

Products

Chemical-Free Treated Wood

Heat-modified decking is guaranteed for 20 years

by Scott Gibson

A new brand of wood decking and railing components that have been thermally modified using a process developed in Finland is being marketed by Texas-based Building Products Plus. Guaranteed for exterior use for 20 years without the use of any chemical preservatives, Nature's Choice Deck is southern yellow pine that's been subjected to temperatures as high as 482°F.

According to Building Products Plus, the heat treatment — which darkens the wood — improves dimensional stability and helps the wood resist rot and decay. It also decreases moisture absorption and makes the planks less likely to split and more resistant to bending (for more information on thermal modification, see *Decking News*, May/June 2008; free at deckmagazine.com).

The company is hoping to appeal to the green-building market and says the wood is "100 percent safe" for gardens and animals and for use around water sources. "Cedar and redwood last decades without any chemicals," says senior product consultant Eric Lincoln. "Thermal modification gives pine a natural resistance matching that of cedar and redwood." And because Nature's Choice contains no chemicals, scraps don't



require any special disposal or handling.

Nature's Choice is completely free of wane and mostly free of knots, the company says. One side of the decking is smooth, the other grooved.

Distributed by Building Products Plus, Nature's Choice Deck is manufactured by Burkes' Garden Deck Component Systems, an Indiana-based company. Burkes' also thermally modifies wood for several other brand names: Green Eco-Wood, PureWood, Radiance, and Roastwood. "The process is the same for all," says Burkes' George Kooistra, "but some apply their own sealer."

Decking is available in 1x5 planks at \$1.78 per linear foot. Railing components include 2x2 balusters, 4x4 posts, and 2x4 handrails.

Scott Gibson is a writer in East Waterboro, Maine.

■ **Building Products Plus**, 281/509-9729, natureschoicedeck.com.

LED Light Sticks

Buy accent deck lighting by the foot

The Wagner Companies' Lumenrail packs LEDs into 3/4-inch-wide sticks that can be used for accent lighting on decks and stairways.

Light sticks are available in lengths from 6 to 60 inches in 6-inch increments and can be installed in wet or dry locations. They are hard-wired and come with 18-inch leads on each end so that lights can be connected in series. The ETL-listed light fixtures are also dimmable when connected to an aftermarket DC voltage controller.

Lights draw 2 watts of current per foot. Customers



have two lens options: a "cool white" lens with a light output of 51 lumens per foot and a transparent lens with an output of 86 lumens per foot. (For a point of reference, a 60-watt incandescent bulb puts out roughly 800 lumens.)

Lumenrail sticks retail for about \$85 per foot. — S.G.

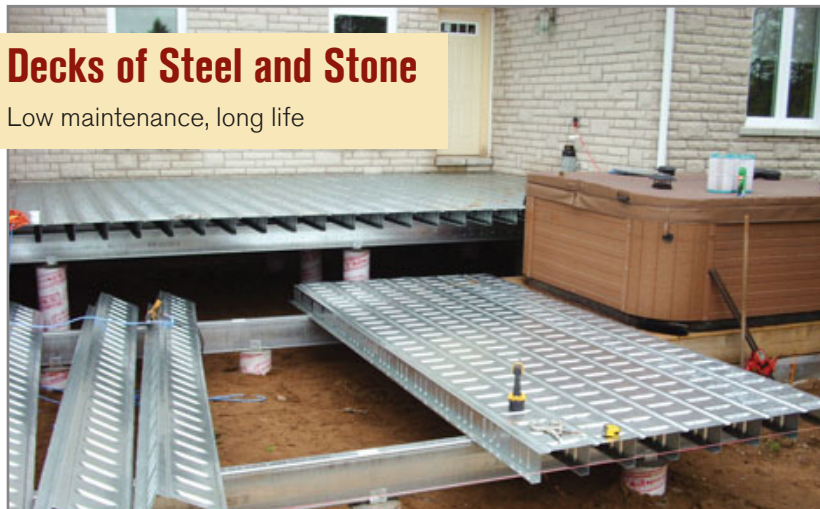
■ **The Wagner Companies**, 888/243-6914, wagnercompanies.com.

