

Products

Cheap Flood Insurance. Floodchek *washing machine hoses* are made from industrial-grade hose and machined brass couplings. The manufacturer is so confident they won't spring a leak it offers a 20-year warranty — and reports that it has yet to receive a claim. The hoses are sold in 5-foot lengths for \$40 a pair and in 7-foot lengths for \$44 a pair.

Floodchek Corp., 800/845-9089, floodchek.com.

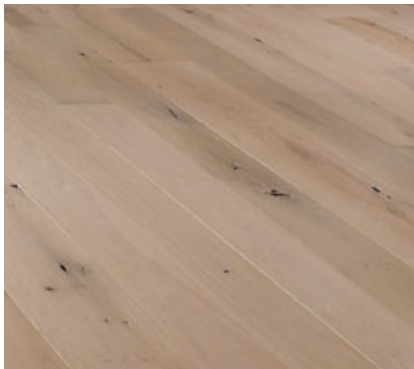


Three Boxes in One. One-piece polymer construction makes the *MH Tuff Box* leakproof, says the maker — an advantage over conventional sheet-metal diffusers. Installers should appreciate the product's versatility: Each of the available sizes (6x6, 8x8, and 10x10) has a stepped collar that lets it connect to three different diameters of flexible ductwork.



Unneeded collars snap off with the twist of a screwdriver. Prices range from \$5 to \$8.

Airtec Products Corp., 800/324-7832, airtecproducts.com.



New Old Floors. *Reclaimed Hardwood Flooring* from HomerWood is milled from old-growth red and white oak salvaged from condemned barns. Rather than erase imperfections during the milling process, the company conserves the holes, cracks, and kerfs that give old lumber its character. Material costs range from \$14 to \$25 per square foot.

HomerWood Hardwood Flooring, 814/827-3855, homerwood.com.



Simpler Solar. Cost and complexity are the two main reasons you don't see a photovoltaic array on every rooftop in America (except in Seattle). *Solar in a Box* simplifies the installation process and reduces labor costs, says the maker. In addition to a ready-to-go AC solar-panel assembly, the modular kit includes all necessary cables, connectors, and roof mounts. The builder just needs to provide home-run wiring and circuit breakers. (A separate kit has all the materials needed for future expansion.) The price to builders varies from \$3.95 to \$4.50 per kilowatt.

Ready Solar, 877/817-3239, readysolar.com.

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Safer Storage. It's no myth that cedar can protect clothing from moths, says the maker of *CedarSafe Natural ClosetLiner*. The company's website includes a link to an entomological study that concludes that aromatic eastern red cedar repels not only moths, but roaches and silverfish as well (no word on bedbugs). Solid cedar planking forms the heart of the company's line, but manufactured panels, moldings, and smaller items like drawer liners are also available. CedarSafe solid closet planks are packaged in 15-square-foot boxes that cost \$25 to \$30.

Giles & Kendall, 800/225-6738, cedarsafeclosets.com.



Simplified Siding. The benefits of rain-screen siding are beyond dispute, but getting the details right can be tricky. Instead of leaving it up to the builder to select the various components, *Ceraclad* provides the whole package. Its prefinished fiber-cement siding is fastened using $\frac{9}{16}$ -inch-thick panel clips, which create an air cavity between siding and housewrap. At the bottom of the wall, a perforated starter strip gives water a way out. Ceraclad siding comes in a variety of colors and textures and costs about \$6 per square foot.

Panasonic Electric Works Corp., 425/883-9290, ceraclad.com.



Versatile Ventilation. Many people don't realize that a dehumidifier is as costly to operate as a room air conditioner. In some cases — depending on the season and location — a fan might be a better idea. The *Xchanger Basement Fan* requires only 35 watts to power a pair of reversible 90-cfm fans that can be adjusted to exhaust humidity, bring in fresh air, or do both at the same time. The unit is designed to install through the rim joist of 16-inch-on-center floor joists. A ducting kit is available. Prices for the Xchanger range from \$200 to \$250.

Tjernlund Products, 800/255-4208, tjernlund.com.



Skylight Dimmer. Tube skylights are a great way to bring natural light into interior spaces. But what if somebody wants to take a nap? For those times when sunlight — or even moonlight — is too intense, ODL recently introduced the *Solar Powered Dimmer*. The manufacturer says the



accessory can be retrofitted onto all of its 10-inch tubular skylights and some of its competitors' products. A three-button remote operates both the dimmer and an LED nightlight. Power is generated by a small solar panel with rechargeable niMH batteries as backup. The dimmer costs \$130.

ODL, 866/635-4968, odl.com.

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Liquid Housewrap. *StoGuard* is a liquid coating that's applied with a sprayer directly onto wood or gypsum-based sheathing. The maker claims that the coating is compatible with all common types of siding and exterior finishes; that it qualifies as both an air and a moisture barrier; and that it won't rip or blow off. Installation costs range from \$1 to \$1.20 per square foot.

Sto Corp., 800/221-2397, stocorp.com.



Furniture for the Bath. Although designers routinely convert old dressers into bath vanities, the units seldom age well in wet conditions.

Capri Bath Furniture looks antique but is built to last in moist environments. According to the maker, the modular collection — 36- and 48-inch vanities and 12- and 24-inch bridges — can be configured to work in almost any space. Matching mirrors are also available.

The basic 36-inch vanity sells to contractors for about \$1,100.

Xylem Group, 866/395-8112, xylem.biz.

Stylish Protection. Some safety equipment is specific to certain conditions or tasks, but eye protection should be worn all the time. *Varsity Eyewear* glasses weigh less than an ounce and have adjustable nosepieces and a sporty wraparound design. They come in a variety of colors for indoor and outdoor uses (all models block harmful sunlight) and can be found online for as little as \$4 a pair.

Gateway Safety, 800/822-5347, gatewaysafety.com.



Efficient Cans. *LEDme Recessed Downlights* offer the energy efficiency and life span of LED technology concealed within a discreet design.

They're available in 2-, 3-, and 4-inch sizes — in round or square shapes — with housings for new construction or retrofit fits. The 2-inch luminaries can be dimmed from 100 percent to 15 percent with an electronic low-voltage dimmer, and the larger sizes dim to 1 percent with an incandescent or electronic dimmer. Prices range from \$600 to \$420.

WAC Lighting, 800/526-2588, waclighting.com.

