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{A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR}

With spring in full swing, it's time to get outside. In this issue, you'll find articles that make it fun and easy to improve all of your outdoor spaces.

If you like to entertain outside—or just hang out with the family—you'll want to check out the clever drink coolers on page 10. They're fun to make and will add personality to your party. The deck dress-up on page 54 will inject some style, as well. And if you like plants and flowers, then you'll love the window boxes on page 26 and the compost bin on page 48.

Of course, this issue has plenty of ways to dress up your indoor spaces, too. We'll explain how to build a great-looking daybed (*page 16*), help you turn family photos into art (*page 40*), and show you ways to bring more style to any room. On page 32, we'll even walk you through how to put together a garage storage system that will help you be more organized both indoors and out. Enjoy!

DAVE

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Get a Great-Looking Garage System for Less

The custom garage storage systems made by companies like Gladiator and GarageTek sure are cool, but I wondered if someone with more modest means could get a similar look for less. As it turns out, I was able to find every ingredient for a garage storage and work area (page 32) for less than \$400 at the home center. It goes together in a few hours and has style to rival the custom systems.

James R. Downing, Senior Project Designer



Easy Photo Art

The photo art ideas on page 40 were such a big hit with the *My Home My Style* staff that we couldn't wait to try them on our own digital photos. Many of the effects can be achieved in a snap using free online tools. Plus, some companies will print your custom creations and ship them right to your door.

Alyssa McNab,
Assistant Editor



Antique Enhancer

I was happy to stumble upon Briwax, a natural wax suitable for most wooden surfaces (Briwax.com). I used it on the "found things" from the "New Traditional Style" article (page 12). It was not only effortless to use, but it also brought immediate life back to those old pieces without stripping away their character!

Rebecca Cunningham,
Associate Style Director



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On The Cover. Even a beginning DIYer can build this comfortable, stylish daybed in no time.

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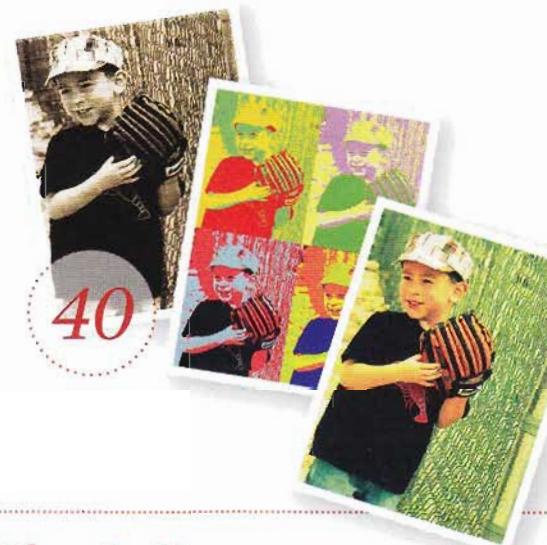
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These great-looking window boxes will liven up the exterior of any home. Made from durable PVC, they'll last for years.

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Our cedar compost bin looks great in your yard, makes composting simple, and features a "potting bench" lid.

54] before & after: Dress Up Your Deck

To give your deck the style and comfort of an outdoor room, learn the secret to artfully arranging plants in containers.



great yards from a Garden Hose

Nothing adds impact to a yard quite like a path or a flower bed with a graceful, sweeping curve along the edge. But drawing those curves on paper is one thing. Transferring them into reality in your yard is something else entirely.

Helpful Hose. Cott Wenger, an architect from Sidney, Ohio, discovered the solution hanging inside his garage — a humble garden hose.

Garden hoses are long enough to lay out the shape of almost any size bed and flexible enough to handle every curve you can dream up. Just lay it out, stand back and take a look, and make adjustments as needed. If you're happy with the look, you can dig right along the hose to prepare the bed.

mark it fast with Landscape Spray

Another option for laying out yard features quickly is a landscape marking spray. These cans of colored spray work similarly to spray paint, only the applicator nozzle is positioned so that you can turn the can upside down (*Photo, right*). There are even environmentally friendly "chalk sprays" available that will fade away after 15 to 30 days.

We like to use landscape marking spray in conjunction with the garden hose tip shown above. To do it, just lay out your yard feature with a hose, pull the hose back about a foot, and create a curved line with the marking spray.



Simple Spray. Landscape marking sprays are designed to be used upside down, making quick work of curved paths or flower beds.



catch some organization with Mousetrap Hangers

They may have finally "built a better mousetrap" (i.e., one that doesn't kill the mouse), but you can still use the inexpensive traditional traps in a fun, functional way. Joshua Shirey of York, Pennsylvania, turned them into wall hangers for use over his garden potting bench.

Trap Some Storage. To convert mousetraps into storage hangers, just remove the little "catch" that holds the trap with a pliers, and then spray-paint them any color you desire. They're great not only for seed packets, but also for gloves, notes, receipts, or anything else you don't want to lose!



3 quick tips

1] The pump sprayers used for applying fertilizer are also great for staining fences, decks, or siding, says Doug Stoner of Des Moines, Iowa. Spray on the stain, and use a brush to smooth it out.

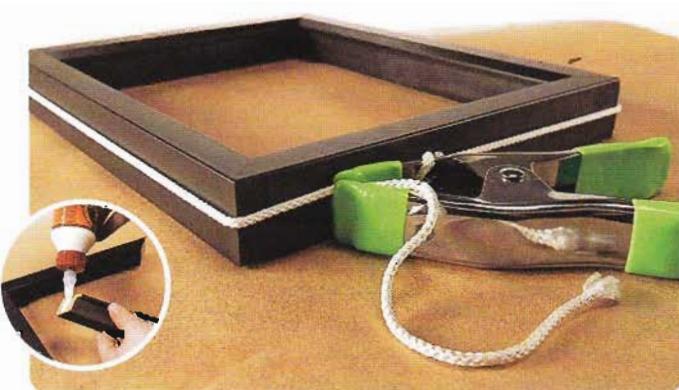
2] Nothing is more annoying than a stripped screw. If the screw head is exposed, get it out easily with a pair of locking pliers, advises Wade Mears of Boerne, Texas.

3] Need more power in your garage? Micah Jacobs of Perrysburg, Ohio, recommends investing in a retractable cord reel.

finally! easy assembly for Mitered Frames

If you've ever attempted to build a mitered frame, you know how tricky the task can be. Try to put a clamp on the corner to hold it together, and it will inevitably slide apart, leading to frustration and a big mess thanks to all the glue.

Rope It Up. Jean Daniels of West Valley City, Utah, uses a rope and spring clamp to assemble her frames. First, she ties one end of the rope through a hole in the clamp. Then she glues the frame together, wraps the rope around it to hold it tight, and secures the other end in the jaw of the clamp. The miters don't slip, and the frames look great!



Faster Frames. To build a mitered frame easily, just use a rope and a spring clamp to hold the miters tight while the glue dries.



Got a great tip?

My Home My Style will pay you for it. Just send your ideas to: Email: editor@myhomestyle.com | Mail: DIY Tips, *My Home My Style* Magazine, 2200 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312



Long-Lasting Outdoor Paint

Q: I recently purchased an unfinished wood Adirondack set for my backyard, which I'm planning to paint. What do I need to do so the paint holds up in the elements?

David Kohl, Knoxville, TN

A: The key to a long-lasting outdoor finish lies in the prep work. Raw wood furniture is usually very smooth when you buy it, so start by roughing up the surface for better adhesion (Fig. 1, right). After wiping off the dust with a tack cloth, apply an oil-based primer (Fig. 2), and let it dry thoroughly. Follow up with an exterior latex

paint in the color of your choice (Fig. 3). Lightly sand the surface before applying a second coat.

If you're inclined to skip the priming step, choose a self-priming paint like Benjamin Moore's Iron-Clad Alkyd Metal & Wood Enamel. Either way, it's a good idea to save leftover paint, so you can take care of touch-ups as the seasons pass.

Up the Ante on Wall Anchors

Q: The towel bar in my bathroom fell — even though I used the wall anchors included with the hardware to hang it. Now what?



Jenny Vanderheiden, Menomonie, WI

A: Using an appropriate wall anchor is crucial when hanging a weight-bearing item from drywall that isn't backed by a stud. Most freebie wall anchors are light-duty (a). When you slip one into a hole drilled in a wall and drive in a screw, the ends flare to "lock" the anchor and screw in place. Unfortunately, they do tend to pull out.

For a towel bar, it's better to upgrade. This may mean using a medium-duty anchor with steel wings that draw against the backside of the wall as you tighten the accompanying screw (b). Heavy-duty anchors with swing-out clamps are available for maximum holding capacity (c). Or consider the Wall-Dog fastener with aggressive threads that cut deep into drywall, offering the holding power of a traditional anchor in one piece of hardware (d).



DIY Dictionary

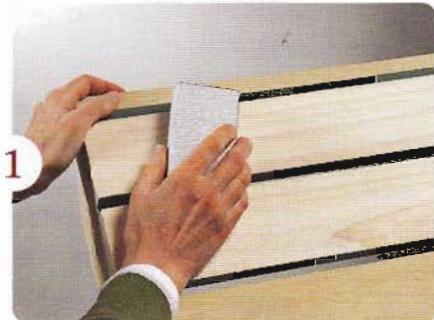


What's the difference between **Level** and **Plumb**?

Level means **truly horizontal**. A level object has absolutely no tilt side-to-side or front-to-back. Use a level tool to check both directions. (The bubble on the tool should be centered in the vial.)



Plumb means **truly vertical**. When something is plumb, it's perfectly straight up and down. Hold the level tool vertically to check two adjacent sides.



1 Lightly sand the bare wood with 120-grit sandpaper, so primer will bond to it.



2 Oil-based primer protects the wood and serves as a good base for the paint.



3 Exterior latex paint adheres to oil-based primer well and will hold up outdoors.

SNOWBALLS

Sunkist Oranges
CITRUS FRUIT EXCHANGE

Steel tubs have a
classic appeal
that beckons guests
to your party.



turn a steel tub into a clever chalkboard drink cooler

Welcome guests to your deck party with well-stocked containers boasting cheerful chalked-on messages. It's a novel way to infuse any gathering with personal style.

If galvanized steel tubs remind you of grandpa feeding the livestock, you'll be happy to know that these versatile vessels can have fun uses, too. They work great for keeping drinks on ice at outdoor get-togethers or become unique side tables when flipped over. We painted our tubs with Rust-Oleum Chalk Board paint, so they could also display messages to fit any occasion.

These tubs will last for years, too. The hot-dip galvanizing process bathes steel with molten zinc and creates the excellent rust-resistance essential for a drink cooler. Galvanizing also produces a cool crystalline pattern on the surface called "spangle." That's why we chose to leave some parts of the coolers unpainted.

Choosing a Container. Select a heavy-gauge galvanized steel tub that has a corrugated bottom, so it's sturdy enough to handle a full load of ice and

drinks. Red Hill General Store (see Resources on page 62) has hefty tubs in round, square, and oval shapes in a variety of sizes. Retail stores that target rural customers, like Tractor Supply Company, are also good sources for heavy-duty tubs.

Finishing Tips. Paint won't stick to the zinc coating on galvanized steel unless you take some special steps. Start by roughening the areas that you want to paint with 240-grit sandpaper. Then thoroughly wash the entire tub with an ammonia-based cleaner.

Next, use tape to mask off where you want bare steel to show. Brush an exterior latex primer on all the areas that will be painted. When it's dry, apply masking tape over the tub's natural ridges where stripes will be. Then brush on two coats of chalkboard paint. Follow the directions below to create the colorful accent stripes.



Chalkboard labels take only moments to create and wipe off easily with a damp paper towel when the party's over.



Paint on two coats of chalkboard paint. Then remove the masking tape from the tub's ridges to reveal the primer coat.

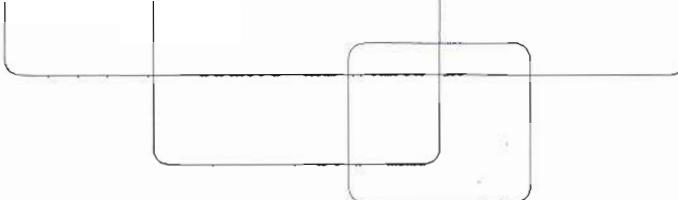


Brush on paint hues that accent your deck decor. Just tape off the chalkboard areas before adding the colors.



Peel off the tape as soon as the paint has set up—the edges will be cleaner than if the paint has completely dried.





mix and match to create your own **new** traditional style

Get to know today's traditional — a style that blends new with old, classic with contemporary, and fresh with worn. It's a simple way to create a look that's coordinated and sophisticated, yet comfortable and casual.



When you're decorating a room and you need inspiration, home design books, magazines, or catalogs are a great place to start. They're filled with photos of beautiful spaces that are decked out in impeccable style. But that style is often restrictive. The spaces are completely country, totally traditional, or single-mindedly modern.

Outfitting your home in this all-or-nothing way works if you're a strict fan of one style. If your tastes are more diverse, though, it leaves you with a decorating dilemma: How do you reconcile your appreciation for traditional pieces or antiques with your interest in furnishings that are more modern?

The solution is to embrace both. You can mix and match multiple styles to create what has become known as "new traditional" decor. As you can see in the *Photo* at left, this new take on traditional is sophisticated and stylish, but casual and comfortable, as well.

Today's traditional style is remarkably easy to create, but there's more to it than throwing diverse items together. There's a simple recipe to follow, as shown below. Just start with a neutral backdrop, bring in a bit of the new, add in items that are old, and accent it all with carefully chosen accessories. The next two pages guide you through how to put that recipe to work in your home.

Recipe for Success When Mixing Styles



1] Neutral Backdrop

Choose wall colors, flooring, and window treatments that create a neutral palette. It lets your furnishings shine.



2] Bring in the New

Don't be afraid to add bold contemporary furniture. You'll be surprised by how classic it can look.



3] Add on the Old

Antiques add instant personality and give a room a lived-in look that puts everyone at ease.



4] Accessorize in Color

Splash your space with tasteful but colorful accents to tie everything together and give a coordinated look.

1. Start with a Neutral Backdrop

The clean, uncluttered look of today's traditional style starts with a neutral backdrop. Off-whites, tans, and light beige tones are popular for the room's biggest pieces, such as the walls, window coverings, and major furniture.

These neutral colors create a clean palette that lets the other furnishings shine without undue competition. Plus, the classic hues will remain in style, meaning you won't have to repaint walls or rethink furnishings for years to come. Because of that, opt for quality when purchasing these major room anchors.



2. Bring in the New with Modern Style

If the notion of blending contemporary furniture with traditional or antique pieces strikes you as odd, consider what truly defines the term "contemporary." Rather than being funky or avant-garde as some people might think, most contemporary furniture is defined by straight lines, simple geometric shapes, and clean, unembellished finishes.