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Decks of Steel and Stone

Low maintenance, long life



Those homeowners attracted to composite decking by the promise of low maintenance might also be interested in a steel-and-stone approach that a Canadian firm says needs even less attention than composites do.

Made from 100 percent recycled steel, EvolutionDeck's 16-gauge galvanized-steel beams and planks are set on conventional concrete piers and, much like light-gauge steel framing, are screwed together on site.

Beams are available in depths of 8 and 10 inches. Eight-inch beams can span 8 feet post to post; 10-inch beams can span up to 14 feet, and when doubled, up to 20 feet. Planks are 6 inches deep and designed for 10-foot spans. When installed correctly, the system has a deflection of $L/682$ and can support loads up to 256 pounds per square foot.

Once in place, the steel deck can handle a variety of surface finishes, including granite, limestone, and travertine. Natural stone needs little maintenance beyond an occasional hosing down, the company says, and it can be sealed



periodically to minimize staining.

Although EvolutionDeck, an engineering company as well as a manufacturer, sells stone in its own market area, buyers in other locations should source finish stone locally. Kits are available now in Ontario and by special order; they'll be more widely available in U.S. markets in 2010.

Decks are designed to last 60 years and come with a structural warranty of 30 years. Without a finish surface and not including concrete piers, the steel beams and planks retail for between \$12 and \$15 per square foot. — S.G.

■ **EvolutionDeck**, 800/725-5228, evolution-deck.com.

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Products

Collated Screws for Composites

Coating makes fasteners compatible with ACQ framing

Pam Fastening Technology says its PamFast collated autofeed screws eliminate the need for predrilling composite decking and produce a consistent countersink for a neat, finished appearance.

Available in lengths of 2½ and 3 inches, PamFast Composite Deck Screws have a special head that's designed to reduce mushrooming in deck boards and a dual-thread pattern that pulls decking tightly to framing. The thread design allows the screws to be driven with about one-quarter less torque than other deck screws, resulting in less bit wear and easier installation.

The #10 screws fit Pam's P13 autofeed system, which uses a tapered Torx 25 driver. The proprietary bits and screws can also be used in Milwaukee, Senco, Hilti,



Grabber, and Hitachi autofeed systems.

Screws come in four colors — brown, red, tan, and gray — as well as stainless steel. Colored screws are protected by a coating that resists corrosion in standard ACQ-treated framing lumber; for treated lumber rated for ground contact, the company recommends stainless steel.

Screws, collated 50 per strip, retail for \$86.31 per 1,000 for the 2½-inch length and \$108.56 per 1,000 for the 3-inch length. — S.G.

■ **Pam Fastening Technology**, 800/699-2674, pamfast.com.

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Products

A Moveable Roof

Metal covering works rain or shine



The Equinox is a louvered roof system that provides filtered shade on sunny days and a watertight patio covering when it rains.

Actuated by a 12-volt DC motor — which is controlled by toggle switches or a remote control — the louvers rotate in unison through a 160-degree arc, making a wide range of shade settings possible. The motor can be powered by a transformer plugged into a standard 110-volt receptacle or by a solar panel that's built into the roof. The roof can also be linked to a home automation system to open or close on a preset schedule or as conditions warrant (when it starts to rain, for instance).

Roofs can be installed as free-standing structures or attached to an existing building. They can be flat or pitched — or even vertical to provide privacy or wind protection.

The 8-inch-wide, 1¼-inch-thick louvers are made from roll-formed galvanized steel with a powder-coat finish. Roofs can be manufactured to just about any size, although the maximum louver length is 12 feet. Larger roofs are made by dividing the covered areas into increments of 8 feet, 10 feet, or 12 feet, the standard louver lengths.

The support pieces can be finished in stucco, stone, wood, or other materials to help the structure blend with the house. Retail pricing is about \$30 per square foot, including the support system. Custom finishes cost more.

Dealers are limited mainly to the western U.S., but the system can be ordered in kit form and delivered anywhere in the country. Lead time for ordering a system is about two weeks. — S.G.

■ **Equinox Louvered Roof**, 801/231-0798, equinoxroof.com. ❖