

# Products

by Patrick McCombe

## Don't Get Hosed

I always bought rubber air hoses because of their durability, but they're heavy and seem to get hung up on everything. I've also tried lighter PVC hoses, which work pretty well, but cold weather makes them about as flexible as a Lally column. If you're looking for something better, the *Flexeel Air Hose* is a polyurethane hose that's durable, lightweight, and flexible down to  $-40^{\circ}\text{F}$ . A 100-foot  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch hose with  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch fittings (model PFE61004) costs about \$130.

**Coilhose Pneumatics**, 732/390-8480, [www.coilhose.com](http://www.coilhose.com).



## Glass With Class

Solid wood doors can be too dark for some spaces, but clear glass can be a little too revealing. For a happy medium, you might try the *Sculpted Glass* from JELD-WEN. Using what the manufacturer calls UltraGlas, this line of interior doors can brighten spaces but obscures the clutter commonly found in pantries and game rooms. Standard glass designs include Art Deco, Vineyard, Harvest, Ocean Waves, Mediterranean, and Game Room. Standard wood species include knotty or clear alder, fir, and mahogany. Custom species are also available.

**JELD-WEN**, 800/877-9482, [www.jeld-wen.com](http://www.jeld-wen.com).



## High Fiber

Fiber-cement siding has some unique advantages and continues to grow in popularity, but paint and coating manufacturers have lagged behind in developing new products specifically for fiber cement. Cabot's new *C3 Formula* is an exception. Available from Cabot factory prestainers, the formula is made in semitransparent and solid versions. The semitransparent finish comes in five wood tones, has a 12-year warranty, and, according to Cabot, gives fiber cement a look that's similar to that of real wood. The solid version is available in 74 colors, has a washable surface, and includes a 25-year warranty. Prices vary by region, but to coat all sides generally runs about 30¢ a square foot per coat.

**Samuel Cabot**, 800/877-8246, [www.cabotstain.com](http://www.cabotstain.com).



## Rail Runner

A lot of carpenters make their own doors for custom cabinets and built-ins, but cutting the end-grain profile on small rails can be a challenging and even dangerous proposition. The task is easier with the *Pro Model Coping Sled* from Eagle America. The plastic sled has a sturdy hold-down clamp and easily machined polyethylene guide blocks that prevent tear-out. The sled sells for \$60, and extra guide blocks for additional profiles sell for \$15 each.

**Eagle America**, 800/872-2511, [www.eagle-america.com](http://www.eagle-america.com).



## Products



### Central Shampooer

Central vacs continue to grow in popularity, but they don't usually help much with spilled juice or cleaning up after a legion of muddy boots. The *Aqua-Air* central vac is an exception. It seems like the perfect vacuum for customers who put an extra emphasis on clean. It features both wet and dry pickup, and water in the tank captures dust and dirt particles, so there are no filters to clean or change. Quick connects for hot water at the suction inlet mean you can shampoo carpets without additional equipment or calling in a cleaning company. The tank is self-emptying, but you'll need a pipe running to a laundry tray or floor drain for wastewater.

Aqua-Air, 800/916-5777,  
[www.aquaair-wetdry.com](http://www.aquaair-wetdry.com).



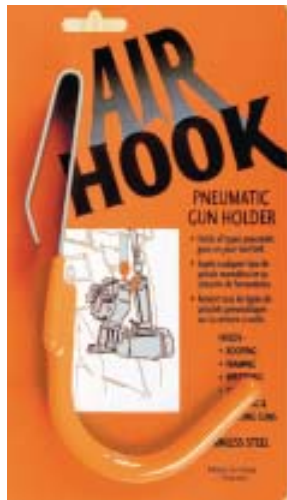
### Leaf It Alone

Cleaning out the gutters every year is one of those jobs that everyone hates. If you can give your customer dispensation from the annual drudgery, you could be a hero. *Leaf Relief* is an aluminum gutter cover that's made for both new gutters and retrofits. Most gutter covers are stymied when leaves stick to the straining surface, but, according to the manufacturer, Leaf Relief's smooth aluminum surface frees up dry leaves with only a 6-mph breeze. In addition, the product installs easily, and it won't get clogged with pine needles.

Alcoa, 800/962-6973, [www.alcoahomes.com](http://www.alcoahomes.com).