That means contemporary pieces can have a timeless style that's easy to relate to and live with. That's especially true if you arrange the furniture in traditional ways. Take the chair at left, for example. Pairing it with a matching chair and arranging them face to face (*Photo, above right*) invites intimacy and conversation, which gives the room a comfortable, cozy feel. Aligning them with the TV—a typical modern move—would make the space feel cold.



3. Add Character with the Old

Antiques offer instant personality to a room and make it more friendly and inviting. Choose pieces with natural wood tones to add warmth, and don't be afraid to mix up the woods, styles, and eras of the pieces.

In today's traditional style, simple primitives and ornate pieces can blend together perfectly. You can choose reproductions, or save money and have fun searching as you hunt down the real thing.

Whatever you choose, don't think that antiques have to be restored or in perfect condition to provide great looks and good service. Timeworn pieces look and feel like they're meant to be used and enjoyed rather than just admired.

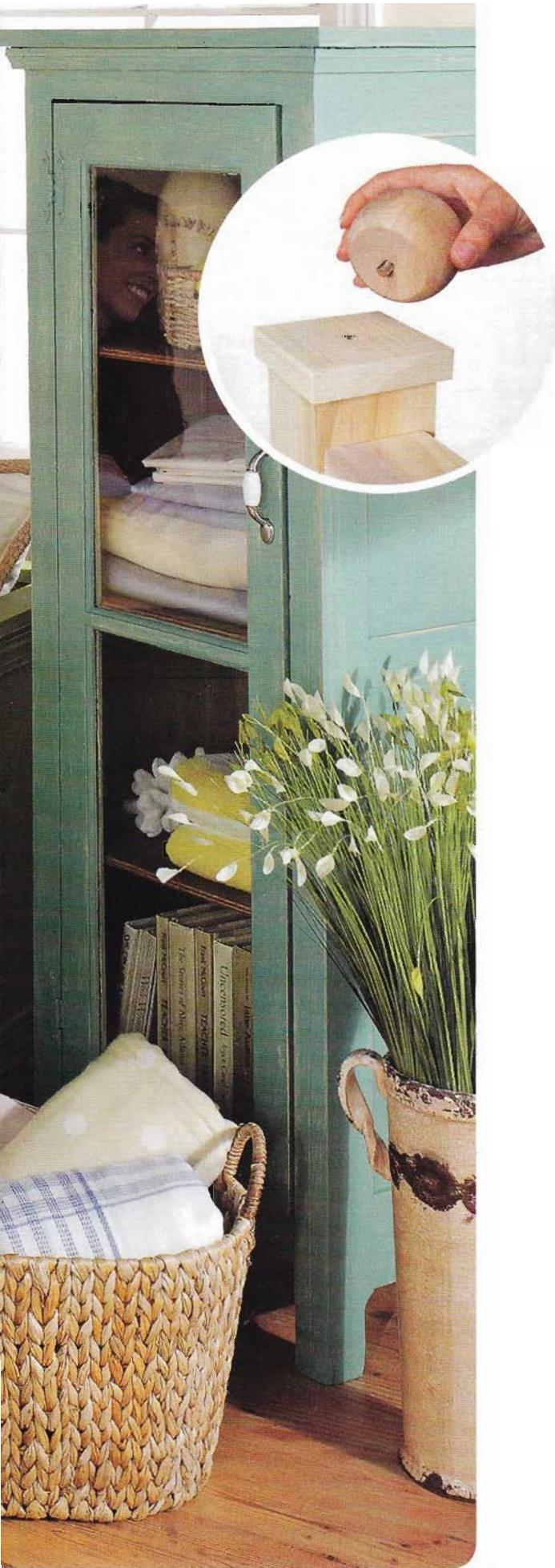


4. Create Color with Accessories

Once you have the major pieces in place, it's time to add color and personality with accessories. You can once again blend old and new both in accent items and art. Just choose coordinating colors to tie everything together.

Don't forget to accessorize the furniture, too. Colorful pillows and throws soften the geometric lines of contemporary furniture, while varied fabrics and patterns lend extra depth and texture. To maintain the clean, crisp look of today's traditional style, just be sure you don't create a cluttered look by adding too much.





make your own pretty & practical daybed

This gorgeous daybed may seem complicated to build, but its looks are definitely deceiving. We'll show you how to make your own with simple supplies from the home center.

A great-looking guest room starts with a bed that serves as a stylish focal point. Daybeds are a popular choice since many guest rooms double as home offices, craft rooms, or playrooms. They provide a place for overnight guests to sleep and a spot to sit or lounge the rest of the time.

This daybed meets your practical needs as well as any run-of-the-mill daybed you can purchase, but it definitely has the advantage when it comes to style. Its timeless design will complement the decor of any space. Plus, you can customize the details to suit your taste.

Easy to Build. The daybed looks difficult to make, but its construction is really quite simple. It has two identical end panels, so you can make quick work of cutting the parts and assembling them. Plus, the legs are 3x3s that you can purchase pre-cut to length at the home center. That means you won't have to worry about cutting these thick pieces of dimensional lumber.

The rails are also easy to put together. Once they're made, you'll just need to add hardware, slats, and a standard twin mattress.

Stylish Simplicity. The daybed's construction is enhanced by details that look great and don't take much effort to add. The end panels and rails are accented with casing that gives the daybed its understated elegance, and the legs are topped with finials that serve as the crowning embellishments to its classic lines (*Inset Photo*).

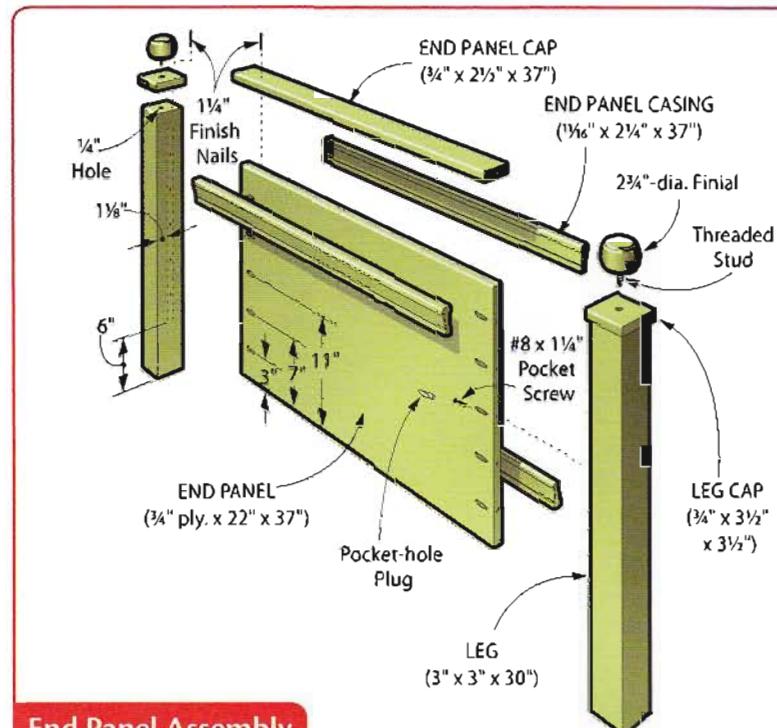
One of the final steps to creating this attractive daybed is giving it a "distressed" finish. The look is easy to pull off, and the results are dramatic. After painting and sanding the frame parts, you'll have a daybed with the timeworn charm of an expensive antique piece.

start with easy, elegant end panels for the daybed

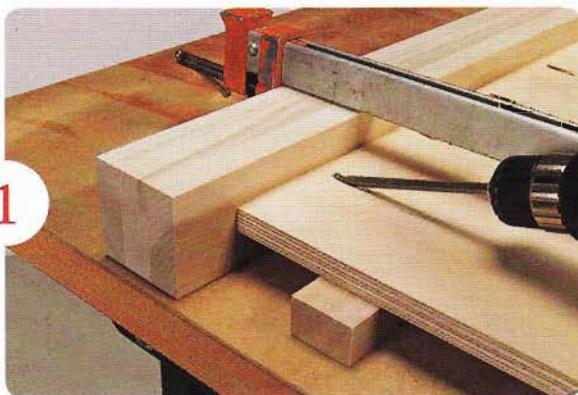
The end panels are the most time-consuming components of the project. But since they're identical, you can cut the parts and put them together assembly-line style. The process is further simplified by the fact that you won't have to cut the legs that anchor the daybed.

Preparing the Parts. You can use a circular saw to cut the plywood parts for this project. If you don't want to do this step yourself, you can have the parts cut for you at the home center for a small fee. Then you'll cut the end panel caps from 1x3s and the leg caps from 1x4s. You can also purchase the casing and finials you'll need to accent the daybed at the home center.

Assembling and Embellishing. Now you're ready to build the end panels. Follow the steps below to connect the parts that will create the basic assembly. Once you've completed those steps, you just have one step left to finish up the end panels: attaching finials to the leg caps. Pre-drill a hole for each finial, apply glue, and then screw them in (*Photo, page 17*).

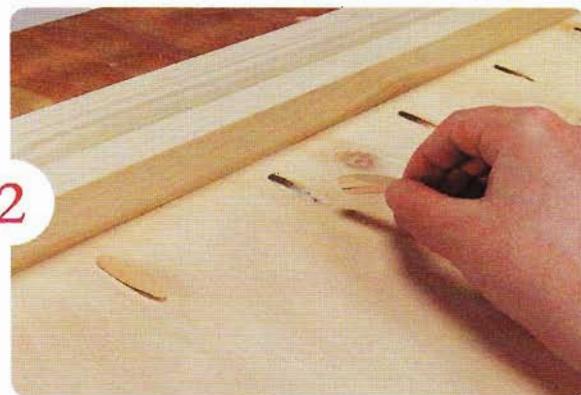


End Panel Assembly



1

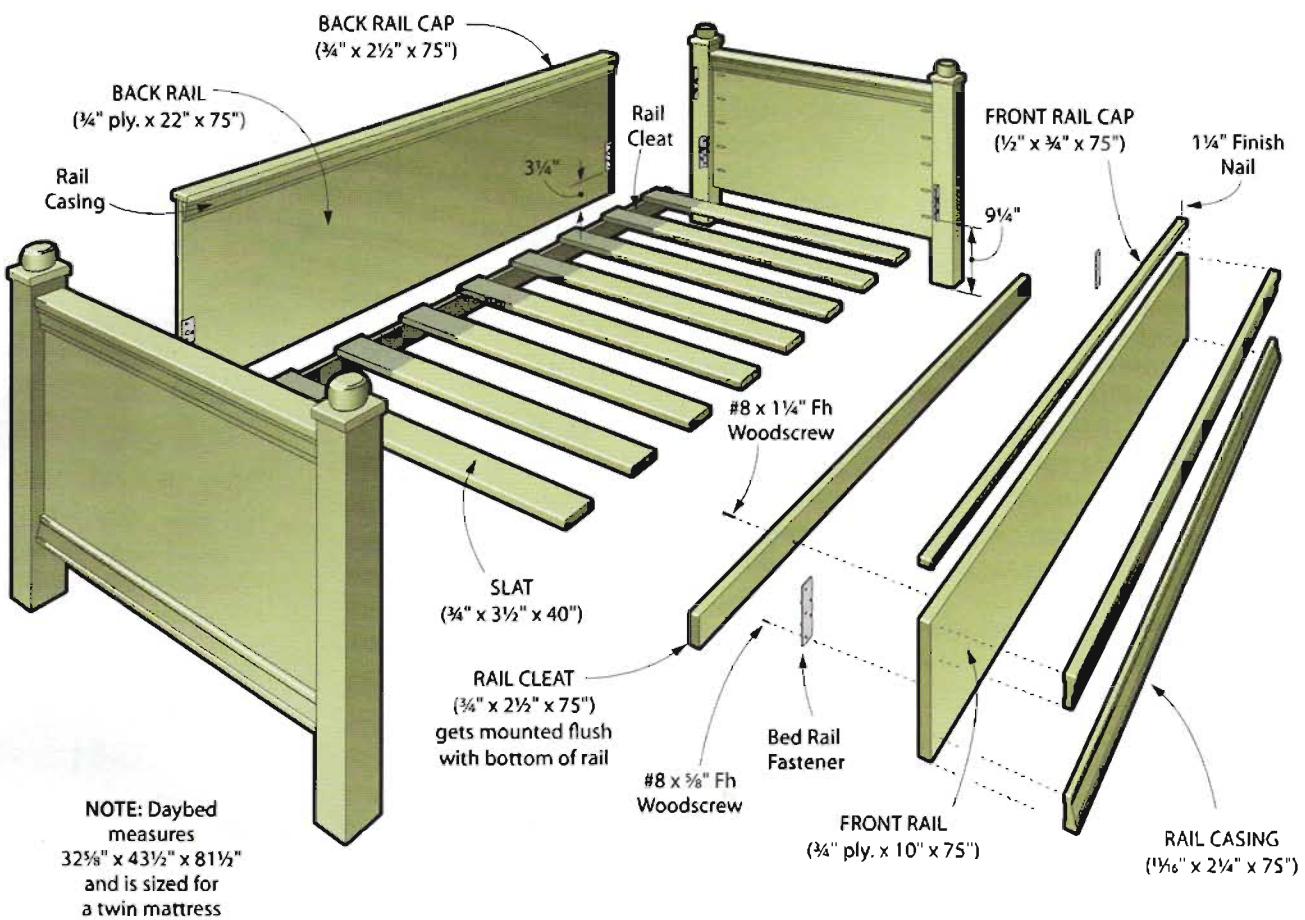
Attach the Legs. Fasten the plywood end panels to the legs using pocket-hole joinery. Use a pocket-hole jig to make the holes, and then drive in screws. For more on pocket-hole joinery, see page 53.



2

Fill the Holes. Next, glue pocket-hole plugs into the holes. These wood plugs are shaped to fit inside pocket holes, so the holes won't be noticeable after you sand the plugs flush and paint the daybed.

Assembly View



3

Add Casing. Now you can attach molding known as casing, which gives this easy-to-build piece its high-end look. Cut the casing to length, and then glue and clamp it to the plywood end panels.



4

Cap the Ends. Next, cap the tops of the plywood panels and the legs. Cut the end panel caps to length, apply glue, and attach them with finish nails. Then glue and nail the leg caps to the legs.

finish the daybed: easy-to-create rails & embellishments

Once the daybed's end panels are assembled, you're ready to create the rails. Then you'll give the parts a distressed finish, assemble the frame, and add slats to complete the daybed project.

Make the Rails. If the daybed's plywood rail panels haven't been cut yet, do that now. Note that one rail is wider to make up the back of the daybed. Then cut 1x3s to length to create rail cleats. These cleats will hold the slats that support the mattress. Attach them to the plywood rail panels with glue and woodscrews.

The rail cleat positions shown in the *Assembly View* on page 19 are based on an 8"-thick or thicker mattress. If you're using a thinner mattress, you'll want to raise the cleats to accommodate it.

