

Treated Wood Alternative

by Charles Wardell



Are you looking for a weatherproof deck wood but don't like chemicals and can't find good redwood or cedar? Then you may be interested in *Pau Lope*, a sustainably harvested Brazilian hardwood that's being marketed as a non-toxic alternative to treated wood and that's priced competitively with clear heart redwood or cedar. The U.S. distributor claims the tropical hardwood has a service life of around 60 years yet contains no preservatives. In fact, it has earned a rating of "highly durable" for insect and decay resistance from the U.S. Agricultural Forest Products Research Laboratory. It has also been given a Class A rating for fire resistance by the Uniform Building Code.

Pau Lope's durability and fire resistance come from its rock hardness — it's three times harder than oak. You'll have to predrill before nailing, but *Pau Lope* won't shrink, deform, or splinter like treated lumber. It's also four to five times stiffer than softwood; you can frame 24 inches on-center for 5/4x6 deck boards, and 16 inches on-center for 1x4 deck boards, without any springiness. The distributor says *Pau Lope* is harvested in conformance with accepted standards of sustain-yield forest management. Selective cutting methods are used to harvest only two to three mature trees per hectare (2.5 acres) every 20 years. This ensures the highest quality lumber while providing increased sunlight

and water to the remaining immature trees. Trees are never harvested in such a way that large openings occur in the canopy.

Contact :Greenheart-Durawoods, Inc. 655 Route 9 North, P.O. Box 279, Bayville, NJ 08721; 800/783-7220.

Preformed Drainage System



Standard foundation drains depend on proper aggregate placement to keep soil from clogging the drainpipe. But the *Prefabricated Drainage System* requires no aggregate; the excavated soil is simply returned as backfill. The system consists of geotechnical fabric wrapped around a plastic core and a PVC drainpipe. The fabric will stop particles small enough to pass through a No. 70 sieve (70 openings per linear inch), but is highly permeable to water. The plastic core, which looks like the bottom of an egg carton, is 90% air by volume (a stone bed is only 10% air by volume), allowing water to drain freely into a 4-, 6-, or 8-inch-diameter perforated PVC pipe at the base of the system.

The *Prefabricated Drainage System* is custom manufactured in either 5-foot-wide continuous rolls (up to 50 feet long) or 8x5-foot panels. Installation is simple. Assemble the panels on the ground, lower them into

the trench beside the foundation, and tie them to the top of the foundation with cloth tie strips. Then backfill the foundation and cut the cloth strips away. No workers need go into the trench, so shoring is unnecessary. And since you only need a very narrow trench, the *Prefabricated Drainage System* simplifies retrofits.

The cost of the system depends on volume, but the top price is about \$1.10 per square foot. While that's more expensive than standard drain tile, it saves about 40% on the cost of labor.

Contact :Eljen Corporation, 15 Westwood Rd., Storrs, CT 06268; 800/444-1359.

Combination Fan and Light Control



Your customers can now control their ceiling fans without using the pull chain. The *FLC300* Fan and Light Control is a wall-mounted variable-speed controller that operates both the fan and the fan's built-in light fixture. It also lets you operate the fan at full speed and the light at 100% brightness. (Most standard dimmers allow output of only about 85% from light bulbs, and most fan controls don't allow full-speed operation.)

The *FLC300* is available in white or

ivory, and can be mounted in single-gang or multi-gang wall boxes.

Contact :Lamson Home Products, 25701 Science Park Dr., Cleveland, OH 44122; 800/327-8864.

Vinyl Channel for Wood Extension Jambs

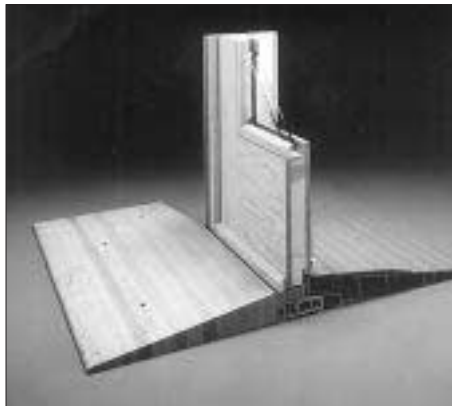


Many people are hard-pressed to tell one vinyl window line from another. But one company has decided to distinguish itself in the way it lets you attach an extension jamb to the window. Extension jambs are a problem with most vinyl windows because you can't fasten the jamb to the vinyl. The result is that an unsightly gap is likely to appear between the window and the jamb. The Jamb Extender Race is an accessory to Alcoa's Magna-Frame series of vinyl windows. It's a vinyl channel that comes in a 1/2-inch variety for dry-wall and a 3/4-inch variety for wood.

Contact :Alcoa Vinyl Windows, 725 Pleasant Valley Dr., Springboro, OH 45066; 800/307-2120.

Mini-Ramp For Patio Doors

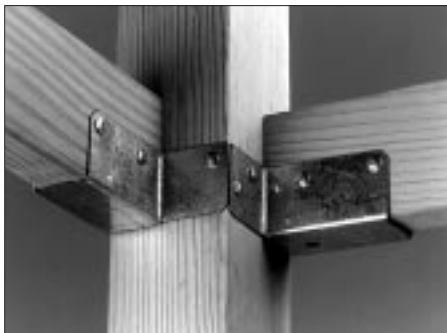
A convenient accessory could make it easier for wheelchair users to get in and out of a house. The Ramped Sill Inst is an attractive, sloped sill that makes a smooth transition between exterior and interior. The exterior is made of prefinished, extruded aluminum, while the solid oak interior can be painted or stained. The insert is designed to fit any Andersen hinged or sliding patio door. Prices vary, but the suggested



manufacturer's list price for a complete kit (full-door interior and exterior package) starts at about \$600.

Contact :Andersen Windows Inc., Bayport, MN 55003; 800/426-4261.

Corner-Mounted Joist Hanger



If you use a regular joist hanger to connect a two-by cross-member to a 4x4 upright, the nailing flange will stick out beyond the edge of the 4x4. Common solutions to this problem include letting the cross-member into the side of the 4x4, flattening the nailing flange, or using a custom-made bracket. But the job is simplified with the RTC42 Rigid Tie Connector. The single-piece structural corner connection wraps around the upright and is fastened on all four sides; the cross-member slips into a galvanized cradle, then is fastened in place with nails or screws. It's available for 2x2, 2x3, 2x4, and 4x4 lumber. The Rigid Tie Connector is made of 18-gauge steel and, depending on the fasteners used, is rated up to 1,730 pounds for floor construction and 2,160 pounds for roof construction.

Contact :Simpson Strong-Tie Co. Inc., P.O. Box 10789, Pleasanton, CA 94588; 800/999-5099. ■