

Accordion Screens

In most coastal regions, screens and screen doors are an absolute must to keep out flies and mosquitoes. But they also impede the view; hence, the search for a practical, retractable screen. The **Accordia Retractable Screen System** offers a pleated screen that completely folds out of the way. The screens are guided on tracks. The manufacturer offers 29 different tracks colors, and custom colors can be special-ordered to match any paint color so that the tracks can blend in with any opening. Accordia Screen Systems fit windows, single doors, French doors, and even openings of up to 9 feet in height and to more than 50 feet in width. According to the U.S. distributor, Screens, Inc., the Italian-made screen system has proved remarkably popular in markets overseas. For more information, contact Screens, Inc., 623/869-0964, www.screensretract.com.



ACCORDIA RETRACTABLE SCREEN SYSTEM



SIMPSON STRONG-TIE DECK SPACERS

Ingenious Deck Spacers

On uncovered composite decks, the decking needs to be spaced to allow for drainage and to accommodate room for expansion of decking materials. That's where **Simpson Strong-Tie Deck Spacers** come in. These ingenious little plastic "hats" (or should we say "houses"?) easily clip onto deck joists during installation (no tools needed for these;

just slip them on). The UV-resistant plastic will ensure an even 1/4-inch spacing, and the shape of the spacer is designed to shed water to protect the tops of the joist. Deck Spacers are available in three colors — gray, brown, and tan — to match common composite decking. For more information, contact Simpson Strong-Tie, 800/999-5099, www.strongtie.com.

Rolling Along

Expanding its line of StormBreaker Plus impact-resistant windows, Simonton Windows has introduced a line of **Horizontal Rollers** — a window style that is popular in coastal regions — that are designed specifically to hold up in harsh coastal climates. The downfall of most horizontal rollers and horizontal sliders is corrosion of the wheel and track in a wet, salt-air environment. Simonton solves this by using rollers immersed in a tough low-friction, UV-resistant resin coating. The coating (similar to Teflon) reportedly resists salt-air corrosion better than most low-friction coatings. The vinyl-framed windows have a standard DP50 rating and can be ordered with low-e glass as an upgrade option. A variety of sizes are available — from a minimum of 25 inches wide by 19 inches high up to a maximum unit size of 73 inches wide by 62 inches high. An L-bracket on the bottom holds the fixed portion of the window unit in place, and units can be ordered in both the "XO" and "OX" opening configurations. For information, contact Simonton Windows, 800/746-6686, www.simonton.com.



STORMBREAKER HORIZONTAL ROLLERS

Weather-Resistant Wood Doors

The Simpson Door Company recently introduced a **Performance Series** line of exterior wood doors featuring a “WaterBarrier Technology” that promises to improve the durability of wood French doors exposed to harsh climates. The new doors are faced with Medium Density Overlay (MDO) and PVC on the outside of the door. At the bottom of the door, which is typically prone to the greatest deterioration caused by splash back, the Performance Series doors have a composite block material, dubbed “UltraBlock,” that is finger-jointed into the bottom of a door’s stiles. According to the manufacturer, this feature eliminates rot, minimizes separations, and improves the warp resistance of bottom rail and lower stile components. The MDO exterior is coated with a thermoset acrylic latex primer topcoat, which provides a superior base for applying either water or alkyd-based paints. Meanwhile, the interior face can remain natural or be painted; the manufacturer claims “a nearly limitless choice of wood species.” For more information, contact the Simpson Door Company, 800/746-7766, www.simpsondoor.com.