Add Casing and Finish. Now you're ready to attach casing to accent the rails. Cut the casing to length, and then glue it in place on

the rails. Then cut and attach the rail caps. With the rails complete, you're ready to paint the daybed. The box below explains how to achieve a distressed finish in three simple steps.

Attach the Bed Hardware. When the daybed's finish is complete, add the bed rail fasteners that attach the rails to the end panels. (*See page 62 for Resources.*) Screw the fastener pieces to the legs and rails, and then connect the parts (*Photo, right*). Then add another pair of brackets to support the back rail, as shown in the *Assembly View* on page 19.

Put Slats in Place. Once the daybed's frame is assembled, you're ready to add the slats. Cut them to length from 1x4s, and set them in place on the rail cleats. Finally, you can add the standard twin mattress and decorate your guest bedroom retreat with pillows and accessories, as shown on page 21.



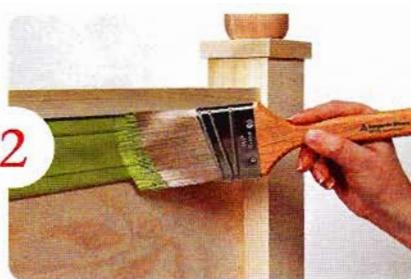
Bed rail fasteners attach the rails to the end panels once the daybed's timeworn finish is complete. Just screw the fastener pieces to the frame parts and connect them.

Distressed Paint Finish

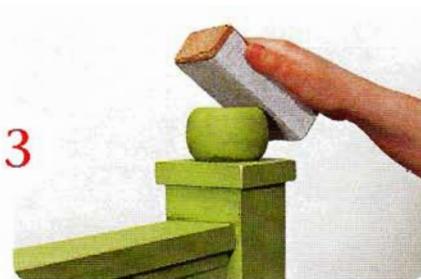
It's easy to give your daybed the aged look of antique furniture. The secret is distressing the frame with sandpaper, brushing on the paint, and then sanding the daybed again to make it look like it has been worn down over the years.



Distress the Frame. Use sandpaper to knock down all of the edges, corners, and other areas that would naturally get worn down over time.



Apply the Paint. Next, paint the end panels and rails. Brush strokes and imperfections will only enhance the aged look of the piece.



Sand the Daybed. When the paint is dry, sand the finish away in some areas. This will make the paint look like it was applied years ago.



Embroidered pillow covers set the color palette for this room. Then we paired the painted furniture with neutral bedding to let the room's colors really pop.

design a relaxing retreat

When the daybed is complete, you're ready to accessorize it to give it a style that's all your own. We decorated an entire room around the daybed to transform it into an appealing space that's inviting for guests and comfortable for everyday use.

1] Bring in a Neutral Base. Since the daybed already has a colorful painted finish, you may want to pick neutral colors for the bedding. This lets the painted furniture in the room shine, and it also gives you the flexibility to add more colors in the decor.

2] Add Colorful Accents. If you're having trouble choosing a color scheme for your guest room, look for decorative accents first. The colorful embroidered pillow cover, for example, served as the

starting point for this room's color palette. Its vintage-inspired design adds a whimsical touch.

3] Put Linens on Display. Let the items you need to store become part of the decor. Extra linens, for example, can add a lot of character to a space when they're displayed out in the open. We put our extra linens to work in an antique display cabinet, which we painted to coordinate with the room.

4] Use Stylish Storage. Guest bedrooms can never have too much storage space. That's why it's a good idea to choose decor pieces that double as spots to stash items when they're not in use. Baskets, storage ottomans, and vintage suitcases are all great pieces that add storage and style.

Bedding Basics

Pile on the Pillows

Add several pillows to turn your guest bedroom daybed into a luxurious spot to lounge. The pillows will make the daybed more comfortable and look great, too.

Throwing a few standard-size pillows on the daybed isn't going to cut it, though. Instead, buy pillows and pillow inserts in different shapes and sizes, which will instantly boost the daybed's visual appeal.

A number of retailers sell the inserts, which are made to fit in decorative covers. The Photo below shows the pillow types we used.



pull
your
room
together
with

perfect patterns



Use patterned accents to transform a bland space into a beautiful one. We'll show you how to enhance a room by adding multiple patterns that create a casual, layered look.

There's something incredibly rich and inviting about a room that features multiple patterned pieces. The patterns often seem as though they've been thrown together, but they all complement one another and make the space feel cohesive.

Plan for Patterns. The truth is that the look is anything but accidental. It takes careful consideration to pull the right patterns into your decor scheme. The process can be intimidating, but in order to boost your room's style, you need to mix some different patterned elements.

Successfully adding patterns to your space often comes down to choosing pieces that fit your personal taste. To get the look you want, you may have to try a few different combinations and see

what looks best to you. There are a few guidelines that you can follow to help you get started, though.

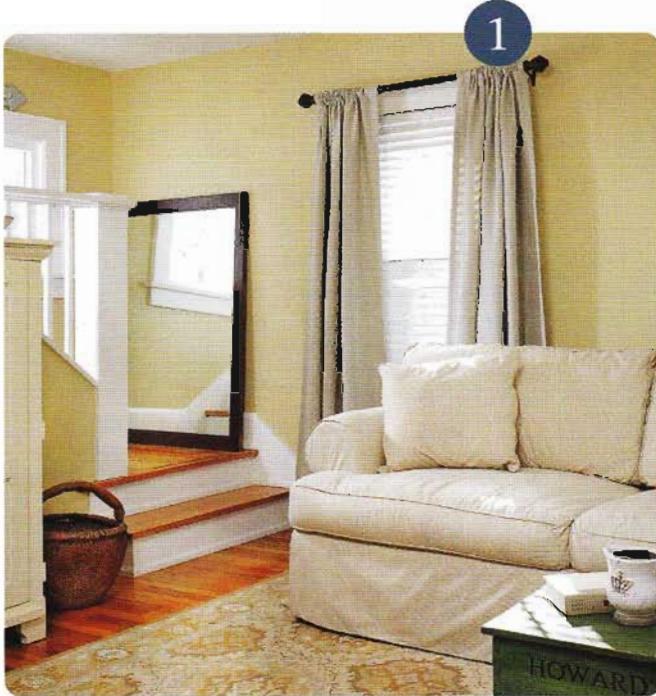
Build the Look. In the room at right, for example, we began with a beautiful yet boring space and built our decor around the dramatic patterned area rug. Then we added other patterned pieces, paying attention to the patterns' colors and sizes to achieve the final look. We'll explain how we pulled this room together with pattern and how you can apply these ideas to your own space.

Mixing multiple patterns in this room gave it a big style boost. Each of the patterns has its own charm, but when put together, they create a visually appealing look that can't be achieved by using just one pattern.





four simple steps to add patterned appeal



Start with one patterned piece

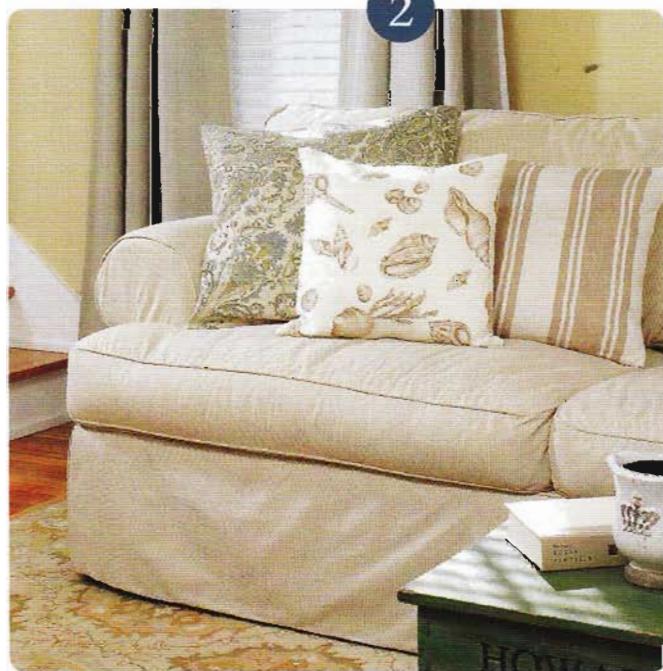
Your first step is to choose a main patterned piece for your room. This piece should be one of the largest elements in the space. In the living room shown in the *Photo* at left, we chose a rug to serve as the main patterned element.

If you're introducing patterned pieces to a room that already has furnishings, you'll want to look for a main patterned element that works with the colors and style of the existing furniture. If you're starting a room from scratch, you can choose any patterned piece that you like and use it as the inspiration for the rest of the space.

Add interest with secondary patterns

Once you've picked a primary pattern, you're ready to shop for secondary patterns. These patterns should each have something in common with the main pattern to tie the room together.

We started small by replacing the pillow that came with the couch with the flowered pillow shown at right. As you can see in the close-up *Photo* at left, this pillow has colors in common with the rug, and its pattern has a similar luxurious look. Then we introduced two more accent pillows. *Step 3* will explain other considerations for picking secondary patterns.



Consider the sizes of multiple patterns

As you add more patterns to your space, consider the patterns' sizes. If all of a room's furniture and decor features patterns that are similar in scale, then the patterned pieces won't stand out as individual elements in the room. Instead, you should choose a mix of pieces that feature patterns in varying sizes.

We applied this idea to the living room by layering our patterned pillows. The pillow on the right features big, bold stripes that provide a contrast to the small, intricate floral motif of the pillow on the left. The seashell print on the center pillow strikes a balance between the small pattern and the large one.

3



4



Bring in accessories and evaluate the look

Don't overlook the pattern and texture that wall decor and accents can bring to your space. We added a large canvas over the couch to give the living room even more interest. We also leaned a stained glass window against the mirror to introduce some pattern to the stairwell accents.

It's possible to bring too much pattern into a room, which will make the space feel busy instead of relaxed. Once you've added your patterned pieces and accents, cast an honest, critical eye on the room. If necessary, you can replace patterned pieces with solid-colored ones that coordinate with the room's color palette. The solid-colored window panels in this room, for example, provide a visual break from the patterns.

cheer up home exteriors with easy-to-build window boxes

Boost your home's curb appeal with colorful flowers cascading from a charming window box. Ours is simple to build and will last for years since it's made from durable synthetic wood.

Window flower boxes are an effective way to enhance any home's exterior. But traditional wooden boxes often rot after a few years, and boxes made from vinyl look "plastic-y" and may crack from exposure to heat or cold. Fortunately, cellular PVC, a synthetic wood product, has proven to be superior for window boxes. It looks similar to wood and can be cut and drilled just like wood. You can paint it with acrylic paint or just leave it white.

Also, window boxes made from PVC keep their great looks for years. They resist damage from insects and moisture, so they'll stand up to the weather and frequent plant watering. They're also virtually maintenance-free, unlike wooden boxes that need to be repeatedly sealed or painted.

Although PVC lumber costs more than wood initially, it will pay for itself in longevity. In fact, a window box made from this material should last as long as you own your home.



Glue-It-Together PVC Construction

When building with PVC lumber, apply PVC cement to the board ends before driving in screws to create a strong, waterproof seal. PVC cement grabs tight and dries fast, so you'll need to work quickly.





building a custom window box — simple construction, easy installation!

Our "picket fence" design is great for beginning DIYers since it requires only basic cuts and joinery techniques. Most of the box gets made from 1x8 PVC boards. A center reinforcing board ensures the box won't bulge out from the weight of wet soil and plants. To give the decorative brackets some heft, we glued two pieces together with PVC cement.

Simple Materials. We found that home centers now carry PVC lumber in several dimensions, but it's trickier to find PVC trim. That's why we used poplar boards for the pickets. They won't be constantly exposed to damp soil like the box, so they'll last, too.

To keep your beautiful plantings from getting waterlogged, we made sure the window box drains by adding two holes in the bottom. And to ensure that excess water drains straight down rather than running back toward the house, we glued short lengths of PVC pipe into the drainage holes.

Choose Your Design. To build your own window box, just follow these step-by-step directions. Then read on to find some creative design options. Once you master building the basic box, it's easy and fun to change up the design to suit your home's exterior style. You'll see a couple of examples on page 31.

Window Box Step by Step

1 build the basic box

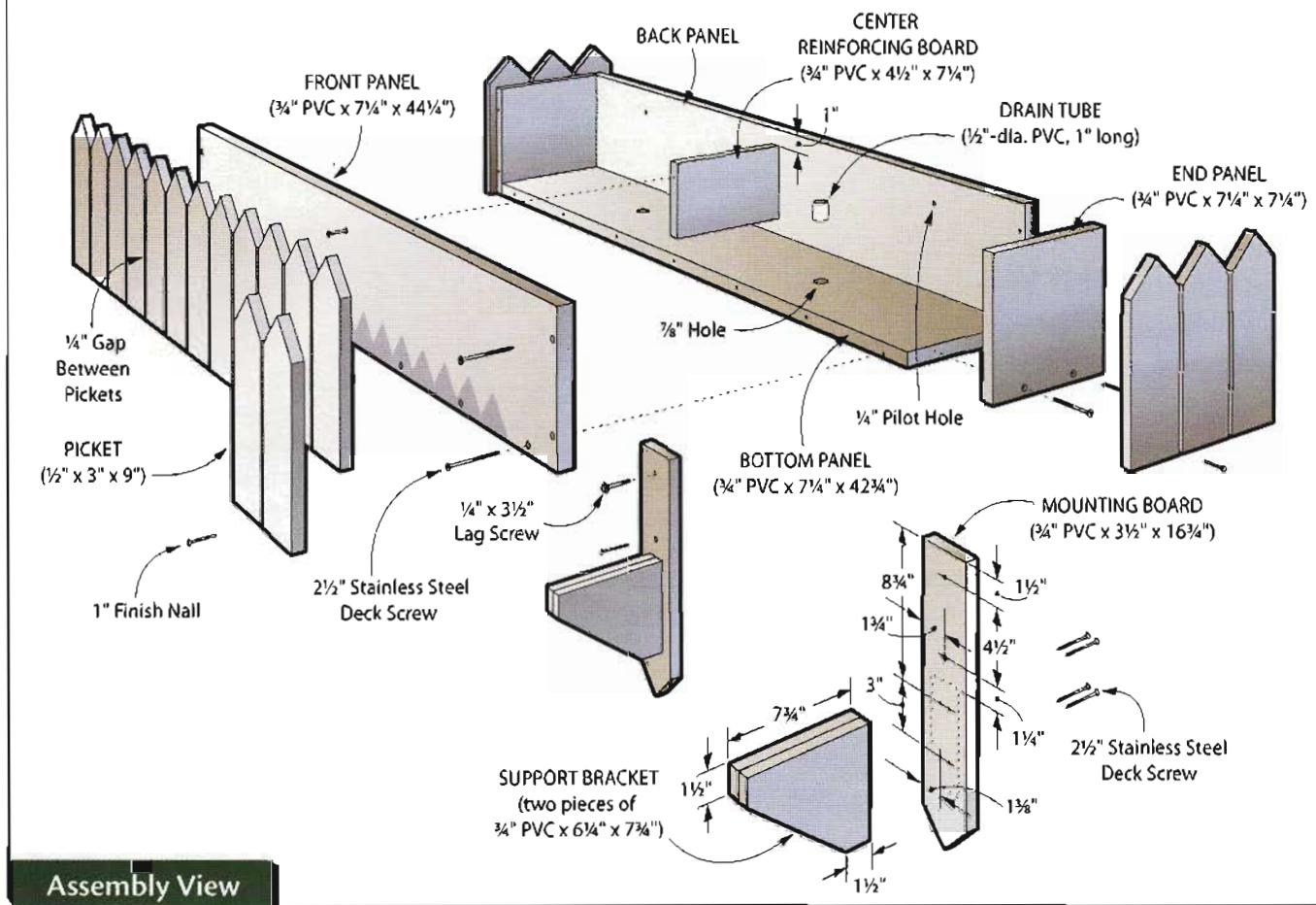
To assemble the box, apply some PVC cement to the board ends and hold the adjoining pieces together as it sets up. Next, draw a pencil line $\frac{1}{8}$ " from the ends of the boards, and use it to drill pilot holes. Then use $2\frac{1}{2}$ " stainless steel deck screws to reinforce the joints. Drive deck screws through the front and back of the box to secure the center reinforcing board. Leave a 1" gap between the bottom of this board and the bottom panel for drainage.



