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TIMBERLINE

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Porch Revival

Builders, especially in the South and East, are finding a market for historically inspired homes. Porches are one feature of these homes that is particularly popular. Covered porches are part of a neighborhood tradition that was lost when our lifestyles geared up to a pace too fast to appreciate them.

A truly effective porch should be a living space that encourages talk, observation and reflection. Developers in South Carolina found through research that the perfect porch was eight feet deep to the outside rail. Six feet was too narrow.

Another study found that for decks and porches, homeowners prefer wood. In the study, 94% chose natural wood over alternative products such as plastic and composite lumber.

Living With Bears

Although many of our readers have never encountered a bear, living with carnivores in your backyard is a more likely occurrence in this world of overlapping habitats. More people live in the wildlands so there are fewer places for bears, cougars, coyotes and wolves to avoid humans. In our neck of the woods, we often have bears pass by, as well as cougars and coyotes. Hundreds live in this part of the mountains.

Black bears, the most common breed, range from five to six feet long, two-three feet at the shoulder. The average male weighs 225 lbs. with yearlings about 60-75 lbs. They range in color from black, brown, cinnamon to reddish brown. There are 600,000 bears in North America. They are omnivorous, eating practically anything including berries, grasses, nuts and insects. They also eat fish, small mammals, eggs, honey or carrion (basically whatever is available). They live for about 20 years, breeding when around 4 years of age. Mothers stay with their cubs until they are 15 months old. Contrary to common belief, they do not really hibernate, but move from den to den during winter months, sleeping for long periods. In the event you find yourself living or recreating in bear country, here are some tips:

At home:

- Don't leave food out. Feed pets and livestock indoors.
- Store garbage in tight fitting cans or inside a shed or garage.
- Clean barbecue grills immediately after use and don't leave food scraps around.
- Bee hives and fruit trees attract bears. Either be generous or realistic. You can install chainlink or electric fence or you can share. Our local bears eat and run- rarely staying more than a few minutes in our orchard, even when the fruit is ripe. The deer are another story.

In the woods:

- Make plenty of noise when hiking, don't hike alone and keep small children close.
- Always be aware of your surroundings. Look for tracks or scat so you know who is in the neighborhood.
- Keep a clean camp. No food should be left out (hang it high in a tree) Sleep 100 feet away from cooking area. Don't leave trash out. Don't sleep in your cooking clothes. Don't keep fish entrails in camp.
- If you encounter a bear, stay calm and avoid direct eye contact. Stay upwind and act human by talking and waving your hands. DO NOT approach a bear, especially with cubs. Give the bear an escape route. If a bear is aggressive, scare it by yelling and/or use other methods of noisy intimidation. As a last resort, curl into a ball (or lie flat and act dead). Do not move until the bear is gone.

Remember black bears are more afraid of you than you are of them. Be bear aware and you won't have any problems! If you want to know more, visit www.bearbiology.com on the Internet.

CA Requires Fire Retardant Shingles

California is known for its natural beauty, its mild climate (outside of the mountains) and its wildfires. The increase in structural losses from wildfire have prompted state officials to require that all wood shingles be fire retardant. This rule includes both new roof applications and replacement of existing roofs.

“Untreated shakes and shingles are no longer allowed to be used in California,” said High Council of the State Fire Marshal’s office. “We have also placed (this information) on our Web site at www.fireca.org.”

This law has been on the books since 1995 when a minimum of a Class C rating was required. Later laws required a Class A and B roofs in specified areas. Officials realize that it will take a full generation before all untreated shingle and shake roofs will be fire safe but decided it was important to clarify that any homeowners who were replacing shingles on a previously untreated roof need to be aware that they are required to use treated shakes as a replacement product. This can be problematic when the shakes have a different appearance than those they are replacing. Treated shakes tend to be more expensive as well. However, fire officials, conscious of wind and wildfire potential are adamant that the change is in everyone’s best interest.

The shake and shingle industry is committed to a comprehensive and aggressive public education campaign to make roofers, distributors and homeowners aware of the new law, and by making the required shakes and shingles more widely available. Builders in the California market will know that non-retardant roofs will no longer be approved by any state building departments, even for remodels.



Interesting Information

Updated Handbook

The Forest Products Society has published two reference sources for users of wood products. *The Wood Handbook: Wood as an Engineering Material*, first issued in 1935, was developed as an aid to manufacturers, engineers, architects and other users involved in making and using wood products. It is the only truly detailed source of information available on the physical and mechanical properties of wood and how they are affected by variations in the wood itself. The most recent update before now was ten years old.

