

ASK DAD



HARRY JACHYM

Pressure-treated lumber is safe, long lasting

Safety concerns about pressure-treated lumber have surfaced lately. Often referred to as Wolmanized lumber (a trade name, just like Kleenex is to tissue), pressure-treated lumber has been the material of choice for many years for outdoor projects. The worries are mostly about the toxic chemicals used to treat the lumber leaching into soil, especially around child play sets.

What is pressure-treated lumber? In the simplest terms, pressure-treated lumber is construction lumber that has had chromated copper arsenate forced into the wood cells under great pressure. Copper is a fungicide to prevent decay caused by various fungi. Arsenate (a form of arsenic) is an insecticide. This particular form is found as a natural trace element in soil, water and living organisms. Chromate "sets" the other two chemicals in the wood making them highly insoluble and leach resistant so it's safe for human, animal and plant contact.

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Because this compound sounds pretty scary (one of the chemicals is arsenic) I did some research. I found that many of the fears are unfounded. Because the chemicals are "fixed" into the lumber, very little leaches in the soil. Several studies in Florida, California, and by the Consumer Product Safety Commission have found that there is no significant danger from using pressure treated lumber in or around play areas. A Florida study said that a child would have to eat a spoonful of dirt a day, taken right next to a play set, for thirty years before there would even be a potential health effect. California's Department of Health found that no form of CCA treated wood has ever been found to cause cancer in animals or humans.

Changes Are On The Way

Public perceptions about treated wood, as well as new technologies are causing changes in the industry. Over the next two years a new generation of preservatives will be on the market. This new preservative will be copper based, but without arsenic. This will likely come at a price however. It's expected that the new product will cost 10 to 20 percent more than the existing.

CCA treated wood has been safely used for over seventy years. Both the EPA and the CPSC find treated wood acceptable for use for playground structures. People are exposed to more arsenic in food, water and other natural sources than from treated wood.

Still certain precautions should be followed when working with P.T. lumber. Avoid prolonged inhalation of sawdust. Protect your eyes. Wash your hands before eating, drinking or using tobacco products. These, however, are good practices to follow when using any wood. In addition, burning pressure treated wood can cause toxic fumes. Dispose of scraps in regular garbage.

The wood preservative industry is quick to point out that using pressure treated wood is helpful to the environment. Pressure-treated lumber has longevity that cannot be obtained with untreated lumber reducing the need to replace rotted boards.

Harry Jachym, a licensed builder, teaches construction trades to high school students and is the general contractor for Habitat for Humanity, Western Wayne County. Since we all seem to ask our fathers for repair or remodeling advice, Jachym writes "Ask Dad," a column on home issues ranging from repairs and maintenance to building and remodeling projects. He is a Plymouth resident. Send any questions or comments to Harry at askdad@comcast.net or in care of Susan Steinnmueller, 805 East Maple, Birmingham, 48009.



Transformed



STAFF PHOTOS BY JERRY ZOLYNSKY

Glamour: Above, hand paintings and silk add glamour and luxury to this bathroom in the Junior League of Detroit Show House. Top left, The Show House at 41 Provençal in Grosse Pointe Farm is an Albert Kahn Tudor inspired by the Arts & Crafts movement.

Show House designers give elegant 1900s Tudor a new look to benefit Detroit projects

BY LANA MINI
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Inside the chocolate brick 8,600-square-foot Albert Kahn Tudor hides a vivid pink West Palm Beach-style bedroom with palm trees painted on the walls. It's any little girl's delight and was created by Shawn McCrindle Interiors and Lisa Ficarra Artworks of Grosse Pointe.

Nearby, the intricately hand-painted woman on a glamorous changing screen in the master bathroom, by Faux Unique of Canton, adds a romantic glamour to the three-story provincial home at 41 Provençal Avenue in Grosse Pointe — it's this year's show house presented by the Junior League of Detroit.

Intricate birds and subtle marbling painted on the hallway walls are nothing short of breathtaking and were created by Jane Shoot Painted Interiors of Grosse Pointe. The stately dining room subdued with dark wall color appears inviting and is an interesting mix with the lavish dining



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Please see **HOUSE, C3**



Classic: Above, DMJ Interiors of Rochester restored the first-floor library's paneled walls with a special oil treatment and included classic antiques for the decor. Inset at left, from whimsical to classic, everything goes in the Junior League of Detroit Show House 2002. The painting here is a light-hearted version of the 41 Provençal home.

Models at Somerset are not your typical birdhouses

BY LANA MINI
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Searching for a quaint bird feeder to lure chickadees or hummingbirds into your yard this spring?

How about a partially enclosed, 6-foot house with panels built from leaves, twigs, strings and feathers plus an overhead light source for the birds?

The house designed and created by JPRAA Architects of Farmington Hills is too big to hang from a tree, of

course, but the over-sized birdhouse is ample enough to attract a whole chorus of songbirds into a backyard. It's just one of 100 birdhouses on display at the Home and Garden Show at The Somerset Collection North Garden Grand Court in Troy through May 12.

The exhibit opened April 20 and is proving immensely popular, according to Linda McIntosh at The Somerset Collection.

"It's been incredibly busy," she said. "I can't believe how much time people are spending look at them. It appeals

to everyone from 8 to 80."

The birdhouses were designed by local companies, architecture firms and even fifth-graders at Hamilton Elementary School in Troy.

Raffle tickets are available daily for the 46 birdhouses designed by the children. The other birdhouses are available for ownership through a May 11 silent auction. All the proceeds from the raffle and auction are being donated to the Detroit Zoo.

Please see **BIRDS, C4**

WHAT: A display of birdhouses by local architects, students and individuals followed by a silent auction of the houses. Proceeds go to the Detroit Zoo.

WHERE: The Somerset Collection North Garden Grand Court in Troy amid a 3,000-square-foot garden.

WHEN: April 20 through May 12; silent auction is 7-9 p.m. May 11, with \$20 admission.

SPONSORS: The Somerset Collection, Dominick Tringali Architects, Great Oaks Landscape Associates, Inc.