2 drop in drainage tubes

Now you can move on to the bottom of the box. Start by drilling two $\frac{1}{8}$ " drainage holes in the bottom panel. Then make two drainage pipes by cutting 1" lengths of $\frac{1}{2}$ " PVC pipe. Apply some PVC cement to the outside of each pipe, and then tap it through the hole in bottom panel. Make sure the pipes are flush with the inside face of the bottom panel, so excess water can drain out of the box.





Assembly View

nail on the **pickets**

3

The pickets that get nailed around the box's front and sides are made from $\frac{1}{2}$ "-thick poplar boards. When cutting the pickets, use a stop on the miter saw to ensure consistent sizing. Rotate the saw to 45 degrees, and trim one end of the board. Then flip the board, and repeat the cut. Next, paint each picket. To ensure perfect spacing, cut some pieces of $\frac{1}{4}$ " hardboard and temporarily insert them in between the pickets. Then attach the pickets to the front and sides of the box with white finish nails.



seal up the **seams**

4

The PVC glue and deck screws do a great job of connecting all the box pieces. But for an extra measure of waterproofing, apply a bead of silicone caulk to the interior joints. This will ensure that no dirty water leaks out from the seams and spoils the window box's appearance. The only maintenance your box should need is an occasional hosing off.



Brackets & Installation

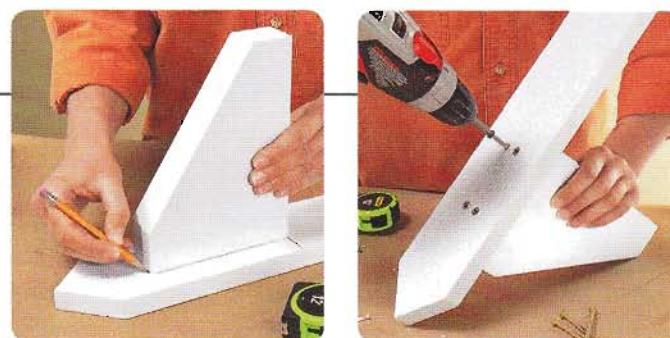
5 double-up the brackets

To give the support brackets a substantial look, adhere two pieces back to back with PVC cement. To do that, quickly apply an even layer of cement over one side of a bracket piece, and then press the second piece on top of it. Clamp them until the cement dries. Finally, clamp the bracket pieces to a work surface, and cut them to size with a jigsaw.



6 assemble the brackets

To assemble the two support brackets, start by centering a bracket on a mounting board. The top of the box's back panel will be flush with the top of the mounting board. Draw a pencil line around the bracket, and then set it aside. Use the lines to drill four $\frac{1}{4}$ " pilot holes through the mounting board. Then apply PVC glue to the end of the bracket, hold it in place, and drive $2\frac{1}{2}$ " deck screws through the back of the mounting board into the bracket.



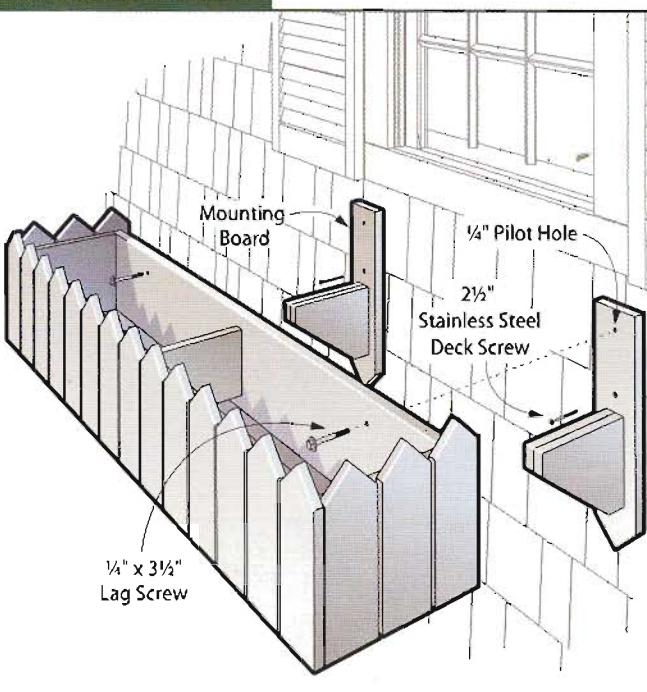
7 installation details

Align the mounting boards with wall studs, and then screw the completed brackets to the wall. **Drill $\frac{1}{4}$ " pilot holes** through the back of the box and the brackets. (Hold the drill at an angle since it won't fit inside the box.) Then remove the box, and drill $\frac{3}{16}$ " pilot holes into the wall studs. **Replace the window box**, and install lag screws through the box's back and the mounting boards.

Online Extras!

For more detailed instructions on how to build this PVC window flower box, check out our online slide show.
Just a Click Away! MyHomeMyStyle.com

Installation Detail





2 Great Window Box Design Options!

It's simple to modify the style of the basic window box by changing the trim pieces and brackets.

Clean and Modern

This window box's bold horizontal lines and charcoal hue would complement any home with a contemporary feel. Even the unusual split-style brackets reinforce its modern vibe.

Classic and Stately

With its coal-black color and familiar curved trim molding and brackets, this window box would feel at home on traditional-style houses, from cozy bungalows to grand Colonials.







turn your cluttered space into one **great garage**

Who says garages can't be stylish? With just \$400 of material from the home center, you can create a workstation with custom storage that mimics the look of high-end garage systems that cost thousands more.

We all need a comfortable, organized spot in our home to work on projects and hobbies. This space should provide not only storage for tools and supplies, but also a large surface to work on. For many of us, the logical location of that area is in the garage.

The Usual Setup. Unfortunately, a garage's multiple personalities—carport, craft center, gardening hub, and automotive shop—mean that it's all too easy for clutter to completely take over the space. The result can be a setup like the one shown in the "Before" Photo, below left.

Stylish Station. Many companies make high-style organization systems that solve your storage and work area problems, but these systems cost big bucks to install. We came up with a station that has the style of a custom system that costs thousands, but the final price tag for all the components is around \$400. Plus, you can put it together in no time at all!

The secret is starting with the same store-bought steel racks you see in the "Before" Photo. These are readily available at home centers, and they go together in minutes. (For more on the racks, see the Resources on page 62.)

Instead of leaving the racks open and cluttered, though, we enclosed them in a simple, stylish way. Then we outfitted the racks—and the rest of the garage—with a few accessories to complete our great garage system.

before the makeover!

start by
setting up
the enclosed
storage units

With 48 cubic feet of space, this storage unit is sure to solve most any garage clutter dilemma. By enclosing the open shelves of the metal racks with doors and sides, you can make them as stylish as they are functional.

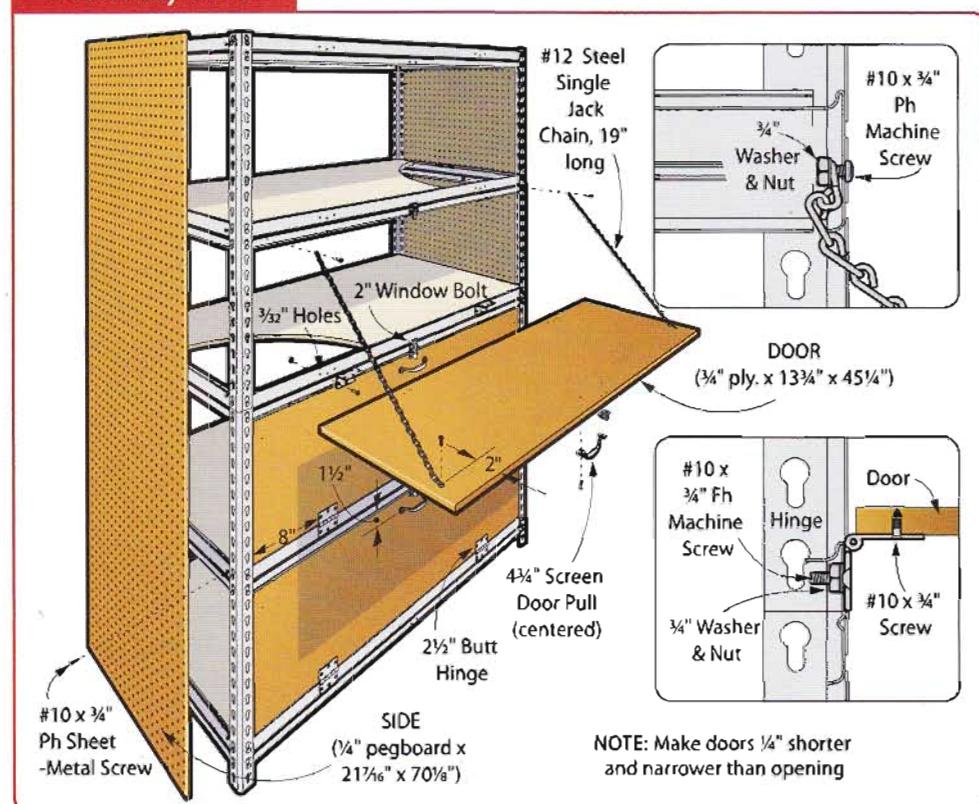
Staging Your Storage. Converting these racks into enclosed units couldn't be much simpler. To do it, all you need is a sheet of plywood, a sheet of pegboard, and some basic hardware. The plywood gets cut down to become doors; the pegboard becomes the sides; and the hardware holds it all together.

Unit Overview. To see how we built these handy units, first take a look at the *Assembly View* shown at right. Then, follow the photos and steps shown on the next page to build your own in no time.

Also, please note that the dimensions shown are for the large storage unit (24" x 48" x 72"). For the smaller unit shown on page 32, the same steps will apply, but the dimensions of the door and side panels will be smaller.



Assembly View



add the doors

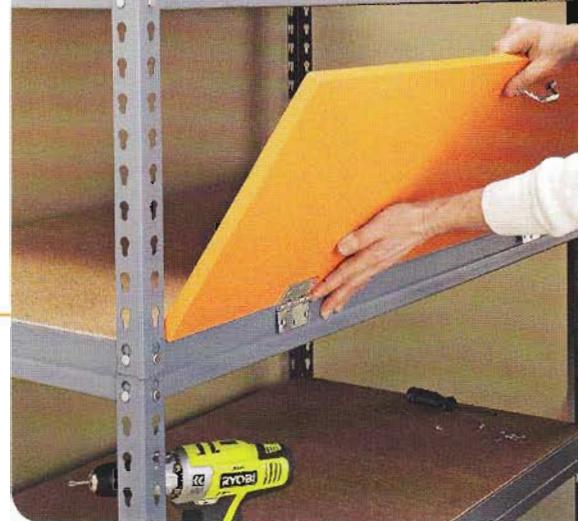
1

Cut the doors to size from plywood to fit in the openings in the rack (Assembly View, below left). Then attach the hinges, position the doors in the openings, and mark the holes for the hinges on the rack's rails. Now remove the doors and paint them. Drill the holes in the rails, and secure the hinges (Photo, right).

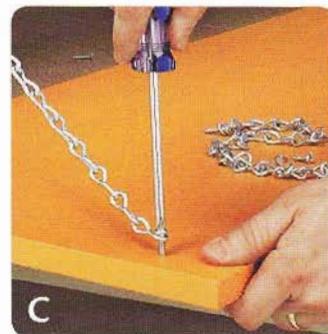
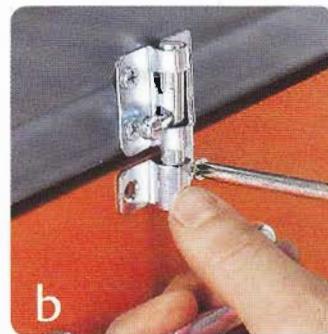
Next, you'll want to add three more items to each door

for convenience and security. First is a door pull, which just gets screwed to each door panel near the top (Fig. a). Then, add a barrel bolt to the rails and doors, so you can lock the doors in place when they're closed (Fig. b).

Finally, you want the doors to rest flat when they are open. This is accomplished by securing chains to both sides of each door (Fig. c). The



chains get attached to the backside of the metal shelf rail above at one end and to the door panels at the other end (see the Detail Illustration on page 34).



send in the sides

2

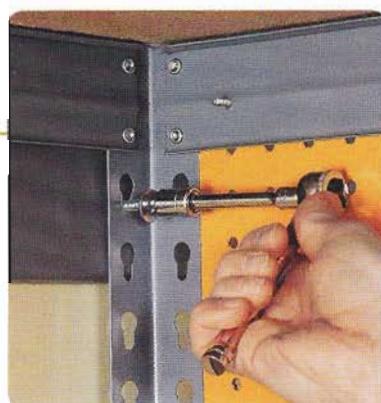
Adding the doors to the storage units is easy, but putting on sides is even easier. The sides are made from pegboard that is cut to fit and then painted. Position the sides on the case, pre-drill some holes through the metal legs of the rack, and attach the sides with small screws.



make it secure

3

All that's left is to secure the unit to the wall, and again, that part's a snap. Just drill pilot holes through the keyhole slots in the rack legs, and drive lag screws with washers through the slots into the painted rail behind it (page 37).





build a hardworking workstation

If you're going to build projects in your garage, you need a work surface to do it on. This one couldn't be much simpler to put together.

