

Stronger than steel! Able to bridge incredible spans with a single beam!

## The Fiberglass Pergola Revolution

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Patio covers and outdoor structures have finally come of age. Old standards such as Aluminum and Vinyl are being replaced by low-maintenance structural composites specifically designed for the job. Pultruded fiberglass technology has arrived!



The first aluminum structure I ever witnessed was covering the parking area next to a garage at a relative's house. I think it was way back in the 1970s. It was a simple stand-alone structure that a home owner could buy and construct themselves. It was constructed of wood posts wrapped in sheets of thin aluminum with a corrugated roof. I'm not sure who was first to market the idea, but it seemed to catch on.

Then came the vinyl versions of the 1980s. Installers in the home improvement market found that homeowners were interested in add-ons that included covered outdoor living spaces. Low maintenance outdoor living structures were becoming increasingly popular as a lifestyle investment as well as a home equity investment.

Vinyl has always shared the same drawbacks as Aluminum. They both need wood or steel reinforcements to achieve the necessary strength for most installations. Rust or rot would eventually compromise the structure if water got inside the outer skins. Vinyl is a material that has a slick glossy look and never needs painting, but only comes in a limited number of color choices. Aluminum can be painted, but can require yearly maintenance due to chipping, peeling and denting. Both materials are highly susceptible to extreme weather conditions and caustic environments.

Homeowners have been forced to accept these materials, and their drawbacks, as the only choices available. Sagging vinyl fences, dented aluminum posts, rusting screw holes and bland colored vinyl used to be the norm. Not anymore.

Recent advancements in Pultrusion processing technology have brought lightweight, high-strength, corrosion resistant composites to the Outdoor Living market at extremely competitive prices.

The commercial applications of pultruded fiberglass materials are well known. You have used pultruded composites in a trusting situation for years without really knowing it! The fiberglass legs on the ladders we climb to clean out gutters or paint a high ceiling were made by a Pultrusion fiberglass process.

The structural strength of this material is amazing. 10' X 10" columns that are 1/8" thick are capable of holding 14,000 lbs of compressive load without structural reinforcement. No interior post, beam or other reinforcement is necessary.

Pound for pound fiberglass is stronger than steel. It will not warp, twist, shrink or sag in extreme temperature conditions. Salt air and ocean spray have no affect and spans of 18 feet between supports are accomplished without the need for additional support. A 24 foot 2" x 6" beam produced by this thin wall technology only weighs 24lbs!

Fiberglass can be painted to the color of your choice and span large open areas creating more usable space beneath the pergola. Pultruded fiberglass is the only choice:

- If you are in the market for an outdoor structure that is low or no-maintenance.
- If you want a structure that gives the warmth and elegance of finished wood.
- That is available in colors of your choice.
- When you need to span a long distance between supports.
- When speed and ease of installation is an issue.

Fiberglass Pergolas and Arbors are available as a kit for the do-it-yourself handyman, or through your local builder.