### Quick Draw

Keeping all your tools close at hand is a major part of working efficiently. Everyday hand tools are easy, but nailers and cordless drills don't fit very well in your carpenter's apron. If you're trying to get a handle on your nailers, the *AirHook* clips to your toolbelt and keeps your nailer or drill within easy reach. The stainless-steel rubber-covered hook removes easily when you don't need it. It sells for \$10.



Link Corporation,

800/522-1196, [www.linkcorporation.com](http://www.linkcorporation.com).



### Hang In There

Commonly used for suspending commercial and industrial plumbing, sprinkler, and hvac systems, *Vertigo Wood and Metal Anchors* are useful for residential construction and remodeling tasks, too. The versatile anchors are perfect for drop ceilings and other overhead hanging and mounting tasks in concrete, steel, and wood. Metal and wood versions are both self-drilling, and the hardened version for concrete cuts its own threads. Designed for threaded rod or bolts in 1/4-, 3/8-, and 1/2-inch diameters, the anchors are claimed to have better holding power than the systems from other manufacturers.

Powers Fasteners, 800/524-3244,  
[www.powers.com](http://www.powers.com).

### Landscaping Products

**Natural-Looking Block.** While modular concrete block has made building retaining walls and other landscape features much easier, some homeowners complain about their unnatural uniformity. If you or your customer wants a look that more closely resembles natural stone, you might look to the *Country Manor Landscaping Block*. The tumbled block comes in six sizes that can be placed either horizontally or vertically, making a total of 11 different shapes (one block is 12 inches square). They're available in 3- and 6-inch heights and in three color combinations. According to the manufacturer, installed prices range from \$17 to \$25 per square foot.

Keystone, 800/747-8971, [www.keystonewalls.com](http://www.keystonewalls.com).

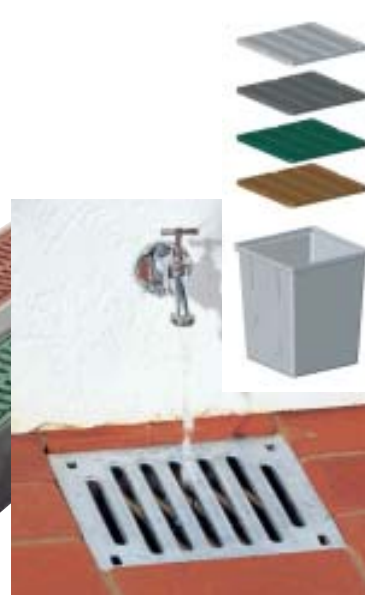
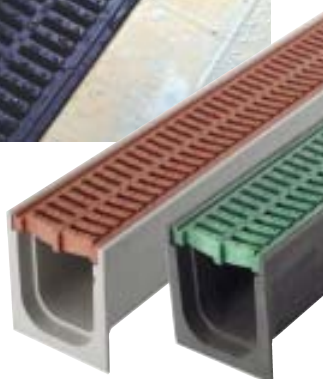


**Get Your Fiber.** Fiber-composite materials have become one of the preferred products for homeowners seeking a maintenance-free exterior, so it's not surprising that manufacturers have started using fiber composites for fencing and other landscape applications. *FiberTech Fencing* is a 1/2-inch by 6-inch by 6-foot composite fencing board available in several colors. According to the manufacturer, the product lasts twice as long as cedar and doesn't require any maintenance. Prices depend on region but should sell for about \$7.50 each. The company also makes *BenderBoard*, a composite landscape edging with similar attributes. The material can bend to a 24-inch radius, making it ideal for edging around trees and curved beds. 16-foot boards come in six colors and sell for about \$9 each.

FiberTech Polymers, 888/262-2070, [www.fibertechpolymers.com](http://www.fibertechpolymers.com).

**Rain Gear.** Effectively dealing with site drainage and roof water is one of the most important aspects of a good landscaping plan. ACO's *Pointdrain* is a perfect solution for ponding water on lawns and driveways or to stop washing caused by downspouts or hose bibs. The product is offered in both poly and concrete varieties in sizes from 9 inches to a little more than 12 inches square. Knockouts in the bottom allow connection to underground drainage pipe. List prices start at \$20. The company also makes an extensive line of trench-drainage systems that can handle eaves runoff and prevent seepage under garage doors. The least expensive option, *Homedrain*, has a list price of about \$9 per lineal foot and can handle occasional light-vehicle traffic.

ACO Polymer Products, 440/285-7000, [www.acousa.com](http://www.acousa.com).





