



## BUILDING PRODUCTS Top 100 (1-25)

### Here are the most wanted products in 2006

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Tankless water heaters, solar-energy systems, and garage organization packages don't have much in common. But they do share the distinction of being some of the building products readers most wanted to know more about.

Here you'll find the top 100 products that readers asked for information about during the past year by mailing us the reader service cards found at the back of each issue. The products, which come from the editorial pages of BUILDING PRODUCTS and its sister publications BUILDER and REMODELING, represent diverse wares that can save you installation time, boost your productivity, slash material costs, or make your clients say, "Wow!"

Each Top 100 product is listed with a photo, a descriptive caption, and the manufacturer's Web site and phone number. If you missed these products the first time they appeared, now's your chance to check them out. We hope you'll find a number of items that you can incorporate into your new and remodeled homes. Happy hunting!

*–BUILDING PRODUCTS*



**1 Gracious Living.** The Maxit garage storage system from this Royal Group Technologies firm incorporates a slat wall system that supports gardening tools, sports equipment, and much more. Pros can customize storage solutions for their clients with modular Maxit hooks, brackets, and shelves, asserts the maker. Optional polymer-based chemical-resistant garage flooring also is available. 866-852-2791.

[www.graciousliving.com](http://www.graciousliving.com).



**2 Icynene.** The Icynene Insulation System is a 100 percent water-blown soft-foam insulation and air barrier. It air-seals cavities to minimize the intrusion of moisture and outdoor pollutants and reduces air leakage for increased energy efficiency, says the maker. It is ideal for application in rim joists, attics, or around windows and doors. 800-758-7325. [www.icynene.com](http://www.icynene.com).



**3 Lasco Bathware.** ADA- and ANSI-compliant bathing products from this manufacturer include acrylic and fiberglass showers with low or roll-in thresholds and slip-resistant textured bottoms. The firm also makes handheld showers, mounted seats, and grab bars. The products come in stainless steel or white powder-coat finishes. 800-945-2726. [www.lascobathware.com](http://www.lascobathware.com).



**4 Hurd.** FeelSafe windows and patio doors meet coastal building codes as well as Energy Star requirements. The insulated glass windows feature extruded aluminum cladding in seven standard and 20 custom colors; custom shapes and sizes are available with various interior wood species. FeelSafe products also come in single-pane laminated glass configurations to meet Miami-Dade County, Fla., building codes. 800-223-4873. [www.hurd.com](http://www.hurd.com).



**5 Louisiana Pacific.** The company's Top Notch family of OSB subflooring products features a vertical notch system to drain away surface water during construction and improved resin to reduce edge swell. Self-spacing, tongue-and-groove edges provide for easy installation. The panels' surface layers are perpendicular to the core layers, increasing strength and durability, the company says. They are backed by a transferable 20-year warranty. 888-820-0325. [www.lpcorp.com](http://www.lpcorp.com).



**6 Wayne-Dalton.** The idrive garage door opener mounts to the wall above the door, eliminating the overhead rail. Because it needs no turning chain, belt, or screw drive, it requires less space and operates more quietly than conventional models. Two versions are available; the idrive for Torsion is compatible with most traditional doors. 888-827-3667. [www.wayne-dalton.com](http://www.wayne-dalton.com).



**7 SieMatic.** Made from a lightweight base material that is wrapped with a layer of real stone, StoneDesign countertops allow for the gapless manufacture of lengths and areas that would otherwise be impossible to fit, says the firm. Countertops range in thicknesses from 1-1/2 to 3 inches and come in more than 24 stone types with numerous edge treatments. 215-244-6800. [www.siematic.com](http://www.siematic.com).



**8 TruStile Doors.** The Wood Door collection offers unlimited sizes and custom designs in more than 300 styles and 12 wood species. Made from hand-selected, color-matched wood, the stain-grade doors feature stile-and-rail construction and are available with a number of finishing options including etched glass and radius tops. 888-286-3931. [www.trustile.com](http://www.trustile.com).



**9 Vantage Pointe Group.** A modular system of zinc-coated steel cabinets, toolboxes, workbenches,

perforated steel pegboard, louvered wall panels, and accessories, the Dura Fitted Garage System is coated with a polyester/metallic silver epoxy. The system features two-point locking mechanisms on cabinets, lockable casters on rolling base units, and adjustable feet on fixed base units that can be bolted together for increased stability. Cabinet doors are double-skinned; drawers are lined with foam to protect tools. 877-387-2872. [www.dura.us](http://www.dura.us).



