

PRODUCTS

Pressure-Treated Parallams

Use for deck beams and columns

by Scott Gibson

You can nail treated 2-bys together to form beams for decks and porches, or you could try using Wolmanized Parallams, parallel strand lumber that's been pressure treated to prevent rot and insect damage.

As its name suggests, parallel strand lumber is made from long strands of wood; these are bonded together with resin in a microwave. Like other engineered wood, the material is consistently straight, uniform in dimension, and not as likely to warp or check as solid wood. It's also stronger than sawn lumber of the same dimension, allowing for longer spans between posts (a span table is available at the company's Web site).

Made by the iLevel division of Weyerhaeuser, Parallams are treated with either CCA or CA, depending on the intended use. The company says they can be used in unprotected outdoor environments, even with recurring ground water contact and salt-water splash. Holes and end cuts don't have to be treated in the field, according



to the company, because the material is protected all the way to the core. Parallams can be painted or stained.

Header and beam materials (treated with CA) come in a range of sizes, from 3½ inches by 9¼ inches to 5¼ inches by 16 inches. Column and post materials (treated with CCA) come in three sizes: 3½ inches by 5¼ inches, 5¼ inches square, and 7 inches square. Lengths range up to 32 feet.

Wolmanized Parallams are covered by two 30-year warranties, one from iLevel and one from the preservative manufacturer. Weyerhaeuser did not provide pricing information.

Scott Gibson is a writer in East Waterboro, Maine.

■ **iLevel**, 888/453-8358, ilevel.com.

A Light Touch

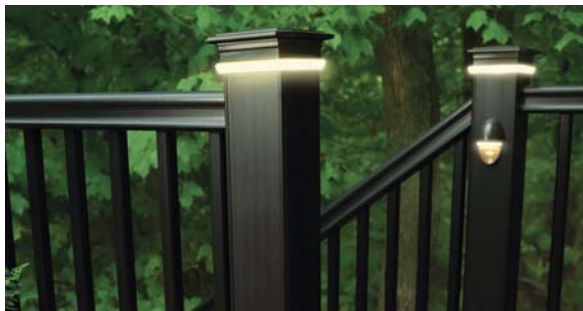
Low-voltage fixtures made for TimberTech rails

Accent lighting — including lights for post caps, balusters, posts, and stair risers — is now available from TimberTech.

The post-cap and baluster lights were specifically designed to complement the company's RadianceRail and Ornamental Rail systems. With a lens that fits neatly between post cap and post sleeve, the post-cap lights have an unobtrusive profile. The bronze-colored baluster lights are mounted between balusters on blocks that come in black or white to match the RadianceRail line, and in cedar, gray, or redwood to match the Ornamental Rail system.

Also bronze-colored, the ovoid lights for stair risers are installed in a recess in the riser to eliminate any tripping hazard. They can be used with any deck system.

TimberTech says the low-voltage system includes simple electrical connections that should not require a



permit for installation. In addition to the lights, which are sold individually, system components include a UL-listed 120-volt transformer, wire connectors and guides, and replacement bulbs.

A maximum of ten 10-watt xenon bulbs can be attached to a single circuit. Each transformer will power up to 30 lights.

DeckLites components are covered by a five-year residential warranty. — S.G.

■ **TimberTech**, 800/307-7780, timbertech.com.

For more product information, go to <http://exteriorproducts.hotims.com>

Easy Tapered Columns

Cellular PVC stock snaps together

Builders who would like to make tapered porch columns in the tradition of an Arts & Crafts bungalow, but in record time, might want to take a look at Wrap N' Snap columns.

Each kit consists of four tapered panels made from 1/2-inch cellular PVC that snap together at the corners around a structural support post (provided by the builder). Bead molding also is included.

To install the column, the builder applies PVC adhesive to grooves in the pre-mitered panel sections and snaps them together around the post. Pieces do not have to be attached to the post, and assembly takes just a couple of minutes per column, according to the company.

Factory-applied tape at the miters stays in place until the adhesive has cured.

Bottom panels are available in widths of 12 inches, 16 inches, and 20 inches with corresponding top widths



of 8 inches, 10 inches, and 15 inches. Heights range from 54 inches to 96 inches, and panels can be cut in the field to match the height of any support post in that range.

Column sections are white but may be painted, and three different trim packages are available. Prices vary by size: A kit sized for an 8-foot 4x4 post costs between \$110 and \$120 per column. — S.G.

■ **Screen Tight**, 800/768-7325, screentight.com. ❖

For more product information, go to <http://exteriorproducts.hotims.com>