SIMPSON PERFORMANCE SERIES DOORS

Houdini Hutch

Inventor Ken Hoffman recalls the devastation of Katrina when explaining his inspiration for the **Hurricane Hutch**: how do you save personal valuables when the house itself cannot be saved? Safes, which aren’t exactly watertight, wouldn’t suffice. But Hoffman’s Hurricane Hutch, with its gasket-protected interior-locking mechanism, is based on a design conceived by a slot-machine manufacturer that Hoffman contracts to construct each order. Slot machines, apparently, are designed to be both safe from fire and flood, not to mention theft. In a similar fashion, the Hurricane Hutch comes with five body-welded steel latches to be screwed into a home or building’s foun-

dition with 6- by 1/2-inch concrete anchors (removable only with a special tool). Few safes (or slot machines, for that matter) get tested for wind and debris resistance by the Wind and Science Center at Texas Tech, but the Hurricane Hutch passed the impact testing with a 15-pound 2x4 propelled at 250 mph with only a dent resulting, easily meeting Dade County tests for wind-borne-debris impact. Further waterproof testing has been conducted by the manufacturer for salt-spray corrosion resistance, water pressure under a 130-mph wind pressure, and submersion in water. The hutch’s welded seams and 11-gauge



HURRICANE HUTCH

powder-coated steel seems to survive it all. Each Hurricane Hutch can fit about two desktop-size PCs, and its price of \$1,499 includes shipping and anchors; colors, sizes, and bulk prices are negotiable. For more information, contact The Hurricane Hutch, 908/251-3041, www.hurricanehutch.com.

Practical Porch Railing

Fypon offers **Quick Rail** and **Quick Post Systems** made of a multilayered PVC composite, which the manufacturer claims increases the strength of these rails and posts. Ideal for harsh outdoor weather conditions, this low-maintenance rail system reportedly will not decay, warp, fade, chip, or splinter. The rail system comes prepackaged in kits that include top and bottom rails, balusters, brackets, covers, and screws. Both square and colonial balusters in white or tan are available. The material may be left unpainted to reduce the need for maintenance. The posts, made of polyurethane reinforced with PVC, are as impervious to moisture, decay, and insects as any Fypon product. Two sizes — 5- by 5-inch (with a load-bearing capacity of 2,500 pounds) and 6- by 6-inch (with a load-bearing capacity of 5,000 pounds) — are available. The post system comes with structural metal inserts designed to connect the railing to the posts to meet the 200-pound outward force required by the IRC. For more information, contact Fypon, 800/446-3040, www.fypon.com.



FYPON QUICK RAIL AND QUICK POST

PVC Porch Decking



AZEK PORCH

Azek now offers a line of cellular PVC decking made especially for covered porches. According to the manufacturer, these 1x4 T&G porch planks are much less susceptible to dimensional movement than many composite decking materials, so they can be installed relatively tightly and will maintain their spacing. Azek Porch combines cellular PVC with flax fibers, which do not absorb water and

are naturally decay resistant. The end product provides an easy-to-clean surface that resists stains, moisture, mold, scuffs, scratching, and fading. Like other Azek cellular-PVC products, **Azek Porch** can be installed with traditional woodworking tools. For more information, contact Azek Building Products, 877/275-2935, www.azek.com.

Impact-Resistant Acrylic Block

Privacy windows that let in light but don't allow a view prove useful in homes on densely developed coastal lots, and the **Hy-Lite StormBlocker** line of acrylic block windows simplify the installation of glass block-type glazing. The installation is not any more complicated than installing any other window unit, as the acrylic blocks come preassembled in a frame with a nail fin. Available in six window sizes, the fixed Hy-Lite StormBlocker windows feature a polycarbonate reinforced core and high-strength aluminum frame that allow the StormBlocker line to resist large-missile impacts in accordance with Miami-Dade County testing requirements. The 2-inch-thick acrylic blocks provide good resistance to heat flow, so despite the aluminum frame, these windows have a decent U-value (.37). However, the Solar Heat Gain Coefficient is nothing to write home about (.58). To resist solar heat gain and keep cooling costs low, large overhangs or awnings to shade these windows should be used in locations where these windows will see extensive exposure to the sun. For more information, contact Hy-Lite Products, 800/423-3032, www.hy-lite.com.



HY-LITE STORMBLOCKER WINDOWS