**10 SoftPlan Systems.** The maker's CAD software product lines allow users to draw fully assembled walls, windows, beams, rafters, foundations, and more once designs are completed. SoftPlan automatically creates elevations, cross sections, framing diagrams, and materials. SoftList, SoftView, SoftTalk, and SoftPlan review programs also are available. 800-248-0164. [www.softplan.com](http://www.softplan.com).



**11 Rinnai.** The Continuum tankless gas water heater delivers up to 8.5 gallons per minute and features a digital temperature control pad that can be located anywhere in the home. The system can be set to exact temperatures to deliver hot water to multiple sources at once while maintaining temperature consistency. The Continuum can be wall-mounted or recessed in exterior or interior locations. 866-746-6241. [www.foreverhotwater.com](http://www.foreverhotwater.com).



**12 storeWALL.** The storeWALL Heavy Duty System is based on an extruded PVC tongue-and-groove wall panel. Available in 4- and 8-foot lengths, the panel comes in two wood-grain finishes and three solid colors. A variety of hooks, shelves, baskets, and bins and wood, steel, or resin cabinets provide wall storage. The cabinets come in several capacities. storeWALL may be installed with screws or with no-show fasteners. 866-889-2502. [www.storewall.com](http://www.storewall.com).



**13 Rheem Water Heaters.** Delivering up to 7.4 gallons of hot water per minute, the Pronto RTG-74 tankless gas water heater has an easy-to-read digital display that allows homeowners to set their desired water temperature. The RTG-74 measures 24 inches high by 13-2/3 inches wide and 9-2/3 inches deep and weighs 52 pounds. The unit automatically shuts down if it detects an unsafe temperature in the heat exchanger, the firm says. 334-260-1500. [www.rheem.com](http://www.rheem.com).



**14 Amarr Garage Doors.** Each of the six designs in the Biltmore Estate collection was inspired by doors and design elements at the famous estate in North Carolina. Insulated with polystyrene and covered with Luan paneling, the doors boast a 3/4-inch Western red cedar overlay. An array of decorative hardware is available. 800-503-3667. [www.amarr.com](http://www.amarr.com).



**15 Gadco.** Freedom 9001 series garage doors are constructed of high-density polyethylene that the firm promises will never rust, delaminate, dent, or warp. The doors are impact- and abrasion-resistant, the maker says, and the all-aluminum framework is designed for corrosion-free operation. Available in white or brown, the doors are also insulated with expanded polystyrene. 630-859-3000. [www.gadco.com](http://www.gadco.com).



**16 Takagi.** Weighing 70 pounds, the Mobius T-M1 tankless gas water heater measures just 24 inches high by 18 inches wide and 9 inches deep. Its compact design allows it to be hung on an exterior or interior wall or installed in a cabinet with proper venting. It delivers a maximum flow rate of 9.6 gallons per minute; output temperatures can be adjusted between 100 and 176 degrees F. 888-882-5244. [www.takagi.com](http://www.takagi.com).



**17 BBT North America.** With an average efficiency rating of 87 percent, the Bosch Pro Tankless GWH 635 ES gas water heater delivers up to 6.35 gallons per minute and can supply two major applications at once, the maker says. Its compact size and direct-vent, sealed-combustion design allow it to be mounted on a wall in a closet or other room. 866-330-2725. [www.protankless.com](http://www.protankless.com).



**18 Blanco America.** Handcrafted from a single panel of 18-gauge, 304 series stainless steel, the Precision series sink boasts zero-radius corner, side, and bottom seams that create crisp, sharp lines. Other features include extra bowl depth, rear drain placement, and sound-deadening insulation. 800-451-5782. [www.blancoamerica.com](http://www.blancoamerica.com).



**19 Noritz.** Designed for wall-hung installation indoors or outdoors, the N-069M Medium+ residential tankless gas water heater delivers 6.9 gallons per minute. The heater also features a TurboFlow capability that allows it to produce 7.9 gpm within a 35-degree temperature rise. The unit is covered by a 10-year warranty. 866-766-7489. [www.noritzamerica.com](http://www.noritzamerica.com).



**20 Jeld-Wen.** Estate series garage doors offer homeowners fashionable choices for creating Mediterranean or castle looks, says the maker. The wood composite units come in multi-plank, grooved styles that mimic the look of swing doors, but lift up to open. Decorative hardware options include straps, knockers, and pull handles with studs. 877-535-3462. [www.jeld-wen.com](http://www.jeld-wen.com).



