



Home Improvement Tips

Poison In Your Backyard?

Recycled Milk Jugs Are The Antidote

(NAPSA)—Planning to use pressure-treated lumber for your next outdoor building project? In light of recent news, it's worth thinking twice. Studies have shown that pressure-treated lumber can leach unsafe levels of arsenic into the soil.

CCA, or chromated copper arsenate, is a substance used to help pressure treated lumber (commonly used in outdoor building projects) resist insects and rot. The substance is used on 98 percent of pressure treated lumber sold in the U.S.

A recent University of Florida study found CCA contains high levels of arsenic—a carcinogen linked to numerous health problems, including cancer and diabetes—and that wood treated with the substance tends to leach arsenic into surrounding soil.

Experts say the findings represent a pressing public health problem. In response, government agencies have taken steps to warn people about the dangers CCA-treated wood may present.

For example, the Connecticut Department of Health's Web site officially warns visitors that "children should be prevented from playing underneath CCA-treated structures." The state of Minnesota is considering banning CCA altogether (following the lead of such countries as Germany and Sweden) and the Environmental Protection Agency has asked the American Wood Preservers Institute to develop a program to increase consumer understanding of the issue.



Building materials made from recycled plastic may be smart alternatives to chemically treated lumber.

Industry experts say the findings about CCA has caused many consumers to turn to what is called alternative lumber. Paul Bracegirdle, VP of Engineering for USPL (www.usplasticlumber.com), manufacturer of Carefree Decking Systems, said, "HDPE and composite alternative lumber products like ours are naturally insect- and rot-resistant. They're made of recycled plastic for durability, longevity and safety."

Products like Carefree, ChoiceDek, Timbertech, Brock and Kroy are made from synthetic and recycled materials, and, for many homeowners, they're smart alternatives to CCA-treated wood.

For more information on alternative lumber, visit www.plasticlumber.org, the Plastic Lumber Trade Association, or www.plastics.com, the American Plastics Council. For EPA guidelines on arsenic, visit www.epa.gov.