That's because all you have to do is assemble one of the racks that's shown in the "Before" Photo on page 33. Only for this workstation, you're actually only going to make "half" of the rack to create a shorter structure (Photo, left). Then, slip in three of the shelves.

Top It Off. The only part of this workstation that you actually have to build is the work surface. Since the shelves that come with the metal racks already fit in place perfectly, we just cut a slightly larger piece of medium-density fiberboard (MDF) to size with a circular saw and screwed it to the top shelf to create a sturdy, durable surface. To do it, we pre-drilled holes and drove screws in from underneath.

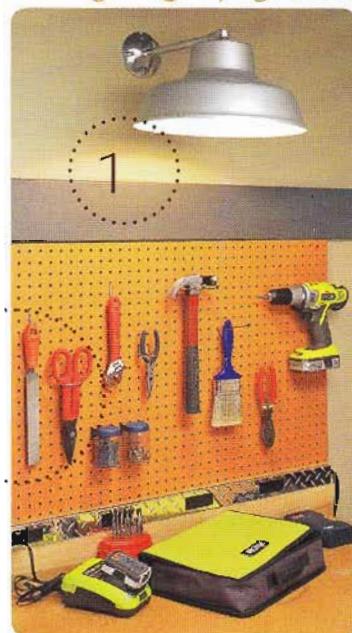
At the back of the work surface, we also created a backboard of poplar that we secured with glue and screws. Then we finished the whole work surface with two coats of polyurethane.

Details Make a Difference. Finally, we added a few amenities to the station to truly make it a great place to work on projects. These are outlined at right and below.

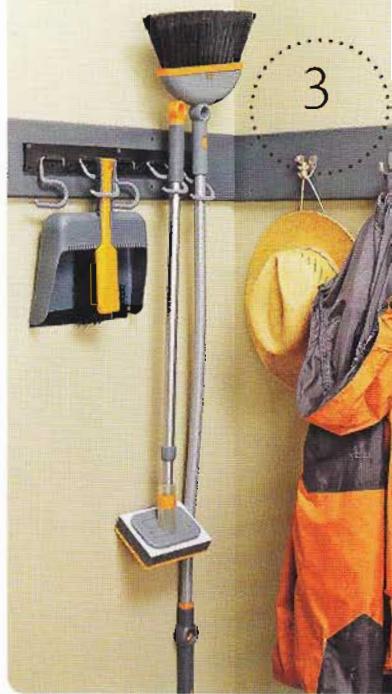
1] Let There Be Light. Every work area needs good lighting, and we picked up a large "reflector" shop light at the home center to serve our purposes here. If you buy a similar light, you'll want to have an electrician wire it for you. Or you can choose an inexpensive track light and just plug it into the power strip below.

2] Handy Hanging Storage. A pegboard storage rack offers a great area for stashing tools and supplies right above the workstation. To mount it, put nylon bushings around the screws to create a gap between the pegboard and the wall.

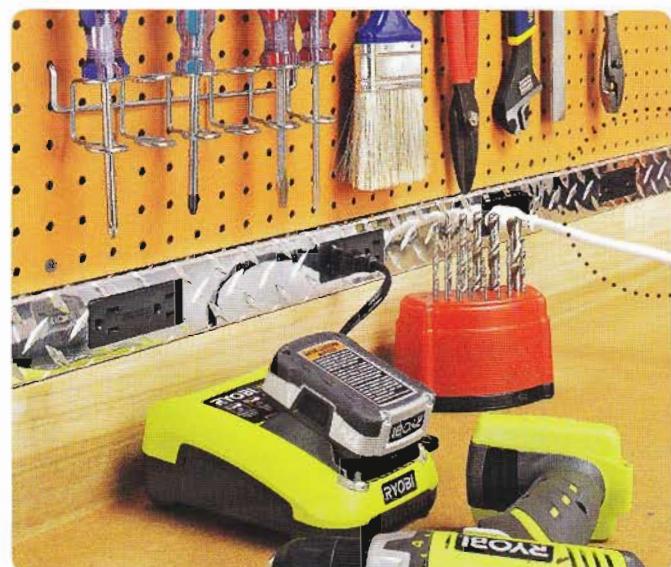
lighting & pegboard



2



3



4

10-outlet power strip

3] Run the Rails. A rail that's made from painted 1x6 boards adds a touch of custom style to our garage station, but it serves a functional purpose, too. The rail makes a convenient place to mount the storage units without having to worry about hitting wall studs. You can mount other hangers to it, too.

4] Plug and Play. To fuel the tools you'll need for your projects, this four-foot power strip has ten outlets that fill the bill. It mounts right behind the work surface, so you'll never again have to bend over to plug in or unplug a tool.

get the best of both worlds with a stylish garden center

Another possibility for this project is the garden center shown at right. It combines the big-time space of the storage units and the ample work surface of the workstation into one handy unit. The result is a great place to pot plants — or handle just about any other project in your garage!

If your garage doubles as a space for potting plants, you'll love the garden work center. It's also easy to build.

To make this garden center a manageable size, we decided to start with the smaller 18" x 36" x 72" metal rack. (For sourcing information for the rack, see page 62.)

Building the Center. As you can see in the *Photo*, all you have to do is build the two "halves" of the storage rack just like you did with the workstation shown on page 36. Position one shelf near the bottom of each half, and a second shelf near the center.

You will have an extra shelf and an extra set of rail components left. We set aside the shelf, but we used the extra rails to stiffen the structure and provide a way to mount a large MDF top. To do this, position the two longer rails at the front of each unit, and the two shorter rails on the outward-facing sides of the units.

Next, add plywood doors and pegboard sides to both racks. The parts are slightly different sizes than those on the storage unit on page 34, but the steps for installing them are identical.

Convenient Cubby. Though most of the details of this garden center are similar to the other units, there are a few subtle differences to note. One of these is the space between the two racks in the middle. We found this area handy for extra storage.

The Crownning Touch. The size of this unit calls for a larger top panel. You can make it by cutting a sheet of medium-density fiberboard to size. For an added bit of "wow," we covered the top with a piece of aluminum flashing that we mounted with heavy-duty spray adhesive. This makes it easy to clean soil off the top.

Finally, pieces of aluminum angle get screwed to the front edge and ends of the top to finish the center in style.





turn ordinary photos into extraordinary photo art



You can create display-worthy photo art in minutes with the help of easy-to-use computer software.

You don't have to be a photo-editing expert to make beautiful art pieces from your digital photos. Using common software or free Web tools, you can design one-of-a-kind photo art creations on your computer.

Nothing can customize your home more effectively than displaying treasured photos. Decorating with photos of your favorite people and places ensures that your decor is meaningful to you.

You can take this approach to decor customization even further by using computer software to alter your digital photos. The programs allow you to apply filters and effects to your photos, turning them into art that stands out in your space.

Cool Editing Tools. Whether you're a photo-editing beginner or an advanced user, you have plenty of options. There are even

some free online editing tools. With just a few clicks of your mouse, they will transform your photos into works of art.

Fun Photo Effects. Editing software lets you create art that matches your room's style. Effects are available that can make your photos look like paintings, pencil sketches, and even pop art.

Upgrade Your Display. When you're done with your photo art, you need a way to show it off in your home. Photo art can be dramatically displayed in frames, but a number of companies also offer unique alternatives such as canvases or trinket boxes (page 42).

Simple Software

Start with photo management tools.



Many photo management programs, such as Apple's iPhoto, can perform basic editing functions like adjusting colors or converting photos to black and white. You may already have a program like this on your computer. If not, you can search for "photo management software" online for more information.

Editing Programs

Take your photos' potential up a notch.

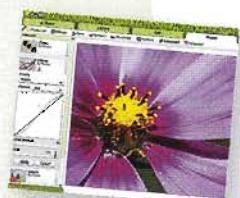
If you want even more editing options, buy a photo-editing program like Photoshop Elements. With this program, you can choose from an array of effects and editing capabilities. Elements is a simpler version of the professional editing program Photoshop, so you get many similar features in an easy-to-learn program.



Online Applications

Alter photos instantly on the Internet.

Editing Web sites like Picnik.com and Fotoflexer.com offer fun, free applications for modifying your photos. No registration is required, so you can just upload your photos and instantly begin applying effects like "Pencil Sketch" and "Cartoon." When you're finished, you can save your creations right to your computer.



Transform your own
digital photos
into personalized art
that gives your home a
fun custom touch.



create your own art by adding unique photo effects

If you have a digital camera, you probably already have plenty of photo files available at your fingertips. From that point, creating photo art with computer software and Web site applications couldn't be easier.

Pick Your Photos. The first step is to choose photos to turn into art. When you're selecting your photos, consider the decor in the room where you'd like to display them. You can alter the colors of the photos to coordinate with the room's palette, but the art will look even better if the photos' subjects match the decor. If you're decorating a room that's styled to look like a beach cottage, for example, you could display vacation photos taken in a seaside setting.

Select Software. Now you're ready to choose a photo-editing program or Web site application. The overview on page 40 explains a few of your options.

If you'd like to purchase a photo-editing program, you may be able to get a free trial to test the features that it offers before you buy the full version. Check the Web site for

the program that appeals to you to see if this option is available.

Experiment with Effects. Save duplicate copies of your photos on your computer before you begin applying effects. This step ensures that you'll have copies of the original photos for your archives.

Once your photos are backed up on your computer, you're ready to load them into the program and begin editing. Many programs offer effects or filters that let you change your photos instantly and then make adjustments to fine-tune them. A few examples of easy photo effects are shown at right.

Consider Your Style. As you try different effects, you'll be able to see which ones coordinate with the style of your space. An eclectic, antique-filled room, for example, would benefit from photos that have been transformed to take on an old-fashioned feel.

Each photo effect will give you better results on some photos than others. If you like an effect, apply it to several photos to see which ones are suitable for display.

From Photos to Cool Home Accents

Photo art looks great inside a frame, but that's not your only display option. Many companies provide unique products that allow you to show off your creations in other interesting ways.

Canvas Prints. Several Web sites, including Shutterfly.com, will make canvas prints from your photo art. The canvases offer a professional-looking alternative to poster-sized prints.

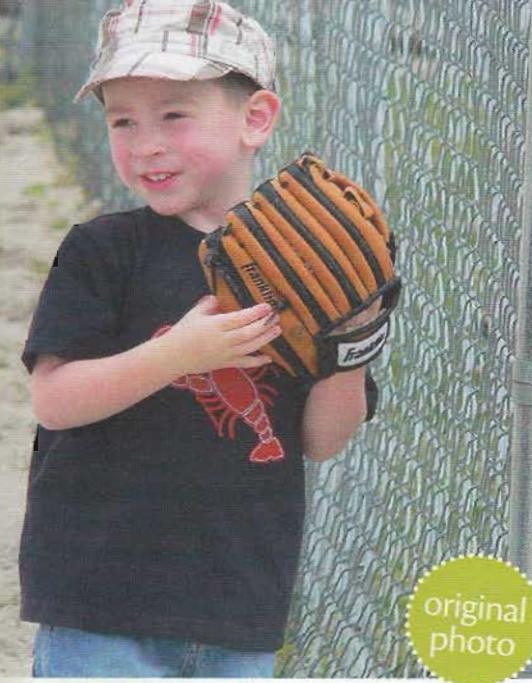
Decor Accents. You can also display your photos on a smaller, decor accent like the ones shown

below. Shutterfly.com, for example, can put your photo art on a trinket box. You can even turn a few of your favorite digital photos into a set of coasters.

Photo Panels. Wood photo panels offer another display alternative. The panels give your

photos a contemporary, frameless look. Snapfish.com offers small wood photo panels with easels that are perfect for tabletop display (*Photo, below*). KodakGallery.com can turn your photo into a wood wall panel with a glossy, scratch-resistant finish.

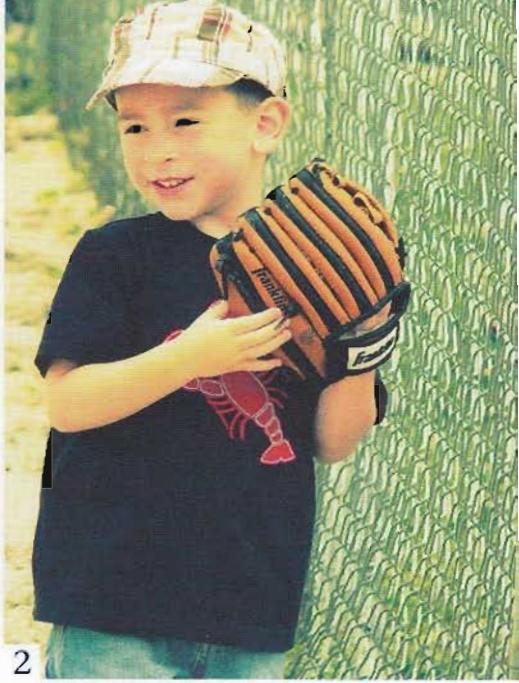




original photo



1



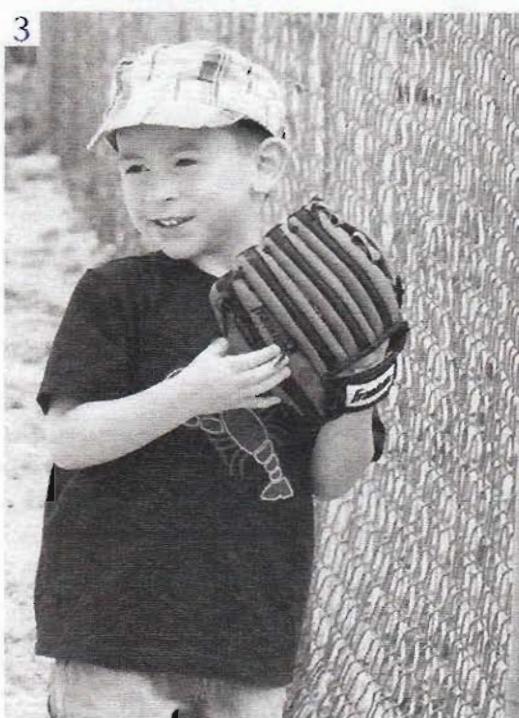
2



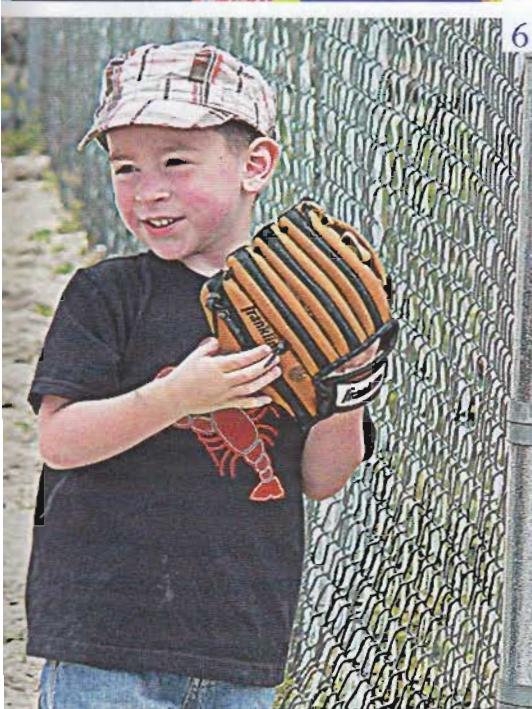
7

We transformed the original photo (above left) with seven fun effects.

