

“Cement” Siding Looks Like Wood, Wears Like Concrete

Need new siding or building a house? How about a product with the look of wood and the strength of concrete that hardly ever needs paint?

The product is fiber cement siding, and it's made of a mixture of Portland cement, sand, cellulose and water.

Alan Forrer is communications manager with Cemplank, one of the three main companies manufacturing and marketing fiber-cement siding in the U.S. He says this type of siding has been used around the world for decades, but has been available in the U.S. for only about 10 years and is not well-known. Cemplank's main competitors are James Hardie Building Products and CertainTeed, one of the largest U.S. makers of vinyl siding.

The product is gaining in popularity, thanks in part to problems with hardboard siding, but also because homeowners are looking for longevity and low maintenance but with a more natural look.

Forrer says installing fiber cement siding is almost the same as with other types of siding, in that it's cut to fit and nailed in place. Because of the cement content, though, it must be handled a little differently. For example, don't try to carry a single plank flat, particularly in longer lengths, because it may break. It can be cut with a circular saw, but dust can be a problem. Special fiber cement shears are available, though, which all but do away with the dust.

It weighs more than most other siding materials. Installing it is generally not a one-man job, because of the weight and need for careful handling.

Fiber-cement siding costs about the same as the top grades of vinyl siding, but is half as much as stone or brick. Installation costs vary geographically. Where the product has already become widely accepted, installers have learned to handle it and installation costs are similar to other board siding materials. Where workers are less familiar with fiber-cement siding, installation costs can be as much as twice as high as installing vinyl or steel.

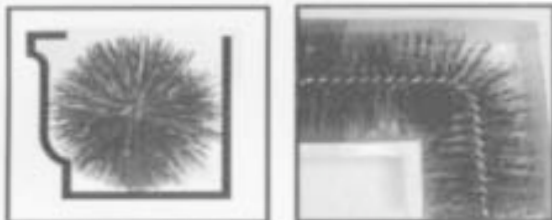
One advantage of fiber cement siding is that it will not burn. It's also resistant to pests like termites, woodpeckers and carpenter bees.

It has little or no insulation value, so keep that in mind when insulating and wrapping the house before the siding is installed.

Gutter Brush Stops “Everything But The Water”

The past few years all kinds of new rain gutters have come on the market to keep leaves and other trash out of rain gutters. But here's a new product that simply lays inside existing gutters to keep out leaves, branches and other debris while letting water filter through to the downspouts.

“Gutterpillar” looks like a giant caterpillar. It's simply an 18-in. long wire brush that you can use in small chunks over the downspouts, or place the full length of the house. Besides filtering out trash, it also acts as a deterrent against nesting birds and rodents.



Made from UV-resistant poly bristles, it flexes to fit around corners. To clean, it simply lifts out of the gutter. No cutting or drilling is needed to install. You just lay it into the gutter.

Comes in sizes to fit 5 and 6-in. gutters. Sells for \$3.99 to \$4.99.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Amerisales, Inc., Box 248, Orland Park, Ill. 60462 (ph 708 460-6373).

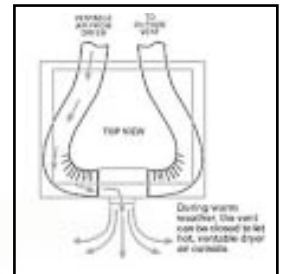


Fiber cement siding offers longevity and low maintenance with a natural look, says the company.



The siding replicates the warmth and beauty of natural rustic cedar wood.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Cemplank, Inc., Excelsior Industrial Park, P.O. Box 99, Blandon, Pa. 19510-0099 (ph 877 CEMPLANK; Website: <http://www.cemplank.com/cemplank.html>); or CertainTeed Corporation, WeatherBoards FiberCement Siding, P.O. Box 860, 750 East Swedesford Road, Valley Forge, Pa. 19482 (ph 877 295-0970); or James Hardie Building Products, 26300 La Alameda, Suite 250, Mission Viejo, Calif. 92691 (ph 877 6HARDIE or 888-JHARDIE; Website: www.hardihome.com).



Air from dryer vents into unit through a heat-exchanging filter, and then outside the house. In cold weather, you open a slide gate to let clean, warm air into the house.

Money-Saving Heat Catcher

Instead of pumping warmed-up air from your clothes dryer to outside your house, you can use that air to help heat your home with the new “Heat Helper”, which was introduced at the recent Hardware Show in Chicago.

Made from sturdy 18-ga. cold rolled steel, it simply installs under a dryer. Air from the dryer vents into the unit, through a heat-exchanging filter, and then outside the house. In cold weather, you open a slide gate to let clean, warm air into the house. In warm weather, you vent the hot air out of the house as normal.

The Heat Helper raises the dryer 9 in. A side benefit is that it makes the dryer easier to load and unload. And in addition to helping heat the house, the unit also adds humidity to the house which reduces the dryness and static electricity inside the home during winter months.

Sells for \$99.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Heater Helper, Wichita, Kan. (ph 800 852-9775 or



Made from 18-ga. cold rolled steel, “Heat Helper” installs under your dryer.

316 776-9452; Website: www.heathelper.com).

“Can’t Miss” Giant Fly Swatter

It looks like a joke product but the manufacturer of this new giant fly swatter says it really works.

The company says the extra-long handle delivers fast, accurate swats for sure kills of flies, mosquitoes, wasps and other bothersome insects.

The 36-in. jumbo swatter sells for \$9.99 or two for \$17.99, plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Whatever Works, Earth Science Building, 74 – 20th St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11232 (ph 800 947-8374; Website: www.whateverworks.com).

Giant fly swatter is equipped with an extra-long handle.