**21 Whirlpool.** The Gladiator GarageWorks system features modular floor cabinets, drawer units, shelving, workbenches, flooring, and a variety of wall hooks, baskets, shelves, and racks. All floor units are mounted on lockable casters and most cabinet shelves can hold up to 50 pounds. Stamped-metal tread plate panels accent the front of lockers and cabinets, as well as the Freezerator refrigerator-freezer, the under-counter garage refrigerator, and the garbage compactor. 866-342-4089. [www.gladiatorgw.com](http://www.gladiatorgw.com).



**22 KWC.** The sculptural appeal of the Murano single-lever faucet—designed by Daimler-Benz design director Bruno Sacco and industrial designer Reinhard Zetsche—is enhanced by the refreshing rush of water as it flows over its round glass disc. Practical features include a polished chrome finish and safety-glass dish treated with a special coating to simplify cleaning and protect against water spotting from lime scale and mineral deposits. 877-592-3287. [www.kwcamerica.com](http://www.kwcamerica.com).



**23 Schulte.** Distinctive Storage offers the freedomRail Garage, which the firm calls a complete garage storage solution. Components are designed in 30-inch widths to accommodate large items. The system includes heavy-duty cabinets and lockers constructed of furniture-grade melamine; organization boxes in three styles; tight-mesh ventilated shelving, rails, and uprights finished in an epoxy coating; and hooks, racks, and grids constructed of heavy-gauge steel. 513-277-3700. [www.schultestorage.com](http://www.schultestorage.com).



**24 Stanley Works.** ZAG offers a complete organization solution specifically designed for the garage, the manufacturer says. The shelves and cabinets are made of durable aluminum in yellow and polypropylene in black. Included are wall cabinets, workshop cabinets, a heavy-duty workstation, durable work surfaces, pegboards, and accessories. 860-225-5111. [www.stanleyworks.com](http://www.stanleyworks.com).



**25 Knape & Vogt.** More than 250 new products are available from the firm including closet components, kitchen and bath organization accessories, and drawer slides. Closet components include wire and resin baskets, pull-out slack and shoe racks, and shelving. Kitchen and bath accessories include pull-down shelves, pull-out trays, plate racks, and wire baskets. 800-253-1561. [www.kv.com](http://www.kv.com).

## **FIRED UP: Tankless Water Heaters**

Readers are fired up about tankless water heaters. With water heating making up 20 percent to 25 percent of a home's energy costs, tankless systems provide several advantages over their conventional counterparts, according to manufacturers. They not only are more energy efficient, they provide a consistent hot water supply, have a longer lifespan, and offer space savings, too.

Instead of continuously using energy resources to heat, store, and reheat water in a tank, tankless systems work on an as-needed basis by flash-heating water through a copper heat exchanger. A flow sensor signals the burners to fire when the hot-water tap is turned on.

"When the tap is turned off the entire unit shuts down, and there is no standing pilot," says Tiffani Thompson, specialty products sales manager for Rheem Water Heaters.

With the absence of a recovery period, savings can add up to 60 percent of the water-heating bill, says Brad Monaghan, East Coast sales manager for Takagi. This savings can help offset the appliances' initial higher upfront costs, which can be two to three times more than conventional tank heaters, notes Ervin Cass, Rinnai's vice president of water heater and heater group for North America. Some states, including Oregon, Maryland, Minnesota, and Massachusetts, also offer tax incentives and rebates for installing tankless systems.

Despite blossoming interest, tankless water heaters only make up about 2 percent of the overall residential water heater market, notes Richard Ponce, national sales manager for Noritz.

Designed with sealed combustion, the compact tankless systems can be installed into properly ventilated closets or surface- or flush-mounted to an interior or exterior wall, freeing up floor space. For the builder,

the advantages "are the space savings and the opportunity to offer an energy-efficient appliance," says Kyle Murray, vice president of marketing for Controlled Energy.

A number of builders are sold on the technology. Mike Curlin of Dallas-based Curlin Custom Homes installs the water heaters in nearly 30 percent of the homes he builds. Additionally, Craig Melstrand's Germantown, Wis.-based Majestic Homes began installing tankless water heaters a couple of years ago. "We've had a pretty good response," Melstrand says, crediting the rise in consumer knowledge.

*–Julie Weber*

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