

Products



Sorghum Board

Kirei Board contains sorghum, a food grass. The stalks — what's left after the edible portion has been harvested — are cut up, mixed with a non-formaldehyde isocyanate adhesive, and cross-laminated in layers. The material comes in 3-foot by 6-foot panels and 1-foot by 6-foot boards, and in thicknesses from 1/2 inch to 1 1/8 inches. It costs \$10 to \$14 per square foot.

Kirei, 619/236-9924, kireiusa.com.



Insulated Lumber

Trus Joist *TJ Insulated Structural Framing Components* make it a bit easier to build energy-efficient structures. The line includes R-17 headers and R-30 corners for 2x6 walls, and 2 1/2-inch-thick R-10 rim board assemblies. Components combine TimberStrand LSL and Dow Thermax insulation. Cost varies, but the maker estimates an average cost of around \$14.50 per linear foot.

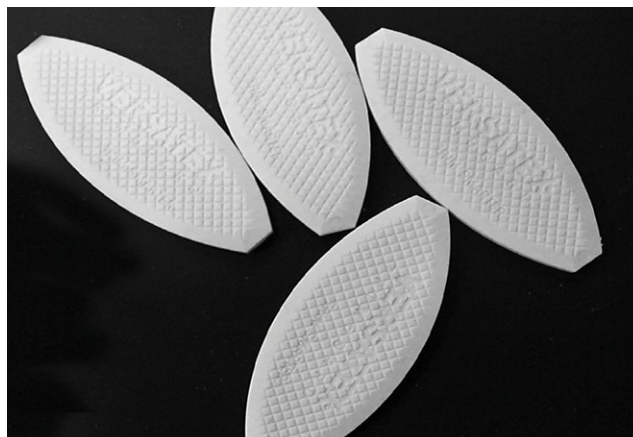
Weyerhaeuser, 888/453-8358, woodbywy.com.



Lateral Deck Anchor

The *DeckLok* anchor is designed for lateral connections on exterior decks — attaching the deck ledger to the home's rim joist, fastening stair stringers in place, and securing posts. It satisfies the IBC requirement that the post resist a force of 500 pounds at a point 36 inches above the deck surface. A 16-gauge hot-dip galvanized anchor costs \$10, a 316 stainless steel version \$15.

Screw Products, 877/844-8880, deck-lok.com.



Pass the Biscuits

Versatex has added #20 *Plastic Biscuits* to its lineup of exterior trim products. Made for joining PVC trim boards, the biscuits are installed using a standard biscuit joiner. They're sold in boxes of 25 or 250 and work best with a PVC-compatible adhesive, whether the manufacturer's *Weld-On* product or another solvent-based adhesive. Cost is 45 cents per biscuit.

Versatex, 724/857-1111, versatex.com.

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Backlit LED

The TerraLux *Decorative LED* is a 4-watt replacement flood for the golfball-sized 20-watt MR16 halogen. The typical LED doesn't look as nice in a pendant fixture as a conventional halogen bulb, mostly because it doesn't cast the same sort of multidirectional glow; but the designers of the TerraLux have addressed this problem by putting small LED light sources on fins at the side of the bulb. Light output and temperature are equivalent to the MR16, according to the company. Cost is \$30 per bulb.

TerraLux, 303/442-4960, terraluxillumination.com.



Stud-Bay Windows

Geometrics Windows fit into 16-inch stud bays. They're made from ASA (a fade-resistant polymer used as cap stock for decking products) and come in 27-inch and 36-inch heights, with tops that are rectangular (\$250), full-radius "Cathedral" (\$300), or half-radius "Eyebrow" (\$280). They can be installed in various configurations and have interlocking flanges; exterior casings must be trimmed and have cutting guides on the back. The $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch-thick low-E glazing has a U-value of .29.

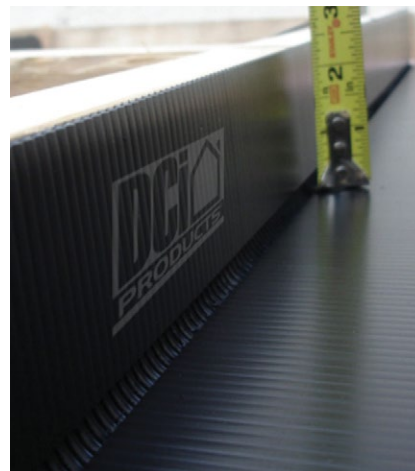
Geometrics Windows, 855/809-7179, geometricwindows.com.



Brick-Mold Flange

A lot of guys "flash" brick-mold doors and windows by running a bead of caulk down the back. *Straight Flash VF* (for "versatile flange") is configured to serve as a real flashing flange. This self-adhered Tyvek flashing membrane has perforated release paper on both sides; you peel off half of one side, stick it to the back of the brick mold, peel off the same half of the opposite side, then put the door or window in the opening. A 6-inch by 125-foot roll costs \$160.

