

## Fast Footings

by Charles Wardell



Tired of mixing concrete for sonotubes? If a North Carolina entrepreneur gets his way, deckbuilders will soon be buying pre-engineered, precast footings off the shelf.

The *Deck Plug* is a flat, cylindrically shaped lightweight footing that's designed for decks and other small projects. The concept behind the *Deck Plug* is simple: Dig a posthole whose base lies beneath the frost line, drop in a deck plug, and you're in business.

I asked the product's inventor why I couldn't just pour my own plugs in the basement using plastic drywall buckets. His reply was that the *Deck Plug* is more than just a slab of concrete. For instance, concrete is seldom mixed correctly in the field and is usually put under a load before it's fully cured. But the *Deck Plug* is produced under controlled conditions and cures for at least 30 days before it's shipped. The manufacturer says that the product is engineered to support the heaviest of decks, with the widest spans allowed by code, and under most soil conditions found in the U.S. Yet the lightweight concrete is only  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  the weight of standard concrete, making it much easier to handle (an 11-inch plug weighs about 22 pounds). The deck plug is 4 inches thick and comes

in 11-, 12-, and 16-inch diameters. Costs range from \$6 to \$8.

Contact: Deck Plug Inc., 404C Commerce St., Charlottesville, VA 22903; 804/979-5810.

### Plastic Wood Window



To most people, selecting a window means choosing between wood and vinyl. The *Eliminator* window combines the best of both. The *Eliminator's* sash looks like Ponderosa Pine but is really an new, solid-core expanded-foam PVC with twice the insulation value of wood. The outside of the sash is wrapped with a vinyl overlay, while the interior is prefinished (the company offers off-white and fruitwood) and imprinted with a wood-grain pattern. The frame and sill are made of Werzalit, a dense wood composite, and finished with a resin-impregnated overlay. According to the manufacturer, Werzalit's high resin content (it's technically classified as a plastic) makes it impervious to bugs and water, and guarantees that it won't split, warp, or rot. The sash and frame get a combined U-value of .46 (R-2.17) with regular insulated glass; you can also get a warm-edge "ultra glass" that lowers the U-value to .32 (R-3.12). The company says that

the *Eliminator* costs about 10% less than a comparable clad-wood window.

Contact: Wenco Windows, P.O. Box 1248, Mt. Vernon, OH 43050; 614/397-3403.

### Instant Balcony



A typical part of finishing an unused attic space is installing roof windows to bring in needed light and ventilation. But the *Cabrio Balcony Roof Window* lets you do something you could only dream of with an ordinary roof window: Convert the space into a porch. The *Cabrio* accomplishes this feat with a dual-sash design. The top sash opens up to serve as a small roof, while the bottom sash pushes outward to create a compact, step-out balcony. If you feel like staying in the house, a ventilation flap lets you close the window and still have air circulation. The top sash section also rotates inward for cleaning.

The *Cabrio* is 100 inches high and 37 inches wide. It uses laminated, low-e, argon-filled glazing. It can be installed in roof slopes from 8.5/12 to 16/12, and can be flashed to any roof material, including asphalt shingles, wood shakes, and tile. An optional flashing system lets you place units side-by-side. At this writing, an insect screen is not available.

The manufacturer claims to have received approvals from all the major code-making authorities. The *Cabrio* sells for around \$2,600, including the flashing.

Contact: Velux-America Inc., P.O. Box 5001, Greenwood, SC 29648; 800/283-2831.

## Low-Profile Slate Vent



The *In-Line Slate Vent* is a low-profile grille for incorporating a structural or mechanical ventilation system into the surface of a traditional slate roof. Designed to blend with the roof's surface, the grille has built-in side flashings and can be installed in an existing or new roof. It provides 15 square inches of free air space, and includes internal baffles that deflect wind-driven rain or snow. The manufacturer also offers a 4-inch-diameter flexible adaptor that lets you connect the grille to an exhaust fan or plumbing vent. The grille comes in a range of standard slate sizes and colors. The company will also match custom color for restoration projects on buildings with weathered slates.

Contact: Clark Matthews & Co.,  
39 Woodley Rd., Buffalo, NY 14125;  
716/833-7449.

## Doorway Dust Cover



New ground has been gained in the war against remodeling dust. The company that makes the Dust Door (*For What It's Worth*, 5/92) has devised a way to seal it or any other membrane to a door opening without driving nails into

the trim. The *Arch Guard* is a plexiglass assembly that clamps onto opposing casings. Its inside surfaces are coated with a nonskid, high-density rubber cushion that won't scratch or damage paint or wallpaper. On one of the outside surfaces of the plexiglass a strip of loop Velcro lets you attach any membrane with a hook Velcro on its face, such as the Dust Door. If you prefer to use polyethylene, you'll need the company's T-shaped *Dust-Lock* vinyl strips. The top of the T attaches to the Arch Guard with Velcro, while the base sticks out from the surface of the Arch Guard. The poly is draped over the base of the T, then locked in place with a U-shaped vinyl cap.

The Arch Guard will accommodate door openings up to 3'0" x 6'8". Cost is about \$139.95 for the Arch Guard and \$19.95 for the Dust Lock.

Contact: Brophy Design, Inc.,  
524 Green St., Boylston, MA 01505;  
508/393-7166.

## Better Bolting



Here's a simple way to reinforce a toggle bolt. The *Bel-Bolt* consists of a flexible plastic bushing and a conical insert. The shaft of a toggle bolt is pushed through the bushing and insert, the wing nut threaded onto the end of the bolt, and the whole assembly pressed into a bore hole in the wall. As the bolt is tightened, the wing nut forces the insert deeper into the bushing, which presses the sides of the bushing tightly against the inside of the hole. The bushing supports the bolt as it's tightened, while an anti-rotation rib on the insert keeps the wing nut from turning. The finished assembly centers the bolt in the hole while resisting axial and radial forces.

Contact: Bel-Bolt, Inc., RR4,  
Box 844, Brattleboro, VT 05301;  
802/254-3836. ■