

PRODUCTS

No-Fade Coating

New cellular PVC decking has a tough resin finish



by Scott Gibson

Fiber Composites has introduced what it calls a “third-generation” cellular PVC decking. The product, fiberon Sanctuary, is finished with acrylonitrile styrene acrylate, a compound used by automakers on some exterior components; it improves both color retention and stain resistance, the company says.

Cellular PVC is a solid extrusion that combines polyvinyl chloride with a foaming agent. At half the

density of ordinary PVC, cellular PVC works much like wood and is formed into a variety of interior and exterior building products, including decking. Manufacturers say one advantage it has over wood-plastic composites is that it’s less likely to support the growth of mold, because it doesn’t contain cellulose.

Fiber Composites says Sanctuary decking is also easier to handle than composites: A 20-foot-long plank weighs 32 pounds, compared with the 54 pounds that a composite would typically weigh, the company says. The decking, which went on the market in December, comes with a 20-year limited warranty and carries a Class A fire rating.

The company likens the surface of Sanctuary deck boards to interior flooring, with a wood-grain appearance that’s the result of photoengraved embossing taken from real mahogany decking.

Grooved planks, designed to be used with the company’s Phantom hidden fastener system, are available in 12-foot, 16-foot, and 20-foot lengths. A square-edge version also is available, in 20-foot lengths. Planks, which come in three solid colors and two multi-color patterns, are 5½ inches wide and about 1 inch thick and cost between \$2.75 and \$3 per linear foot.

Scott Gibson is a writer in East Waterboro, Maine.

■ **Fiber Composites**, 704/463-7120, www.fiberondecking.com

Outdoor Lighting

LED kits contain everything you need for installation



De-Kor is packaging together weather-resistant LED lights, a transformer, and even a custom Forstner bit to simplify the installation of exterior accent lights

on decks, in stairways, and around pools or spas.

The company’s new Millenium Recessed LED Light Kits include eight lights that have an expected life span of 100,000 hours. LEDs, or light-emitting diodes, have long been used for electronic devices and lighted traffic signs but only recently for general household lighting. The energy-efficient bulbs last three times as long as fluorescents.

De-Kor says light kits are available for use as down lights and for stairs. The Millenium Collection also includes a line of post lights and post caps.

Each transformer can handle up to 20 lights, and expansion kits of four LED lights are available. Kits retail for \$229 (\$239 for stair kits). Four-light expansion kits retail for about \$90. — S.G.

■ **De-Kor**, 303/991-2285, www.de-kor.com.

For more product information, visit ebuild, Hanley Wood’s interactive product catalog, at www.ebuild.com

PRODUCTS

Color Coordinated

Matching screw heads to decking gets easier



There's more for sale in the decking market these days than plain vanilla as manufacturers develop synthetic and composite products in a wide range of new colors. Starborn Industries has responded by more than tripling the number of colors its Headcote stainless steel fasteners are available in.

Headcote trim-head screws range in size from #7 x 1⁵/₈ inches to #8 x 3 inches. The most popular size, #8 x 2¹/₂ inches, comes in 15 colors, including forest green, burgundy, white, and numerous wood tones. In other sizes, fewer colors are available.

Headcote also makes flat-head screws — in three colors and in sizes from #8 x 2 inches to #10 x 3 inches — and Razorback screws, which have a four-pointed thread design with an auger tip and are available in brown only.

To make it easier for deck builders to choose the right color, the company offers an interactive selection feature at its Web site. Plug in the species of wood you plan to use or the trade name of



the manufactured decking, and out comes the right color. Choices for more than 100 different deck boards are available, according to the company.

Headcote fasteners are made from #305 stainless steel and come with auger points and square-drive recesses. Heads have countersinking nibs on the underside, although some types of decking still should be pre-drilled.

Trim heads in the #8 x 2¹/₂-inch size cost between 17 cents and 18 cents each, depending on packaging. Flat heads and Razorbacks are between 15 percent and 25 percent more. — S.G.

■ **Starborn Industries,**
800/596-7747,
www.headcote.com.

Speedy Footing

Plastic takes the place of concrete



If you want the benefits of deck post footings without the hassle of concrete, consider the Footing Pad. The 10-inch-diameter plate made from polyethylene and fiberglass meets ICC requirements and can support as much as 2,133 pounds of load, according to the manufacturer.

AG-CO says the process is as easy as dropping one of the plates into the hole, setting the 4x4 post, and then replacing and compacting the soil around it. The 1-inch-thick pad has comparable strength to concrete, the company says.

Soil type and its bearing value determine post spacing. Based on total live and dead loads of 45 pounds per square foot, post spacing for a 12-foot-wide deck would be 6 feet on-center in soil with a bearing capacity of 3,000 pounds per square foot. Spacing could be adjusted up or down depending on the soil's bearing value and the deck area.

Footing Pads retail for \$6.50 each. — S.G.

■ **AG-CO,** 800/522-2426,
www.footingpad.com. ❖

PRODUCTS

Deck With Stone

Conventional wood framing with the feel of a terrace



StoneDeck is a thin layer of natural stone bonded to a composite backer and can take the place of wood or manufactured decking over conventional wood framing. Installation starts with screwing companion joist plates to 16-inch-on-center framing. The 16-inch-

square tiles connect to the plates, leaving a 1/8-inch mortarless gap between tiles and no visible fasteners. A single tile weighs about 15 pounds, or 9 pounds per square foot. Tiles can be cut with a diamond blade or a wet saw.

According to the manufacturer, the stone — available in slate, granite, or quartzite — has a naturally skid-resistant surface. Granite is flamed rather than polished to produce a roughened surface. Quartzite and granite tiles are suitable for use in cold-weather regions. The company recommends that the stone be treated with an impregnating sealer and resealed every four to six years, but otherwise the deck will be a low-maintenance surface.

StoneDeck costs between \$16 and \$18 per square foot and comes in 10 colors. The strongest distribution network is in the western U.S. — S.G.

■ **StoneDeck West**, 877/686-4759, www.stonedeckwest.com.

Repair, Not Replace

Aging fence posts can be salvaged

Simpson Strong-Tie has introduced a trio of products designed for the economical repair of decayed or damaged 4x4 posts: E-Z Spikes, Menders, and Bases. All are made with a black powder-coated finish.

The E-Z Spike consists of a recess for a 4x4 at the top of a tapered section that's driven into the ground.

E-Z Menders are reinforcing plates in the shape of a shallow "U" that are driven into the ground on opposite sides of a post and attached with double-coated or hot-dipped fasteners. The company says they can be used to shore up posts set in either the ground or concrete.

An E-Z Base is a square receptacle that accepts the bottom of a post and is in turn anchored to concrete with 1/2-inch-diameter fasteners.

In all, they may help you get a few more years out of a fence with a rickety foundation but otherwise in sound condition.



Expect to pay between \$15 and \$20 for an E-Z Base and between \$20 and \$25 each for E-Z Spikes and E-Z Menders. — S.G.

■ **Simpson Strong-Tie**, 800/999-5099, www.strongtie.com.

For more product information, visit ebuild, Hanley Wood's interactive product catalog, at www.ebuild.com