

Tools & Materials - Materials

Get the look of real wood without the hassle

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Photography by Roger Yip

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These fake wood products look surprisingly like the real thing

When it comes to wood, nothing beats the real thing. Unless it looks and feels like the real thing but resists mould, rot, insects and fire, and doesn't require yearly refinishing. Here are five wood doppelgängers sure to trick the mind:

Outwater Beams (Shown above)

Large wooden beams never go out of style, but installation requires major structural support and comes with hefty material and environmental costs. Luckily, there's an alternative: beams that look like solid wood but are made of heavy-duty plastic. No warping, decay (even outside) or splitting. There are seven styles to choose from, including hand-hewn, raised grain and vintage, with coordinating corbels and accessories available.

Price: \$7 to \$23 per foot

Everlog Systems Concrete Logs

Get the classic look of a **log-cabin-style** home without, well, logs. Made of concrete, Everlog wall systems create an exterior log-house look (interior walls are flat). There's no worry over rot, mould, insects or fire. Plus, the airtight, R-19 insulation value is seven times that of a real log home. The systems come in virtually any natural wood colour. The cost includes product delivery, erection, chinking and finishing.

Price: \$80 per sq. ft. (approx.)

Concrete-wood drywall

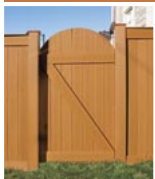
After billions of B.C. trees were killed by the pesky mountain pine beetle, the province was left with a challenge: what to do with the dead wood? Luckily, a scientist at the University of Northern British Columbia came up with a solution. As it turns out, the wood makes a great ingredient for producing concrete. The result: aesthetically pleasing boards that can be cut with regular woodworking tools. The material is a water-resistant and economical replacement for gypsum-based drywall or as countertops or flooring.

Note: this product is still in development

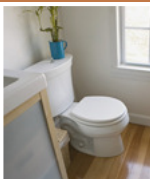
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