

LONG BEACH • SOUTH BAY

September 19, 2007

homeimprovement®

www.homeimprovementlongbeach.com

Great ideas and resources for your home and garden

Windows With Wow!

Top trends in window treatments

Green Light Your Home

Eco-friendly outdoor lighting options

100s of Resources

For your home and garden

Outer Beauty

Explore home exterior materials

expert tips >> monthly garden planner >> design ideas
hot home tips >> local events >> resources

Outer Beauty

For your home's exterior, it's
what's outside that counts

by Carrie Whitney and Karon Warren

With the multitude of materials available, whether you choose natural or synthetic, your home's exterior can welcome guests and hint at the wonderful decor behind the front door. Here are a few exterior options to explore.

Wood: Natural appeal

A traditional favorite, wood remains a popular choice for home exteriors, especially in the historic areas of Long Beach. Wood species such as pine, mahogany, cedar, redwood, cypress, spruce and Douglas fir are just some that are used for siding.

Wood siding products include plank (long rectangular pieces of wood applied side by side in a vertical pattern), clapboard (overlapping long rectangular pieces of wood in a horizontal pattern), shingles (smaller uniform-sized pieces of wood applied in rows) and shakes (smaller non-uniform-sized pieces of wood applied in rows). Consisting of compressed wood fiber, composition board or hardboard siding also may be used.

Brick: How it stacks up

One of the most prevalent natural exterior materials, brick still ranks high with homeowners. Made primarily of clay and water, brick comes in a rainbow of colors and textures. Of course, it's important to make sure you like the color you choose because you cannot change it later without replacing or painting the brick.

When it comes to price, brick generally runs between 3 to 5 percent more than wood, vinyl or fiber cement siding products. In most cases, this cost can be recouped when the home is sold, since, on average, brick homes sell for 6 percent more than other home styles.

Stone: A solid selection

Another natural selection, stone remains popular with today's homeowners. Unlike other choices, stone generally is used as an accent material rather than a primary surface

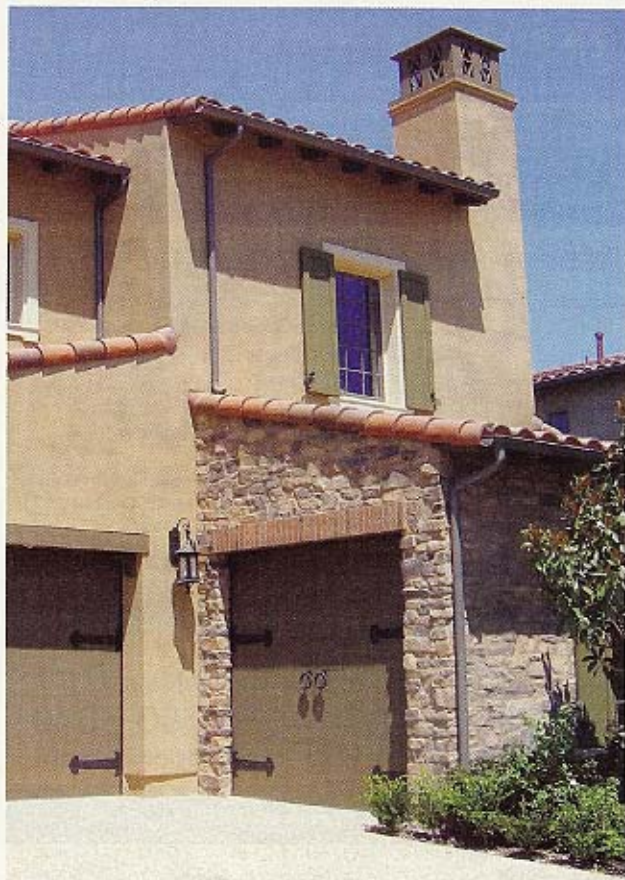


Photo courtesy of Merlex Stucco

material. Trim work, accent walls and mailboxes are just a few of the applications for stone.

Because it is a natural resource, stone is available in an unlimited number of styles, colors and textures. Thanks to modern technology, homeowners can find this variety with manufactured stone as well. Like natural stone, manufactured stone has a rock-like appearance; however, it is constructed of cement and generally has a veneer only a few inches deep.