Dupont, 800/448-9835, dupont.com.

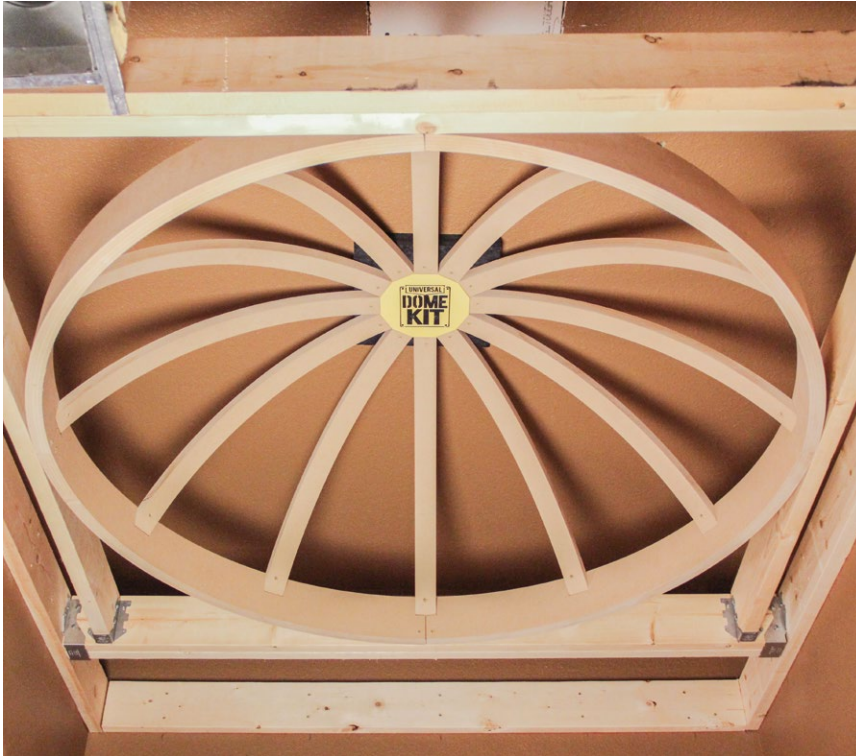


Strong Foam Baffle

Smart Baffle rigid insulation is made from 4-mm-thick corrugated plastic. It comes in versions for 16-inch and 24-inch framing and is shipped as a flat panel with bendable flanges that are stapled to the rafters or trusses. According to the company, the product can support spray-foam expanding insulation without buckling, and can be installed before or after the roof sheathing. A 3-foot-long piece costs about \$4 for the 16-inch version and \$5.25 for the 24-inch version.

DCI Products, 800/622-4455, dciproducts.com.

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Easy Dome

A recessed ceiling dome can add an elegant touch to an entry or dining room. Domes are usually framed from site-cut plywood strips, a job that takes time and skill — but the *Universal Dome Kit* requires less of both. The installer need only frame the rectangular ceiling box (and a dome beam, if necessary); the kit comes with curved MDF pieces for framing the dome. A stock kit sized for a 5-foot by 5-foot ceiling box sells for \$300; custom sizes are also available.

Archways & Ceilings, 877/303-2263, archwaysandceilings.com.



Slab Repair

Abatron's *BestBond Crack Repair* liquid epoxy concrete-repair compound is applied with a standard caulk gun. Because it will slump when applied on walls, it's recommended for horizontal applications, like cracks in garage or basement floors. It dries to a hard plastic, so it shouldn't be used where a flexible joint is needed. A 16-ounce tube fills 10 to 15 linear feet of a 1/4-inch by 1/4-inch crack and costs \$13.

Abatron, 800/445-1754, abatron.com.



Long-Term Efficiency

Rinnai's *Ultra Series* condensing tankless water heater has an energy factor of .96. The secondary heat exchanger is at the bottom so condensate can't leak onto other components. "We're following the boiler world, which uses this design for long-term reliability," the product manager told us. Since the Ultra's logic circuit can be wired to a recirculating pump, the pump and heater run only when the loop needs to be warmed. Cost: \$1,830.

Rinnai, 800/621-9419, rinnai.us.



High-Tech Thermostat

Programming heating and cooling schedules is easy with the *Comfort Sync* thermostat, says the maker. It can be operated over the Internet with a computer, smart phone, or tablet, and features a high-definition touch screen, a one-touch "Away" mode for energy savings, and maintenance and repair alerts. It comes in several colors and patterns and costs around \$225, not including installation.

Allied Air Enterprises, 800/448-5872, armstrongair.com.