1 1/2-hp compressor with an air delivery of about 6 cfm can handle one framing gun or two finish guns without running overtime.) The Air Pac is designed to be used with an oil-less compressor, so the dolly and compressor can be tilted vertically or horizontally. This makes the setup more maneuverable than most wheelbarrow-style air compressors. Of course, your small compressor can always be detached when it comes time for pickup work. For more information, contact Thomas Industries, Power Air Div., 1419 Illinois Ave., Shebogan, WI 53082-0029; 800/558-7721.

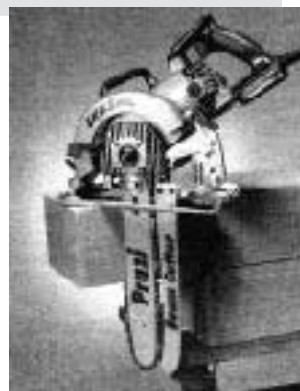
Spot Regulator

A *Spot Regulator* is a simple device to adjust the air pressure at your finish gun, so you don't have to run back to the compressor to change the depth of the nail set. To adjust the air pressure, just slide back the aluminum sleeve and



twist the hex body in or out; then lock the sleeve back in position. The regulator adjusts from 50 to 145 psi. Once set, the regulator will also protect your air guns if the air pressure of the compressor accidentally gets turned up. The 3-inch-long in-line regulator installs between the nipple and the gun and includes a fine screen which serves as a filter to keep sawdust or other debris, which might get in your hoses, from getting in the gun. Two sizes are available to fit 1/4-inch and 3/8-inch fittings. For more information, contact EMC, P.O. Box 37980, Omaha, NE 68137-0980; 402/333-2590.

Beam Cutter



The *Prazi Beam Cutter* is one of the simplest and most useful saw accessories to come down the pike in years. The chain saw blade attachment bolts onto any worm-drive saw, creating a specialty framing saw that can be used for gang-cutting stair stringers, studs, and rafters; chopping solid-sawn and engineered beams; and slicing stress-skin panels. With the bar set square to the saw shoe, the Beam Cutter will cut to a depth of 12 inches. At 45 degrees, the blade will cut just over 8 inches. The cut's a little rough, but, hey, this is a chain saw, not a finish blade. A similar saw on the market, the *Lin-ear Link*, requires an extensive conversion that makes it impractical for switching from circular saw to a beam cutter in the field. The Prazi cutter, however, can bolt onto the saw without removing any parts. The conversion takes about as long as changing a blade. Manufacturer's list price for the Prazi Beam Cutter is \$149. For more information, contact Prazi USA, 11812 Western Ave., Stanton, CA 90680; 800/821-0211.

Remodeling-Size Tile Cutter



If you do a fair share of tile work, but can't justify the cost of a wet saw, check out the *Rubi Tile Cutter*. The Swedish-made aluminum and stainless-steel tile cutter scores the tile and then snaps it clean. Each cutter comes with three scoring points: the standard scoring wheel, a punching tool for cutting outlet holes in the center of a tile, and a 45-degree mitering tool for bevel cuts. To break the tile after scoring the surface, you use a built-in "ram separator," which applies even, downward pressure on both sides of the scored line, while an ascending cam pushes up directly beneath the cutline. A stop holds the tile's position for repeat cuts and adjusts to any angle up to 45 degrees. An

optional drill, which mounts on the guide rods, and carbide cutters can cut holes in the tile from $1\frac{1}{16}$ to $3\frac{11}{16}$ inches in diameter. Three models, ranging from \$130 to \$240, are available to cut tile up to $\frac{9}{16}$ inches thick. For paving tiles up to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches thick, you can use the Rubi Maxi Separator after the tile has been scored. For more information, contact Felker, 17311 Edwards Rd., Cerritos, CA 90701; 213/404-0380.

Portable Mixer



Leave it to the British, who build far more with stone, brick, block, and concrete, to make a rugged, portable concrete mixer. The *Walk-*

er Mixer is cleverly designed in a number of ways. The unique drive-mechanism has a V-belt that wraps around the middle of the mixing drum and is driven by the pulley-end of an enclosed reduction gear. The gear, in turn, is powered by either a gas engine (choose between Robin, Honda, or Briggs & Stratton), or an electric motor (the 110-volt single-phase motor is adequate, but 220-volt, or 440-volt three-phase motors are also available). The heavy-gauge steel stand and motor fold up to fit inside the plastic mixing barrel, making a 40-pound package that is small enough to carry in a hatchback. Assembly reportedly takes just a few moments. All the connectors have thumb screws and don't require any tools. The drum is made from a "punishing resistant," UV-stabilized polyethylene that can be cleaned easily, but should you forget, cured concrete can be cracked off by flexing the drum. Two sizes are available — one mixes up to $3\frac{1}{2}$ cubic feet of concrete, the other up to $5\frac{1}{2}$ cubic feet. For more information, contact Walker Mixers USA, 1185 Ocean Ave., Oakland, CA 94608; 510/547-8260. ■