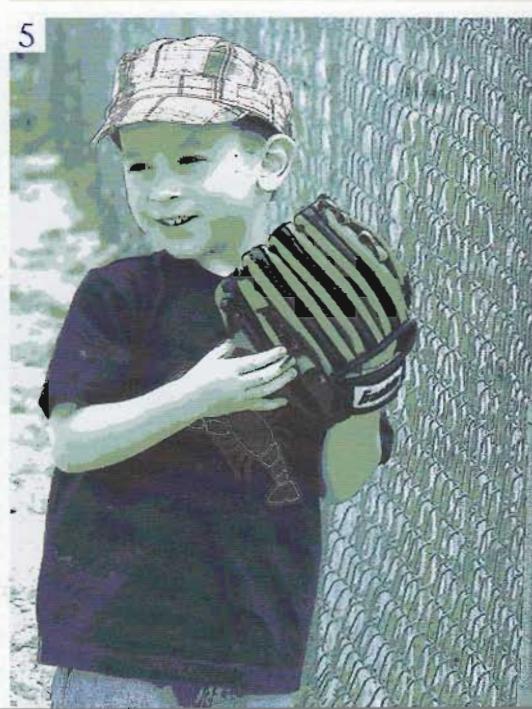
1. **Old Photo.** Use Photoshop Elements to get the look of an aged photo.
2. **Cross Process.** Upload your photo at Picnik.com to recreate this effect.
3. **Conte Crayon.** Add this effect to your photos with Photoshop Elements.
4. **Color Sketch.** Fotoflexer.com can make your photos look like drawings.
5. **Cartoon.** You can also create this graphic effect at Fotoflexer.com.
6. **HDR-ish.** Try this effect on your photos at Picnik.com.
7. **Pop Art.** Create pop art in the style of Andy Warhol at Fotoflexer.com.



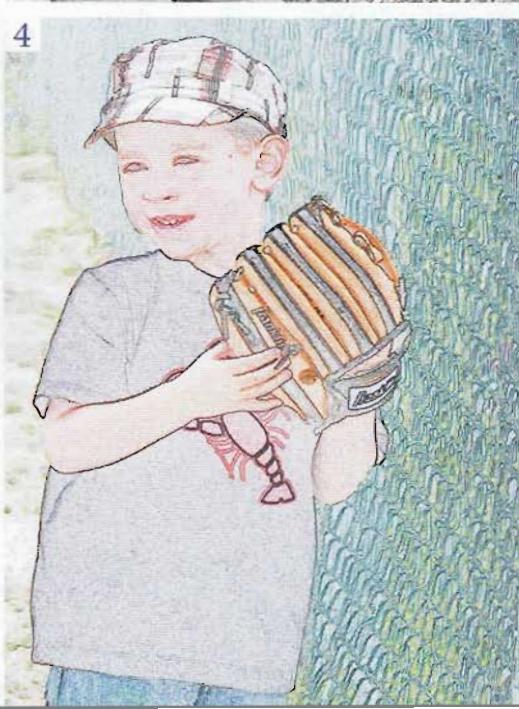
4



6



5



3

Paint Power





You don't have to be an artist to get great effects with masking patterns. The self-adhesive stencil keeps the paint where it's supposed to be. Then peeling it back reveals the beautiful results.



use large-scale masking patterns to create an artistic **stenciled accent**

Decorative masking patterns offer a bold and innovative approach to stenciling. While the striking end result may look like it was done by painting professionals, the technique is simple to learn and fun to do.



New large-scale masking patterns make it quick and easy to paint a stunning accent wall, even if you're no artist. You simply press the self-adhesive patterns onto the wall, and then use stencil brushes to dab acrylic paint in the openings. Next, use traditional Mylar stencils to overlay smaller patterns wherever you want an intricate, layered effect. This two-step process lets you transform any "ho-hum" area into a beautiful design statement.

The super-sized flowers and vines we chose lend a serene and enchanting feel to this dining room. Our source for these masking patterns, Modello Designs (see Resources on page 62), carries a variety of patterns, so you can achieve whatever look you're after. Patterns are available in sets or individually. You might want to buy an extra pattern to practice with.

Masking patterns can be tricky to handle by yourself, so ask a friend to help. That way, one person can control the adhesive-backed pattern while the other person smooths it onto the wall and removes any bubbles.



1 pre-release the stencil

1

Start by placing the pattern on a hard, flat surface, and burnish (firmly rub) the entire surface with the squeegee. Then flip the pattern over, and burnish it again. Next, with the backing facing up, slowly pull the paper halfway off, and then let it roll gently back onto the pattern. Repeat from the other side until all of the paper has been pre-released.



press and peel for a one-of-a-kind accent wall

Masking patterns come with three layers. The pattern itself has an opaque sheet on its adhesive side (backing paper) and a sheet on the top (transfer paper) that holds it together until it's adhered to the wall. You'll also need overlay stencils, $\frac{1}{2}$ " and 1" stenciling brushes, acrylic paint, acrylic extender, a squeegee, paper towels, 3" painter's tape, plastic cups, and stir sticks.

Start by wiping down the wall with a damp cloth. Next, because the masking patterns arrive in a tight roll, unroll the patterns, and lay them out on a flat surface for a few hours to "relax."

Before you apply the pattern to the wall, you will need to "pre-release" the backing paper by partially peeling it off, and then lightly sticking it back on (see Step 1). This makes the backing paper easier to remove later on.

Follow the steps on these pages to complete the large silhouettes in no time. Then, if you'd like to add smaller accents in some places, read the directions in the Sidebar on page 47. ↗



tape it to the wall

2

Decide where you want the first design to appear on the wall, and then secure that pattern with a "hinge" made from masking tape that runs along its entire side or top. Next, flip the pattern over on the tape hinge, and then carefully pull off the backing paper. Peel the paper back against itself at a 180-degree angle. Make sure the pattern doesn't stick as you peel.



pull off the transfer paper

3

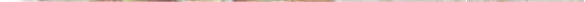
Flip the pattern back on the hinge, so it is in direct contact with the wall. Now press the pattern to the wall by burnishing the transfer paper with the squeegee, working downward. Once the pattern is affixed, slowly pull off the transfer paper. If part of the pattern pulls away from the wall, burnish that area again with the squeegee. Once you've removed the transfer paper, burnish the entire pattern again.



dab on paint

4

Next, begin applying paint, starting in the center of an opening and working toward the edges. Use an up-and-down "dabbing" motion. It's better to apply a thin layer initially and build up layers if a deeper color is desired. Repeat the process for each color.



A Pattern Within a Pattern

Overlaying smaller patterns onto larger forms is a new trend in stenciling that adds unexpected interest to a project. You can stencil different patterns over every part of your design, or apply them selectively like we did.

When you've finished painting a large form, leave the masking pattern adhered to the wall. Allow the paint to dry, and then position a Mylar stencil on the section you want to overlay. Use paint thinned with extender to fill in the openings in the stencil. You might need to reposition the overlay stencil several times to cover the entire area.



grow even greener gardens with an earth-friendly compost bin

The beauty that compost brings to a yard may not be obvious right away, but this hardworking bin is easy on the eyes from day one. Plus, its slide-out front panels and sturdy top cut down on the dirty work.





a basic bin that anyone can build!

"Green" means one thing to environmentalists and quite another to gardeners. From either perspective, composting is an effective way to go green around your home.

This compost bin is specially designed with screened-in sides, slide-out front panels, and a heavy-duty top. With these features, it's easy to turn kitchen and yard waste into nutrient-rich compost and feed it to your plants.

As for style, this is one compost bin that looks as nice as any piece of outdoor furniture, so it actually adds to the look of your yard.

Not a Woodworker? Not a Problem! At first glance, you may think you have a real construction

project on your hands. There are quite a few parts, but don't worry—they're assembled with simple techniques anyone can handle. Here we'll show you how to build the bin; details for the top are on page 52. If you'd like a closer look, complete plans are available for free at MyHomeMyStyle.com.

Basic Materials. We decided to build the compost bin out of red cedar because its impermeability makes it ideal for projects that will be exposed to a lot of moisture. Along those lines, you'll also need exterior-grade screws.

If you don't have a table saw, the project can be completed with dimensional lumber, a circular saw,

and a straightedge. You may have to visit a lumber store instead of a home center to pick up cedar 2x2s for the top slats.

Back and Sides. You'll begin by building the three frame assemblies that make up the back and sides of the bin (*Illustration, right*). Take a look at the *Sidebar* on page 53 to see how to drill "pocket holes" with a simple jig. Then, refer to Fig. 1 to see how screws are driven in to join the pieces. The three frames are essentially the same, except the back needs a few additional pocket holes for attaching it to the sides.

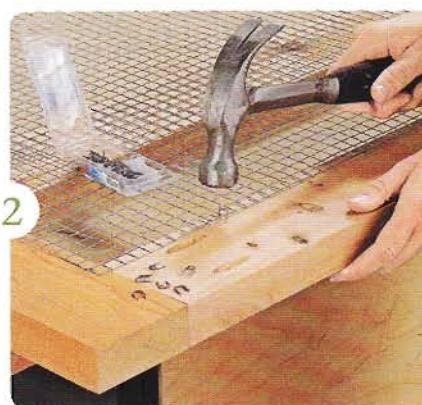
To contain the compost, the frame assemblies are screened in with galvanized hardware cloth

assemble the bin



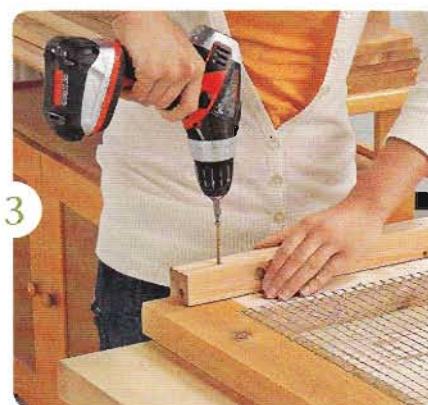
1

Pocket-hole joinery is a strong, easy way to connect pieces. Drill holes with a jig, and drive screws in at a sharp angle.



2

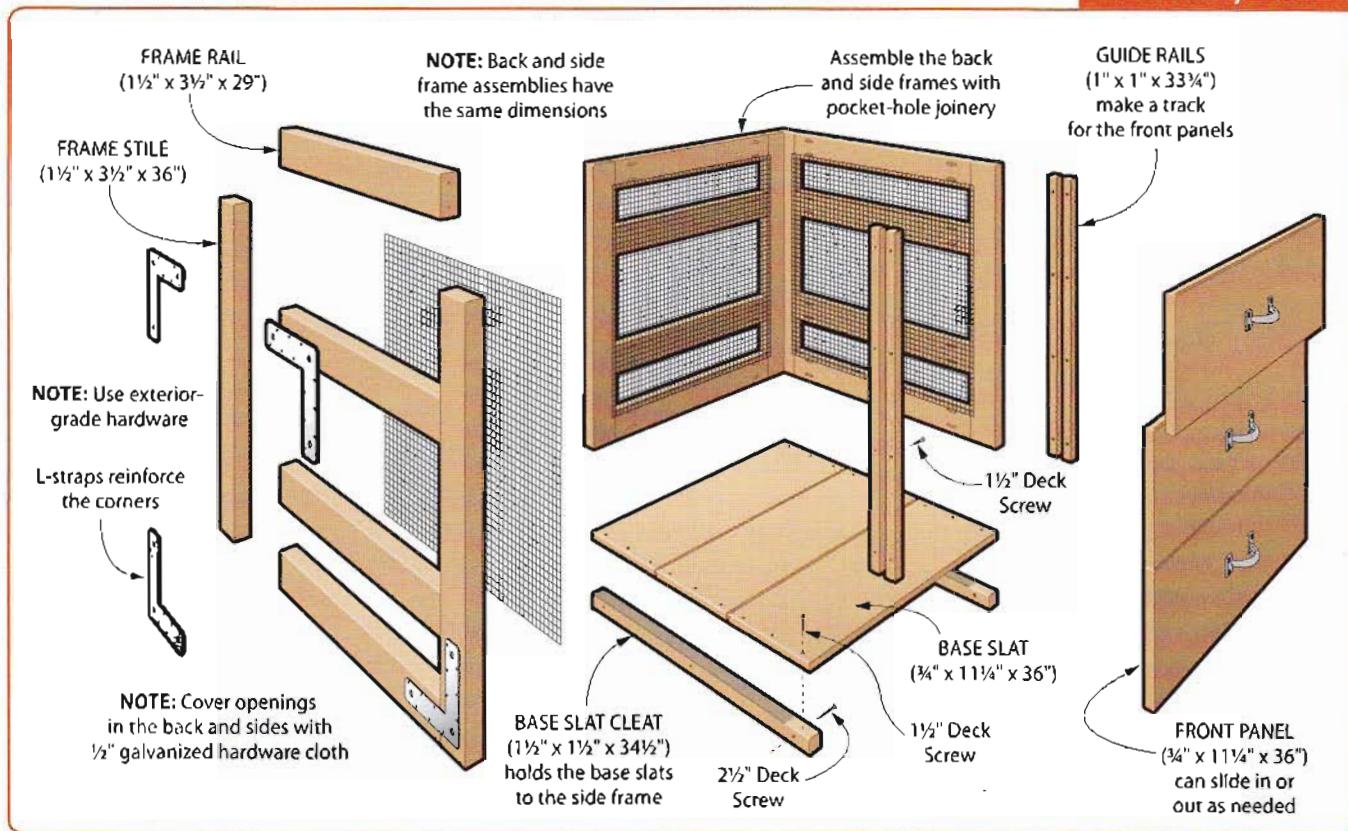
Cover the openings with galvanized hardware cloth. Use metal shears to cut it and galvanized staples to attach it.



3

Attach a cleat to the bottom edge of each side frame assembly. Later, you'll attach the base slats to these pieces.





(Fig. 2). This adds rigidity, as do the L-straps we added to the corners.

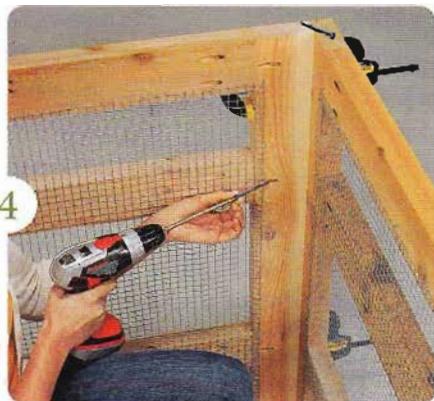
Base of the Bin. Next, you'll attach a cleat along the inside bottom edge of each side frame to support the base slats (Fig. 3). The cleats shouldn't extend the full length of the side frames, however. A gap at one end allows the back to tuck into place against the sides.

