

Letters

Nailing Wide Cedar Shingles

To the Editor:

You omitted an important step in your installation instructions for wide shingles (*On the House*, 4/01). When installing cedar shingles over 8 inches wide, place the shingle face down and score it lengthwise in the middle. Bend it until it cracks, but don't break it completely in two. Then the shingle should be nailed as shown in your illustration, with the two center nails on either side of the score.

All cedar shingles wider than 8 inches will eventually split. By scoring the shingle in advance you can control where the split will occur. When the shingle splits, the two center nails will prevent the two resulting pieces from curling. Without the score, the shingle will almost certainly split outside the two center nails.

I learned this trick from Bruce Lenahan, a builder in Norwell, Mass.

Chris Dowd
Biddeford, Maine

By Design Redesign

To the Editor:

In the article "User-Friendly Foyers" (*By Design*, 3/01), the author moved the fireplace to the outside wall to provide "a more balanced front elevation" and "a strong visual anchor to the view from the foyer." He admits that this is less energy-efficient. I agree with all three points, but find none significant enough to make the change.

First, the chimney mass is really not that visible, being tucked against the end of the building, with the chimney nearly invisible as you near the front door. Second, putting the chimney on the outside wall eliminates a large area with glass/view potential in the living

room. And third, as we know in Maine and is also the case in Wisconsin, all that cold exterior masonry encourages condensation of creosote.

David Wilson, AIA
Stockton Springs, Maine

More Layout Tips

To the Editor:

After reading Don Dunkley's article "Fast Layout for Tall Rake Walls" (4/01), I came up with some further uses for those layout chalk lines on the subfloor. One could, for example, accurately lay out beveled siding, with a few additional lines added to denote the trim at the rake and windows. Splices in the siding could be located at stud and cripple points. The whole assembly could be handed out in order piece by piece through the window for installation. There would even be the opportunity to dab a little paint on the end grain.

Jeff J. McHegg
McHegg Design-Build
Seattle, Wash.

Code Clarification

To the Editor:

The response to the question about wiring bathroom lights "downstream" from a GFCI receptacle (*On the House*, 4/01) is correct only if the following two conditions are met: The circuit feeding the bathroom is a 20-amp circuit, and the circuit feeding the bathroom supplies only that bathroom. If the circuit feeds other bathrooms, it may only be connected to receptacle outlets in the bathrooms, not to other equipment such as bathroom light fixtures (see *NEC*, 210-11 (c) (3)).

And by the way, there's no reason the light has to go out if the GFCI receptacle trips. Under the above two

THE JOURNAL OF LIGHT CONSTRUCTION

A Hanley-Wood Publication
www.jlconline.com

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The Journal of Light Construction

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Williston, VT 05495
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specified conditions, a bathroom light can be connected to the "line" side of the GFCI rather than the "load" side. The light is still provided overcurrent and short-circuit protection through the branch circuit breaker but will not leave the inhabitants in the dark if the GFCI trips.

Van Thornton
Building Official
Niles, Mich.

Whither the Water?

To the Editor:

In the item "Connecting Gutter Downspouts to Footing Drains" (*On the House*, 3/01), I offer a correction to Mr. Fisette's statement that "there is nothing in most building codes that prevents you from connecting downspouts to a foundation's perimeter drainage system." Section 1101.1 of the '97 *Uniform Plumbing Code* states, "All roofs ... shall be drained into a separate storm sewer system, or into a combined sewer system where a separate storm sewer system is not available." Although not specifically prohibited, it is clear that the intent of this section is to prohibit such a connection.

Greg Heidenredch
Certified Plumbing Inspector
Chico, Calif.

Paul Fisette responds: I do not believe that my statements relative to the code are incorrect. The primary directive of the Uniform Plumbing Code, which you cite, is to guide supply and discharge of domestic water systems so as to protect public health. As you correctly point out, section 1101.1 directs builders to drain roofs into a "... separate storm sewer system." The intent of this regulation is to

prevent builders from discharging roof runoff into either a septic system or municipal waste system. Draining runoff into a septic system would invite disaster, while draining roof runoff into municipal sewers would add a tremendous (and wasteful) load to the treatment facility.

The fact is that foundation perimeter drains are prohibited from being discharged into these waste lines by the very code you mention. It is because of this regulation that foundation perimeter drains must be connected to a "separate storm sewer system." Roof drains can also connect to this storm sewer system. The concern that I addressed is that combining roof runoff with perimeter drainage encourages foundation moisture problems, and that the code does not restrict this application.

Stiffer Drywall

To the Editor:

Paul Fisette writes that he has known 1/2-inch drywall to sag when installed on ceiling framing spaced at 24 inches on-center (*On the House*, 3/01). For such applications, we have successfully used USG's Sag-Resistant 1/2-inch drywall. It is denser and stronger than standard 1/2-inch drywall.

John F. Becker
Janesville, Wis.

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