

PRODUCTS

Versatile Deck Connector

Simpson's new DTT2Z, for stronger railings

by Scott Gibson

Two critical connections in deck construction are between the deck ledger and the house framing, and between rail posts and the deck framing. Simpson Strong-Tie says its DTT2Z deck tension tie can be used in both places for improved structural performance over conventional techniques.

Rail posts are typically through-bolted to the rim joist of the deck, but Simpson says these connections often fail to meet International Residential Code requirements that deck railings be able to resist a 200-pound load in any direction.

The galvanized tension tie consists of two flanges that are screwed to a joist. Between them is a hole to accommodate a 1/2-inch bolt that passes through the post and the rim joist. When the assembly is in place,



any load on the railing and post pulls not only on the rim joist but also on the joists.

The connector functions in a similar way when it's screwed to the joists inside the house and through-bolted to the deck framing to reinforce the connection between the deck and house.

Fasteners for attaching the tie to framing are included.

The connector comes with

Simpson's "ZMAX" coating (G185, or 1.85 ounces of zinc per square foot), making it suitable for use with pressure-treated framing members.

The connectors cost about \$9 each.

Scott Gibson is a writer in East Waterboro, Maine.

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

New Wrinkle on Vinyl

Railing is textured like painted wood

Vinyl deck railing has a lot to recommend it, including low maintenance and high durability in harsh weather conditions. But its plain, flat surface on rails, columns, and balusters can be, well, boring. CertainTeed is hoping to change up that look with the brushwork texture of painted wood on its Edgewood vinyl railing line.

Available in white, almond, and sierra blend, Edgewood railing comes in three widths — nominal 72 inches, 96 inches, and 120 inches — and in two heights, 36 inches and 42 inches. Balusters are 1 1/2 inches by 1 1/2 inches, either square or octagonal. I-shaped top and bottom rails are designed to be installed without any pre-drilling, and brackets come with stainless steel screws concealed by covers.

Edgewood railing meets IRC requirements for one- and two-family houses and townhouses up to three stories high.

The railing comes with a limited lifetime warranty that covers repair and replacement costs, including labor, if a manufacturing defect occurs within five years of installation, the company says. It retails for between \$30 and \$37 per foot. — S.G.

■ **CertainTeed**, 800/233-8990, certainteed.com.



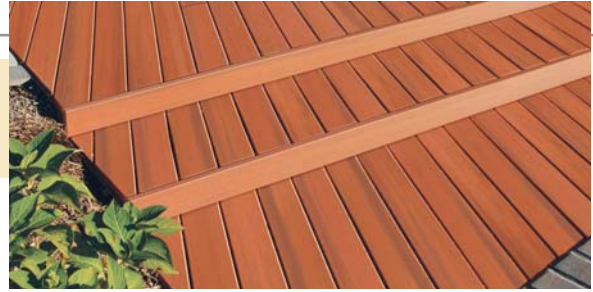
Tropical Planks

Universal Forest Products adds to Latitudes line

Adobe and koa, the two new colors in the Latitudes Capricorn line of composite decking, are meant to look like mahogany and ipe. A wood-grain pattern on both sides of the planks gives them a more natural look.

Manufactured in a co-extrusion Strandex process, in which thin strands of wood fiber are encased in high-density polyethylene, the planks are highly resistant to fading, moisture intrusion, and stains, the company says. The wood dust used in the decking is reclaimed from manufacturing facilities around the country, and the plastic component is a mix of virgin and recycled high-density polyethylene. Overall, about 70 percent of the content is recycled.

Capricorn tropical decking comes in 12-, 16-, and 20-foot lengths in square-edged and slotted versions. Slotted planks use a patented hidden fastener designed



to gap boards automatically. Decking has a limited 15-year warranty and costs about \$3 per lineal foot. A box of Equator hidden fasteners, enough to install 100 square feet of decking, costs between \$80 and \$100.

The company also recently unveiled a version of Latitudes for boardwalks and marinas that's designed for 24-inch on-center spacing. That comes in four colors — gray, redwood, cedar, and walnut — and retails for more than \$3 per lineal foot. — S.G.

■ **Universal Forest Products**, 877/463-8379, latitudesdeck.com.

Wood-Plastic Fencing

LifeCycle complements MoistureShield decking

Advanced Environmental Recycling Technologies is now offering composite fencing made from a 50/50 blend of wood and plastic — most of it recycled — that carries a 25-year warranty against rot and delamination.

LifeCycle Fencing contains the same ingredients that the company uses in its MoistureShield decking line: oak mill waste, milk jugs, pallet wrap, waste pallets and other construction debris, grocery bags, detergent bottles, and food packaging. In all, 90 percent of the product is made of recycled materials, 30 percent of it



post-consumer. The company says its operations keep more than 271 million pounds of waste out of landfills every year.

Wood fibers are encapsulated by polyethylene plastic during the manufacturing process, which, the company says, makes the material impervious to moisture and insect damage.

The company says the product doesn't need painting or staining, but it can be coated after it weathers for two or three months. An oil-based primer and a latex top coat are recommended if you paint. If you stain, use an oil-based stain.

Fencing is available in two finishes, rustic cedar and earthtone, and is textured on both sides. A residential grade is 1/2 inch thick by 5 1/2 inches wide; a commercial version is 3/4 inch thick and the same width. Fence boards come in 6-foot and 8-foot lengths and two profiles, dog-eared and flat top.

Fencing starts at between \$6.30 and \$7 per plank. — S.G.

■ **Advanced Environmental Recycling Technologies**, 866/729-2378, moistureshield.com. ❖