After driving in pocket screws to attach the back frame to the sides (Fig. 4), screw the base slats to the cleats you just added (Fig. 5).

Front Panels. Now fasten a pair of guide rails to the vertical edge of each side frame (Fig. 6). Three panels will slide between these guides to make up the front of the bin. It's a good idea to leave extra

space between them, so the panels won't get stuck if the wood swells.

With the guide rails installed, you can cut the front panels to size, attach a drawer pull to the front of each one, and slide them into place. This design lets you open up one- or two-thirds of the front to access your compost without spilling the whole pile.



Connect the back and sides with pocket screws. The back frame should be positioned between the sides.



The three base slats that serve as the bottom of the bin are simply screwed to the cleats on the side frames.



Guide rails on each side frame hold the front panels. Leave extra space between them, so the panels slide smoothly.

top it off with a durable slatted lid

The top of the compost bin is more than a lid; it's also a practical potting bench. Careful assembly will really pay off in its look and function. This includes arranging for the best face of each slat to show, spacing the pieces evenly, making sure that everything is square, and using clamps to counteract any warping.

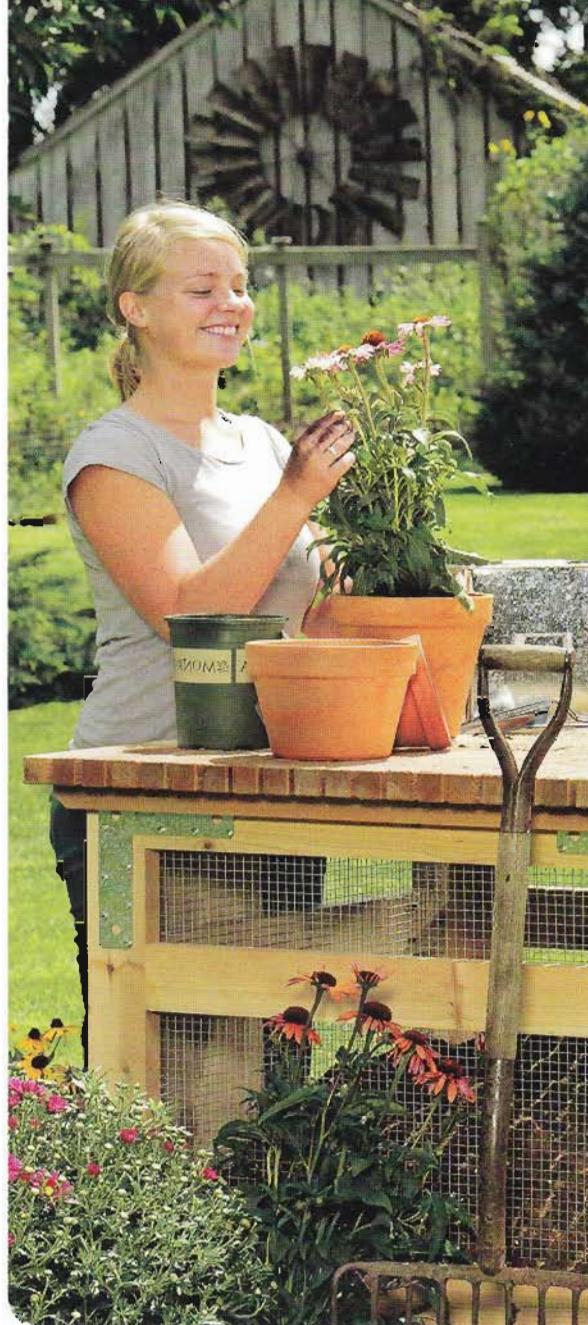
Assemble a Sturdy Top. To make the top, you'll attach 22 top slats to a pair of cleats and a stiffener. The cleats are spaced to fit outside the side frame assemblies of the bin, so you can just set the top in place when you're done.

Assembling the top requires a little bit of setup to make sure you get it right. First, place $2\frac{1}{2}$ "-wide spacer boards outside the cleats when positioning the slats. This will help you maintain a consistent overhang. Next, use small ($\frac{1}{4}$ ") spacers to create consistent gaps between the slats.

With the slats and spacers in line, clamp them tightly together to counteract any warping. Then drill countersunk screw holes, and drive in screws (Fig. 1).

After attaching all the slats to both cleats, turn the top over. You may notice some racking, but that's easily fixed with a center "stiffener" panel screwed to each slat in two places (Fig. 2). Just make sure everything is square before attaching it. Finally, pull out the spacers, and place the top on the bin (Fig. 3).

Now What? You'll be able to knock out a complete compost bin in a weekend or so. But the bin itself is merely the groundwork for a continuing project that will benefit your garden and the environment. Go to MyHomeMyStyle.com to access information and strategies for successfully putting your new compost bin to work.



assemble the top



Screw the slats to the cleats using clamps and thin spacers for alignment plus a wide spacer for each overhang

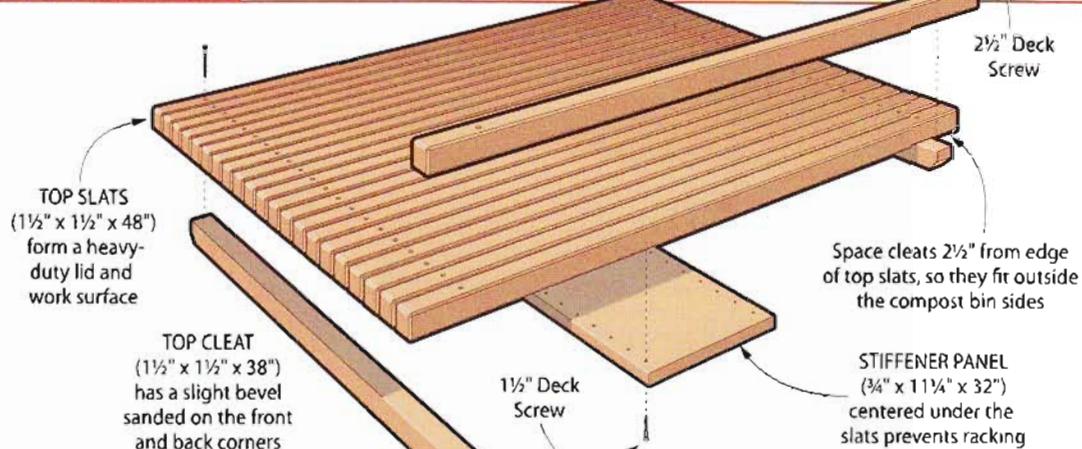


Attach a stiffener to the slats to keep the top from racking. Spacers on each side keep the slats straight.



Set the finished lid on the bin, so the cleats rest just outside the sides. Then haul it outside, and start composting!

Assembly View



Cool Tool

strong, simple pocket-hole joinery

When you butt two boards against each other, you can see that there aren't many ways to connect them. But a simple pocket-hole jig, like this Kreg Jig, makes it just about foolproof.

Start by setting up the jig for the thickness of your workpiece, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2. Then let the jig guide the stepped bit into your workpiece at an angle until the stop collar bottoms out (Fig. 3 and the Upper Illustration). This creates a pocket hole for clearance and a shank hole to drive the screw into. Now put your boards together, drive in a "self-tapping" pocket screw, and the pieces will draw tightly together (Lower Illustration).



1



2

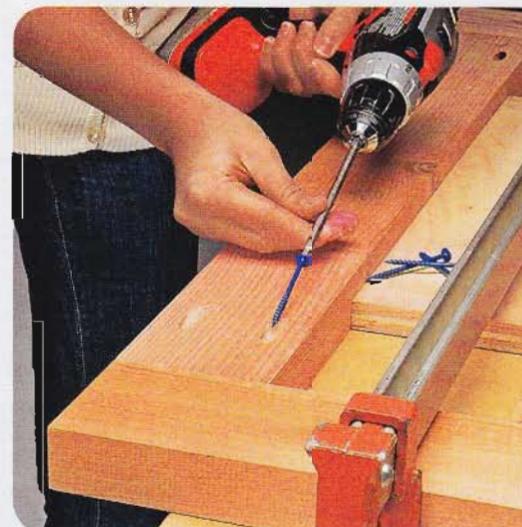
Set the bit's stop collar for the material's thickness using a gauge molded into the case.

Position the jig from the edge of the workpiece using legs that denote various thicknesses.

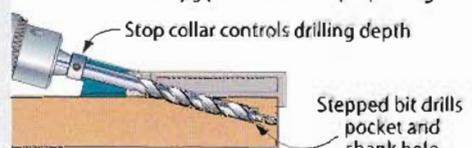


3

With the jig clamped, guide the bit through one opening as deep as the stop collar allows. Shift the jig over to drill a second hole.



Pocket-hole jig positions bit at proper angle

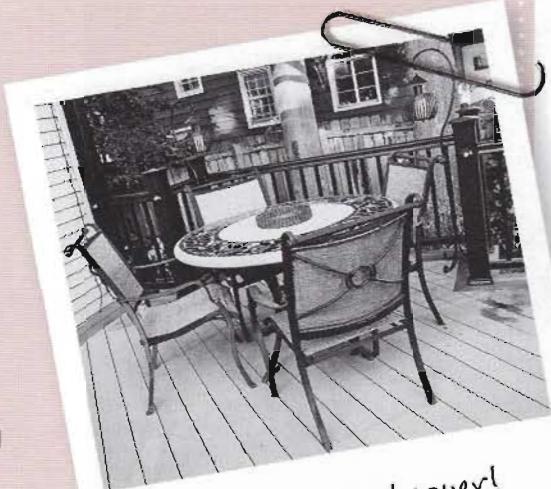


Stop collar controls drilling depth
Stepped bit drills pocket and shank hole



Smooth shank allows mating pieces to slide together as screw draws tightly

Screw tip creates pilot hole for screw to prevent wood from splitting

**A Good Opportunity to "Go Green."**

Synthetic boards, a metal railing, and nice furniture made for a stylish but dull deck. All it needed was a little plant personality.

dress up your deck with cool containers

Inject a little personality into your outdoor spaces by choosing the right plants and containers. We'll offer the guidance you need to customize a planting plan for your home.

These days, more and more homeowners are incorporating a new room into their living spaces. Only this room doesn't have a ceiling, walls, or carpeting—it's the great outdoors.

Now, having a deck or patio on your home is certainly nothing new. But the idea of treating that area as an "outdoor room," a place with all the same creature comforts as the inside of the home, is gaining ground. Of course, that means these spaces ought to have their own style just like any other room.

The Missing Piece. With its elegant decking, railing, and furniture, this home's deck had the makings of a great outdoor room. What it was lacking, though, was a little bit of color and pizzazz to give it style.

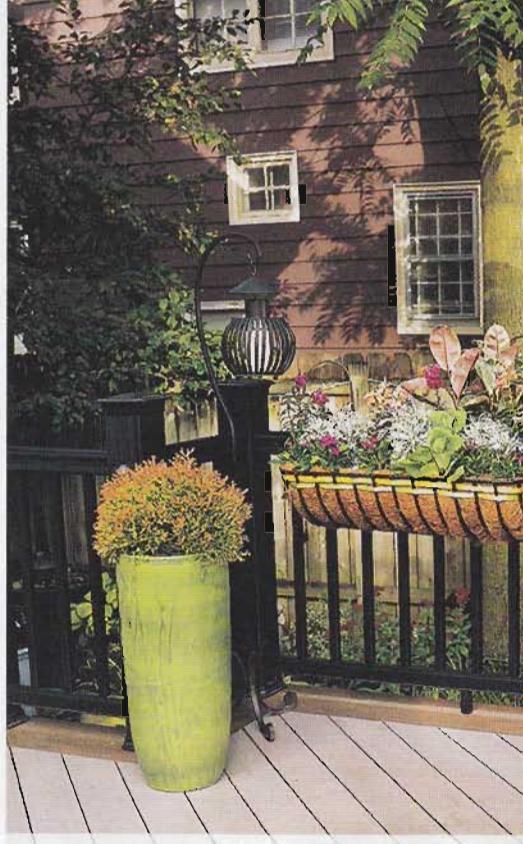
The solution here—and in many other outdoor rooms—is choosing the right plants. Here's how these homeowners solved their plant problem, step by step.







1 Start with Hanging Baskets. Available at garden centers, these "hayrack" planters solved the deck's privacy problem in a way that matched the rails perfectly. They can be mounted with plastic cable ties.



2 Go Tall. To tie the hanging containers to the deck and soften corners, consider a pair of tall, colorful containers like these.

elegant outdoor room step by step

An outdoor room should evoke a feeling of warmth and comfort, much like the outdoors itself on a warm day. This deck had many nice qualities, but the gray boards and black railing left it feeling cold.

The deck's close proximity to a neighbor's windows wasn't helping its comfort level, either. And its hard, square corners, while architecturally interesting, gave it a stiff, formal feel.

Put in Privacy. To create a more comfortable, intimate setting, the homeowners started by installing "hayrack" planters on the railing. Mounting them in front of the neighbor's windows immediately solved the deck's privacy issues. And filling them with a variety of annuals brought some much-needed color and warmth.

If you look closely, you'll see that a third hayrack is mounted to the outside of the rail, centered between the two inner hayracks. The homeowners filled this rack with taller rubber plants for even more privacy.

A Sense of Scale. The hayracks were a nice start, but they seemed to be floating alone on the deck. A pair of tall containers tied them to the surface of the deck nicely. They also softened the sharp corners to give the deck a more casual feel.

Round It Out. On their own, though, the tall containers were pretty stark—almost like soldiers standing guard. A pair of smaller containers on either side took care of that. Their burgundy and cool blue colors rounded out the overall look of the deck quite nicely.



Details Make a Difference. To give the hayracks some personality, consider weaving ribbon through the bars and adding battery-operated tea lights.



3 Complete the Look. The tall containers may look a bit lonely on their own, so consider a few additional pots in contrasting colors to finish the look. Try arranging pots at the store before you buy to find just the right look for your deck!

Potting Plants 101

Containers: A Look Inside

Large containers can be a challenge. You want to be able to move them after potting them, so it's a good idea to fill them about half full of "padding" in the form of foam blocks or a plastic bag filled with packing peanuts first. Then, follow these steps to fill them up the rest of the way.

