

Concrete Logs Look Like Real Wood

By Lorn Manthey, Contributing Editor

Ever dream of living in a log home without worrying about maintenance, log shrinkage, or insect damage? EverLogs™ are made of concrete, but until you're close enough to touch them you'd swear they're the real thing.

"EverLogs have the look and feel of real wood, right down to the grain, knots and growth rings that appear on interior and exterior surfaces," says EverLog president Stewart Hansen. "The façade is actually concrete that's bonded to panels of insulation, reinforcing metal and other layers of concrete. Homes or commercial buildings are made by stacking the panels and joining them with mortar. Exteriors have the distinct feel of fresh-cut logs. Interiors can have the same finish, or be covered with wallboard.

Hansen says another key benefit is that EverLog structures are fireproof, which means peace of mind and lower insurance costs for owners. The company produces logs in its Missoula, Mont. plant and ships them to customers across the country. The logs are cast in place to precise lengths and homes are built with attractive construction techniques such as butt and pass, posted, saddle notches or dovetail notches.

"There are really no restrictions on the designs we can build and the look we can

achieve," says Hansen. "We can deliver a rustic cabin, a massive post and beam look, even a contemporary design. Standard windows, roofing, plumbing, heating and cooling round out the construction process with EverLog homes.

The company also produces EverLog™ Siding for use in renovations and new construction. The siding panels range from 12 to 16 in. high (depending on the profile selected). Pre-finished exteriors replicate the exact character, texture and warm appeal of handcrafted wood logs. The siding uses a proprietary glass fiber reinforced concrete mix that produces high-strength yet light weight panels that won't burn, warp, twist, shrink or settle.

Greg McCue of Missoula says he evaluated different concrete siding products and found that the look, feel and quality of the EverLog was the best. He used it on several customer's homes and was so impressed that he used it on his own cabin. Craig Brewerton of Idaho says the inspiration for his EverLog home was the Sun Valley Ski Lodge, and he's very pleased with how his home turned out. "My wife and I love to fly fish and constantly maintaining a cabin would cut into our fishing time. We don't have to worry



EverLogs are made of concrete, so living in an EverLog home means no worries about maintenance, log shrinkage, or insect damage.

about that with an EverLog home because it doesn't require any maintenance." In Ennis, Mont., Dan Larson, the managing partner of Madison Valley Ranch, says EverLogs used on their new lodge provide the look of real logs without the hassles or ongoing expense and maintenance of real logs. They're also more energy efficient and look great."

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Cover Crops Benefit Gardens, Too

After an article on his business last year (Vol. 38, No. 4), so many FARM SHOW readers contacted cover crop specialist Bob Fairclough about using cover crops in their gardens that his seed provider is now packaging a special garden mix. Readers wanted the same soil building benefits for their gardens as farmers were getting in their fields. Garden Builder Cover Crop Seed Mix from Byron Seeds includes oats, Nitro radish and crimson clover.

"This is a perfect cover crop mix for gardens," says Fairclough. "Oats germinate quickly. The Nitro radish helps hold nutrients, and the clover fixes atmospheric nitrogen in the soil."

In most areas the oats and radish will winter kill, adds Fairclough, leaving the clover to be tilled under as green manure in the spring. He advises no-till gardeners to consider trimming the clover to the soil level and covering the garden bed with black plastic for 3 weeks prior to planting. Elimination of sun and rain plus the heat under the plastic will terminate the cover crop.

"Some gardeners will put up a fence and let chickens graze it down to nothing before they put in their garden," says Fairclough.

He suggests sowing the cover crop seed as garden crops mature and are removed. One of his customers interseeds growing vegetables with cover crops, shading out germinating weeds and providing a living mulch. As tomato and pepper plants are removed, the cover crops take over.

FARM SHOW readers aren't the only ones interested in the garden mix. Fairclough mentioned it to his local FFA advisor, who shared it with other advisors as a possible fundraiser.

"One school in northern Indiana has indicated a need for 500 to 700 bags," says Fairclough. "Others want to set it up as a Supervised Agricultural Experience, where students create a business selling the bags of seed."

Fairclough says he would be happy to help FFA advisors or students in other states set up similar programs.

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Garden Builder Cover Crop Seed Mix includes oats, Nitro radish and crimson clover. "It's a perfect cover crop mix for gardens," says Bob Fairclough.



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Trimmer hangs from a T-bar mounted just ahead of mower's front wheel.

Zero-Turn Rack Makes Trimming Easy

When Vernon Austin mows a cemetery, trimming close around gravestones is easy with his homemade trimmer rack. At 87 years, getting on and off to use a trimmer was giving him trouble.

"I took a standard trimmer and attached it to the mower, so when the trimmer head is on the ground, the mower pulls it along backwards," explains Austin. "I can trim around stones in half the time it used to take."

The trimmer hangs from a T-bar made from lengths of pipe mounted just ahead of the front wheel. The vertical section of the T is held in place by a C-clamp. It angles slightly forward. The horizontal section has a short length of steel strap at one end. The other end of the strap is bolted to the trimmer just below the motor.

When the trimmer is in use, the strap lets the trimmer head ride along the ground beside the mower. When not in use, the trimmer head rides on a rod mounted ahead of and below the seat. It extends out from the deck adjustment bracket and parallel to the ground. A simple welding clamp mounted to the end of the rod holds the trimmer shaft in place.

"I have a pipe mounted to the shaft of the trimmer," explains Austin. "When released from the end of the rod, the pipe lets me move it away from the mower or bring it back up



"I can trim around gravestones in half the time it used to take," says inventor Vernon Austin.

to be remounted."

Austin removed the trimmer head shield to keep it from catching against gravestones. At the same time, he mounted a round piece of plastic to the trimmer head. It keeps the trimmer head from bumping into stones and other objects and maintains a minimum length of string.

When Austin knows he will be using the trimmer, he starts it up and locks the throttle open. As he drives along, he can drop the trimmer head to the ground as needed.

"It really works well," says Austin. "I don't use as much string, and it has saved me lots of time and trouble."

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