This information is now available on CD-Rom. Called *The Nature of Wood and Wood Products*, it contains a series of study modules designed to provide a basic understanding of wood as a material and about principal products made of wood. Its answers such questions as how do various types of wood differ? What wood properties can be modified to improve performance?

To get the handbook (which is \$59.95 plus shipping) or the CD (which is \$69.95 plus shipping) call the Society at (608) 231-1361 ext. 202 or by visiting its website at www.forestprod.org.



A Tax Tip For Businesses

Builders and their suppliers may be missing an important tax deduction unless they take a good, hard look at their excess inventory. By donating new, non-moving products to charity, a company can earn a federal tax deduction under Section 170(e) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Regular corporations (C) may deduct the cost of the inventory donated plus half the difference between cost and fair market value. Deductions may be up to twice the cost. S corporations, partnerships and sole proprietorships earn a straight cost deduction. Small quantities left over from jobs, discontinued models, styles or colors, canceled orders, undamaged returns and slow selling items are all potential candidates for this classification.



Cracks In Hardwood Floors

Cracks are a common complaint in wood floors. The National Oak Flooring Manufacturers’ Association has a *Trouble Shooting Manual* available that includes the causes and solutions to this problem. The manual is \$5 from the Association. To order this and other helpful information about oak flooring call NOFMA at (901) 526-5016 or write to P.O. Box 3009, Memphis, TN 38173-0009

Earthy, All Natural Wall Glaze

Want something truly organic to put on your walls? Color Wash paints from BioShield Paint Co. is made from natural ingredients including clay, food grade preservatives and fine pigment powders made of earth and rock. The paints give walls a translucent, watercolor look as well as visual texture. Call (800) 621-2591 or check www.bioshieldpaint.com for more information.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Canadian mill workers went on strike in July, affecting mostly coastal British Columbia. One of the largest mills quickly settled with the union, giving them a 2% pay hike and benefits. Concessions in flexibility on shift schedules is a major negotiating point that is stalling talks with other mills. Labor talks in the western U.S. have gone better.

May building starts were down but overall construction spending was up. This mixed signal indicated that the rise in interest rates has teeth and has been biting into some construction markets. **Nationwide, housing costs are reaching new heights.** The average home price in the U.S. surpassed \$200,000 for the first time. Seven years ago the average home price was only \$150,000. These figures are based on national surveys by the FHA which currently has loan ceilings of \$227,000. The rise in home prices reflects 31 key markets.

Another federal study found that one in seven families has a critical housing need. These include people from all walks of life. While the poor are an obvious group, the study also found working families and the elderly at risk. Some families pay more than half of their income to housing expense. Three million moderate income families cannot afford basic housing because of excessive housing costs. 650,000 are living in substandard housing. Needs for basic housing have risen 17% over a two year period. The biggest needs are in the suburbs rather than the cities.

One of the most vulnerable groups are municipal workers such as teachers and police officers whose income is too low for average housing. Affordable housing is listed as one of the biggest impediments to economic growth in many communities. Essential workers are traveling further than ever to find housing, creating more strain on transportation corridors and pollution.

Lumber demand and supply are expected to level off during the summer months. 55 softwood mills have announced summer curtailments, with an estimated 50 million board foot draw-down in supply. At the same time, housing starts are expected to decrease 3.3%.



WWPA has information in their Tech Note No. 2. Its good to know that once the wasps emerge, they do not reinfect the wood. If you would like a copy of this information, send a request to info@wwpa.org. Please include your mailing address or fax number. *Please note that Bear Creek Lumber has not had any wasp complaints!*

Quotes

People, like nails, lose their effectiveness when they lose direction and begin to bend-
Walter Savage Landor

If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door.

The road to success is always under construction-
Lily Tomlin



New Jersey Redwood

A driver on the northbound side of the Garden State Parkway near Milepost 135 may be rather startled to see what looks like a tall California redwood tree about 100 feet off the road.

It turns out that about two years ago, Bell Atlantic inquired of the Parkway what would be necessary to get permission to build a monopole for its cellular telephone network on its right of way. In a subsequent public hearing, residents were concerned about the esthetic impact on the surrounding neighborhood. A tower disguised as a tree seemed a reasonable solution. Bell purchased the mostly steel/pole from Valmont Industries in Nebraska. The "needles" are actually made of epoxy, similar to what is used on an artificial Christmas tree. The trunk is entirely brown epoxy that is made to look like bark. The "tree" is 106 feet tall and weighs 15 tons.

The experiment has been a big success and received an award, for Most Environmentally Friendly Cellular Tree Project, from the Turnpike Authority. The bird population agrees. A similar tower lost a significant part of its "bark" to a very persistent eastern woodpecker!

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