Vinyl siding: Built for beauty

Over the past 5 to 10 years, vinyl siding has popped up on homes everywhere. Made of polyvinyl chloride, vinyl siding panels resemble wood siding and come in various styles and colors. Solid-core vinyl consists of foam backing applied to a premium vinyl, providing tremendous energy savings. Most vinyl is expected to last for many years as well—it usually comes with a lifetime warranty, which generally covers 50 years.

Fiber cement siding: A strong choice

Perhaps the hottest home-exterior product on the market right now, fiber cement siding quickly is becoming the most sought-after siding option. Fiber cement siding, such as Hardiplank and CertainTeed, resembles wood siding but is straighter and heavier than wood. ❶

Tips from the Experts

Bill Leisey with **Masterworks Construction Services** in **Signal Hill** says that though vinyl siding is not used in the South Bay area, PVC trim boards are becoming more popular for fascia, window and door trim details because they are termite-proof and can be painted.

Bob Fisher with **REFCO Construction** in **Torrance** says stucco is popular for remodeling and new construction because you can change the style of your home by merely choosing different stucco textures.

Tom Wilson with **Wilson's Home Improvement** in **Long Beach** says redwood or cedar siding are most popular in the historic areas of Long Beach, but almost all exterior materials work well in the South Bay area.

Fisher says stucco is more durable and has less maintenance issues than other exterior finishes. In addition, since color is added as part of the stucco process, stucco requires little or no painting maintenance, he says.

When choosing a material or color for your exterior, make sure you do not choose one that is too trendy or out of character for your neighborhood, Wilson says.

Wilson says one popular combination is using wood siding with stucco to create a nice contrast in textures.

Leisey says when repairing a pre-World War II California bungalow sided with wood, it is best to use the same species as the original siding; however, if an entire wall needs to be replaced, he recommends a fiber cement product.

Wilson says don't settle for what's available in exterior siding at the local home center. There are many different textures and materials available, so make your investment a lasting one by doing research and getting samples before you choose, he says.

Leisey says a common mistake in installing exterior siding is not waterproofing and flashing the framing properly prior to putting on the exterior covering, especially where two different materials come together.

When choosing your exterior materials, be careful about using too many different materials and watch the proportions of one material to another, Leisey says.

Fisher says wood siding is great for a certain look but not practical near damp, humid areas as it has a tendency to attract mildew and dry rot as well as termites and ants.

Resources

Decocal

22208 S Vermont Ave.
Torrance, CA 90502
(310) 782-6304
www.decocal.com
see ad on p. 19

(310) 326-5160
www.thompsonbldg.com
see ad on p. 4

A1 Building Materials
(562) 531-1874

Sunset Paving

1526 West 259th Street Suite 1
Harbor City, CA 90710
(310) 626-6341
www.sunsetpavinginc.com
see ad on p. 31

Contractors Warehouse
(562) 633-6878

Cougar Stone
(714) 993-7360

Thompson Building Materials

2400 Pacific Coast Highway
Lomita, CA 90717

Southeast Construction Products
(626) 443-9333

While you do have to paint fiber cement siding, because it holds paint so well, it only requires paint every 10 years or so. Otherwise, maintenance is minimal.

Stucco: A many-layered option


Stucco remains one of the most popular siding choices in the Long Beach area. Applied with a smooth or textured finish, there are two types of stucco: hardcoat and Exterior Insulation and Finish System (commonly referred to as EIFS or synthetic stucco).

Hardcoat stucco consists of three layers, or coats of a sand, cement and water mix. EIFS stucco also has layers, but they are composed of different materials than hardcoat stucco. EIFS usually contains polystyrene foam, a cement adhesive, a glass fiber mesh panel and acrylic elastomeric coating.

How to choose

With so many choices available, it may be hard to decide which material would be best for your home. Some questions to consider when choosing a siding option include "what style do I want my house to look like?" and "how much can I afford?"

Also consider how much time and money you want to spend on maintenance, and don't be afraid to mix different materials for a unique look. Talk to local contractors and suppliers to find out what their experiences with different siding products have been. Visit area suppliers to see products first hand. Talk to family and friends about their experiences as well and check out their homes to see how the finished product looks.

While researching and finding the right home exterior material for your home can be a daunting task, the reward will be a wonderful new asset you can enjoy every day. 

Editorial Resources begin on page 30.