### Custom Metal Stairs

**Not-So-Heavy Metal.** Third-floor apartments and urban walk-ups frequently have a red-iron fire escape or secondary stair required by code. While red iron has been used in this application forever, it's heavy and requires constant painting to prevent rust. If you or your customer is looking for a maintenance-free outdoor stair, you might check out *Aluminum Stairs* from Jomy Products. The Colorado-based company can fabricate just about any staircase your job requires, and they ship anywhere in the country. According to the manufacturer, assembly can often take place without a crane because the aluminum components weigh one-third that of similar steel components. Prices start at about \$5,000.

Jomy Products, 877/303-5888, [www.jomy.com](http://www.jomy.com).



**Energy-Saving Attic Stair.** Typical attic stairs bought at the lumberyard or home center waste huge amounts of energy, and their rickety construction doesn't instill a lot of confidence. If you're looking to upgrade, you might consider the *Rainbow Attic Stair*. The heavy-duty attic stair features an R15 gasketed door for increased energy-efficiency and steel treads with a 350-pound capacity. The scissor design means you don't have to trim the stringers, and it even comes with casing installed. They're available for ceiling heights from 7 feet 4 inches to 11 feet 6 inches. The model shown has a list price of \$816, but builder discounts often apply.

Horner Millwork, 800/543-5403, [www.hornermillwork.com](http://www.hornermillwork.com).

**New Spin on Stairs.** *Metal spiral stairs* have always been a good way to fit a staircase in a tight spot, but more recently the design community is looking to fabricated metal for its good looks and speedy installation. Fabricators like Custom Iron produce everything from 30-inch spirals designed for lofts and secondary living space to huge curving staircases suitable for high-quality custom homes. Products can be shipped anywhere and the manufacturer claims that reassembly and installation usually takes less than a couple hours. If exposed metal isn't suitable for your project, the company can even make wood-clad versions. The black spiral stair shown sells for around \$5,000.

Custom Iron, 800/732-7699, [www.customiron.com](http://www.customiron.com).



### Fire Prevention and Suppression

**Residential Sprinkler.** Although it's widely known that sprinkler systems help save lives and reduce property damage, residential sprinklers have been slow to catch on because of high installation costs.



REHAU's *Fire Protection System* is one of the new generations of residential sprinklers that combine domestic water piping and sprinkler piping. According to the manufacturer, the com-

combined systems significantly reduce material and installation costs. The sprinkler heads are supplied by either 3/4- or 1-inch PEX tubing, and unlike commercial systems that often flood the whole building, REHAU's system only activates sprinkler heads in the room(s) where there's fire.

Rehau, 800/247-9445, [www.rehau-na.com](http://www.rehau-na.com).

**Resist Burn-Out.** CPVC pipe is inexpensive, easy to install, and doesn't have pitting and corrosion problems like metal pipe. These attributes alone are making CPVC pipe an increas-



ingly popular choice for residential and commercial sprinkler systems. The *BlazeMaster System* uses specially formulated CPVC pipe that's been tested to withstand temperatures up to 1400°F. According to Noveon (the only U.S. manufacturer of CPVC resin), the piping is code-approved for

more sprinkler applications than any other plastic pipe, and sprinkler systems using CPVC cost less than those using metal pipe.

BlazeMaster, 888/234-2436, [www.blazemaster.com](http://www.blazemaster.com).



**Flame-Stopping Sealant.** Any place where pipes and cables pass through floors and walls is a place where flame and smoke can spread to other parts of the building. The careful inspection of these penetrations was once reserved for commercial buildings and multi-family housing, but in recent years it's been of increasing concern to residential inspectors as well. You can appease inspectors and protect your customers with products like Hilti's *FS-One*. The specialty sealant can provide up to four hours of fire protection because it expands as it's heated, providing further insulation from heat and flame. In addition, the red color (typical of fire-rated sealants) makes it easy for inspectors to see that you've chosen the right material.

Hilti, 800/879-8000, [www.us.hilti.com](http://www.us.hilti.com).



**Alarm Panel.** While many fire alarm panels are made for huge institutional buildings, smaller structures don't require such a large, expensive panel. A better product for residential and light-commercial applications is the *Silent Knight 5808* fire alarm control panel. The panel works with up to 127 addressable devices and allows service techs and building managers to see the exact location of an alarm or sensor malfunction. The device has built-in communi-

cation capabilities to report alarms and system operation to remote monitoring stations. Optional components include remote annunciators and interfaces for printing system reports.

Honeywell, 800/345-6770, [www.silentknight.com](http://www.silentknight.com).