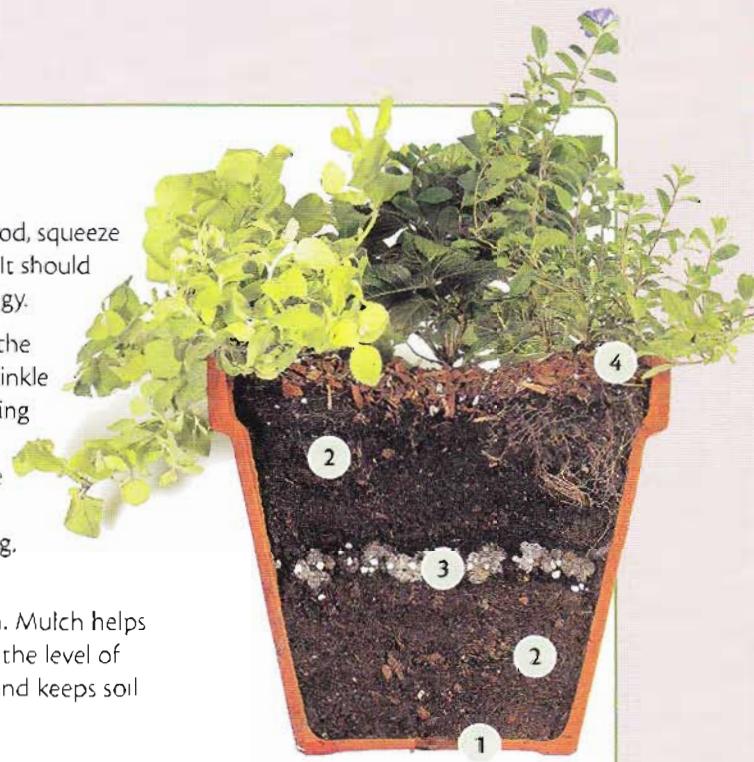
1] Do the Drain. Good potting mix shouldn't leak out of your container, but if you're concerned, you can cover the hole with a coffee filter or screen.

2] Get in the Mix. Good-quality, lightweight potting mix should be the main ingredient in your container. If

you're unsure if it's good, squeeze a handful in your fist. It should remain light and springy.

3] Add Insurance. In the middle of the pot, sprinkle in some water-absorbing crystals and a time-release fertilizer. These can't replace regular watering and fertilizing, but they can help.

4] Top It with Mulch. Mulch helps your plants maintain the level of moisture they need and keeps soil in place as you water.





for better **results**
get to know your cordless
Drill/Driver

Dive into almost any DIY project, and you'll understand the necessity of the drill/driver.

For clean holes and perfectly placed screws, it's just as necessary to understand how to use it.

You're not alone if you've fired up a drill/driver without recognizing anything but the trigger. Whether you wound up frustrated, puzzled, or relieved, it's better to take a minute to become familiar with the tool's components. Then, with the drilling and driving tips on page S9, you'll be able to complete your projects with confidence.

First Things First. Looking at a drill/driver, it's obvious where the bit goes. Old models needed a key to lock the bit in place, but yours likely has a keyless chuck that twists by hand to secure it.

Above the trigger, you'll find the forward/reverse switch. The forward

setting is for drilling holes or driving screws, and the reverse switch lets you back out a jammed bit or remove screws.

Using the Clutch. The less intuitive component is that numbered ring—the clutch. It adjusts the torque, or rotating force, so a bit will power through material or automatically stop spinning once it meets a certain resistance. We'll get into this more on the opposite page.

Trigger Happy. The last thing to note is that your tool probably has a variable-speed trigger. Like the gas pedal on a car, more applied pressure increases the rotating speed of the bit. This allows you to start out slowly to avoid slipping.

drilling holes ... go for drill mode

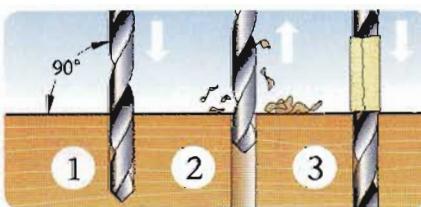
When it comes to drilling holes, you want to maximize the torque your drill/driver exerts, so the bit won't come to a screeching stop mid-way through your workpiece. You can do this by setting the clutch to the drill mode, as you see in the Photo below.



Drill Straight. Unless you intend to drill an angled hole, be sure to keep the bit perpendicular to your workpiece (*Fig. 1*).

Relieve Sawdust. If the hole you're drilling is fairly deep, periodically pull the bit back to relieve the sawdust (*Fig. 2*). This prevents sawdust from compacting around the bit and causing it to lock up.

Determine the Depth. Finally, *Fig. 3* offers a tip for drilling a stopped hole: Measure how much of the bit should enter the workpiece, and mark it with tape, so you know when to stop drilling.



driving screws ... set the clutch

Driving screws is quite easy once you get the hang of it. Of course, you need to use the right shape and size driver bit, so it doesn't wobble around in the head of the screw. Also, make sure you aim straight. Aside from that, the only thing to address is the clutch setting.

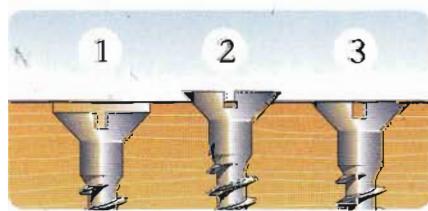
Just Enough Torque. If you drive a screw with too high of a clutch setting, you rely on your trigger finger and instinct. That makes stripping or over-driving it more likely (*Fig. 1*). Too low of a setting, on the other hand, stops the motor before the screw



is driven all the way in (*Fig. 2*). Somewhere in between is a setting that will seat the screw flush just as the bit stops spinning (*Fig. 3*).

Practice Makes Perfect.

Because the right setting to use with various materials and screws depends on the drill, it's a good idea to grab some scrap material and get a feel for your tool's clutch.



One Bit to Prevent Screwups

A countersink bit like the one shown above has two things going for it. First, it drills a pilot hole, so the material won't split when you drive in a screw (*Photo, below*). Second, it creates a "countersink" for the head of the screw to fit into. Instead of the screw head cracking the surface (*Photo, below*) or popping off, it ends up sitting flush and looking just right (*Bottom Photo*).



Splits and cracks from driving a screw into a hard material (like oak or melamine) without pre-drilling can lead to a lot of frustration.



For a smooth joint like this, start by drilling a countersunk pilot hole, which clears the way for the screw and creates a notch in the surface for the screw head.

Instant Style: Create a Carpet Tile Area Rug

The ideal rug is attractive, affordable, and fits your space perfectly. This may seem like a lot to ask for, but you can get all of these features when you build your own rug from Flor carpet tiles.

The carpet tiles are available in many colors and patterns, which can be combined in limitless ways to create a completely unique rug. Or if you get overwhelmed by all of the choices, you can choose a rug kit.

Each kit comes with carpet tiles in pre-selected colors. To begin assembly, just lay out the tiles. Then arrange the included Flordot adhesives with the sticky sides facing up, and connect the tiles (*Photos, right*).

PRICE: Varies by rug kit size and style

LEARN MORE: Flor.com or

866-281-3567



A Rug for Every Room: Flor Kit Options



1] Dramatic Dining Room
Bring in a neutral rug, like the "Just a Sliver" style, to add visual interest but keep furnishings in the spotlight.



2] Lavish Living Room
A vibrant rug, like the "Warm and Fuzzy" style shown here, can tie decor and furnishings together.



3] Colorful Kitchen
The cozy "House Pet 2" rug kit may be beautiful, but it's also built to hold up in rooms with heavy traffic.



4] Fabulous Family Room
Blocks of color in subdued tones help the "Easy as Pie 1" rug kit complement contemporary spaces.



Post Papers Anywhere with a Peel & Stick Tack Strip

You don't need bulky bulletin boards to post notes, lists, and photos around the house. This magnetic tack strip system from Lee Valley is a versatile, space-saving alternative that's perfect for spaces like home offices and kitchens. It includes six magnets and a 48"-long flexible,

adhesive-backed mounting strip that you can cut to length with a pair of scissors and stick anywhere.

PRICE: \$13

LEARN MORE: LeeValley.com or 800-267-8735

Outdoor Heater Doubles as Decor

Keep your patio comfortable by using an outdoor heater to take the chill out of cool evenings. While many outdoor heaters are eyesores, the one shown at right is designed to look like an attractive lamp. Its classic rope-twist design will add to the style of your outdoor space.

The heater, which is available in floor stand or tabletop models, can produce enough heat to warm the outdoor air within a 10-foot circle. It just plugs into standard 120-volt outlets and is designed to shut off for safety if tilted.

PRICE: \$200 (tabletop); \$250 (floor stand)

LEARN MORE: Brookstone.com or 800-846-3000



You don't have to limit yourself to a single decorating style in order to have a well-composed space. New traditional style lets you mix and match to create an eclectic environment that's livable and true to your taste.

Q&A (page 8)

"Covington Blue" Paint (Adirondack chair)
#HC-138, BenjaminMoore.com, 800-344-0400

Chalkboard Drink Cooler (page 10)

Large Oval Galvanized Steel Tub #OACC55;
17-Gallon Galvanized Round Wash tub
#A30298; 15½-Gallon Galvanized Square
Washtub #B33040841, RedHillGeneralStore.com,
800-251-8824

Writable-Erasable Latex Chalkboard Paint,
RustOleum.com, 800-323-3584

"Fresh Foliage" Folk Art Outdoor Opaque Acrylic
Paint #1625; "Pinwheel Blue" Homefront
Interior & Exterior Acrylic Enamel #17311; "Real
Yellow" Homefront Interior & Exterior Acrylic
Enamel #17303, PlaidOnline.com, 800-842-4197.
Homefront line available at Ace Hardware stores

New Traditional Style (page 12)

"Creamy White" Paint (walls) #OC-7,
BenjaminMoore.com, 800-344-0400

Cosmo 84" Window Panels in White,
BedBathandBeyond.com, 800-462-3966

Klaussner Hero Chair in Solo Natural,
#K660UCOLONATU, Klaussner.com,
888-732-5948; available through Walmart.com,
#KLF2302

Head of a Jade Horse by Austin #MT0118,
AllSculptures.com, 800-340-9897

Antique Trunk; Ironing Board; Bowl; White Case;
Dough Bowl, purchased at a local antiques/salvage
store: FoundThingsDSM.com, 515-265-8524

Wall Art; Lamp; Pillows; Vase; Rug, purchased
locally

Daybed (page 16)

"Standish White" Paint #HC-32 (walls); "Swiss
Coffee" Paint #OC-45 (trim), BenjaminMoore.com,
800-344-0400

Custom Paint Color Matches (daybed and display
cabinets),ValsparAtLowes.com, 800-313-5568;
3" x 3" x 30" Posts, available at The Home Depot



Surface-Mounted Keyhole Bed Rail Brackets
#32077, Rockler.com, 800-279-4441

Easy-Fit Twill Off-White Bolster Pillow
#EZF3579, CSNStores.com, 800-593-5251

Mill Valley Embroidered Lumbar Pillow Cover;
Textured Solid Pillow Cover in Chive Green
and Fall Leaf; Jute Braid Pillow Cover in Ivory;
Pick-Stitch Euro Quilt and Sham in White; Pillow
Inserts, PotteryBarn.com, 888-779-5176

Cross Lattice by Hope Smith Wall Art; Square
Lattice by Hope Smith Wall Art, available at Target
stores

Display Cabinet, purchased at a local
antiques/salvage store: FoundThingsDSM.com,
515-265-8524

Perfect Patterns (page 22)

"Powell Buff" Paint (walls) #HC-35,
BenjaminMoore.com, 800-344-0400

Montclair Paisley Pillow Cover in Blue; Linen
Stripe Pillow Cover in Flax, PotteryBarn.com,
888-779-5176

Blossom Wall Art, BedBathandBeyond.com,
800-462-3966

Amanda Blackout Room Darkening Window
Panels by Eclipse in Khaki,
BedBathandBeyond.com, 800-462-3966

American Living Arbor Curtain Rod,
JCPenney.com, 800-322-1189

Furniture and Other Accessories, purchased
locally

Window Flower Box (page 26)

Rot-Free ¾" x 7¼" x 8" Smooth/Textured
Cellular PVC Trim Board #238348, ½" x 3" x
2' Poplar Board (pickets) #1244; ½" x 5' PVC
Charlotte Pipe (drainage pipes) #23967,
Lowes.com, 800-445-6937

Garage Storage (page 32)

"Buttered Yarn" Paint #AF-230; "Courtyard
Green" Paint #546; "Flint" Paint #AF-560;
"Bleeker Beige" Paint (walls) #HC-80,
BenjaminMoore.com, 800-344-0400

{resources}

24" x 48" x 72" Muscle Rack Storage Shelf;
18" x 36" x 72" Muscle Rack Storage Shelf;
¾" Birch Plywood; ¼" Pegboard; ¾" MDF; Pine
1x6 Boards; 2½" Zinc Hinges; 2" Zinc Window
Bolts; 4¾" Zinc Screen Door Pulls; #12 Steel
Single-Jack Chain; #10 x ¾" Panhead Sheet-
Metal Screws; #10 x ¾" Panhead Machine
Screws; #10 x ½" Panhead Machine Screws;
¾" Washers; ¾" Nuts, available at Lowe's stores
48" 10-Outlet Power Strip with Diamond
Plating; 14" 300-Watt Reflector Shop Light;
Victoria Carpet Squares in Grey and Tan,
available at Menards' stores

Photo Art (page 40)

"Sleigh Bells" Paint (walls) #1480,
BenjaminMoore.com, 800-344-0400

Stenciled Accent Wall (page 44)

Modello "Wild Flowers" Silhouette Masking
Patterns (set of five designs) Shape Set #205;
"Lacy Leaves" Mylar Stencil #RDS 613,
"Mini Brocade" Mylar Stencil #RDS 624,
ModelloDesigns.com, 800-663-3860

Delta Creative "Baroque Flourish" Mylar
Stencil #956770018, ShopCraftWorld.com
800-654-6114

"Basil Green" Folk Art Acrylic Paint #645;
"Forest Moss" Folk Art Acrylic Paint #527,
"Fresh Foliage" Folk Art Acrylic Paint #954;
"Titanium White" Folk Art Artists' Pigments
Paint #480, PlaidOnline.com, 800-842-4197
"Dunmore Cream" Paint (wall) #HC-29,
BenjaminMoore.com, 800-344-0400

Compost Bin (page 48)

Kreg Pocket-Hole Jig #255535, Lowes.com,
800-445-6937

36" x 10' Garden Plus Hardware Cloth with
½" Mesh; Kreg 2½" Blue-Kote Pocket-Hole
Screws, Simpson Strong-Tie 8" x 8" L-Straps;
Drawer Pulls, available at Lowe's stores

Deck Containers (page 54)

European Classic Window Hayracks with
Liners #KC16SET, WindowGardensDirect.com,
814-381-6268

Battery-Operated Tea Lights and Votive Holders,
available at Pier 1 Imports

Colorful Containers, purchased at local garden
centers and nurseries

Gear Guide: Drill/Driver (page 58)

Ryobi 12V Lithium-Ion Drill Kit #743076,
available at The Home Depot

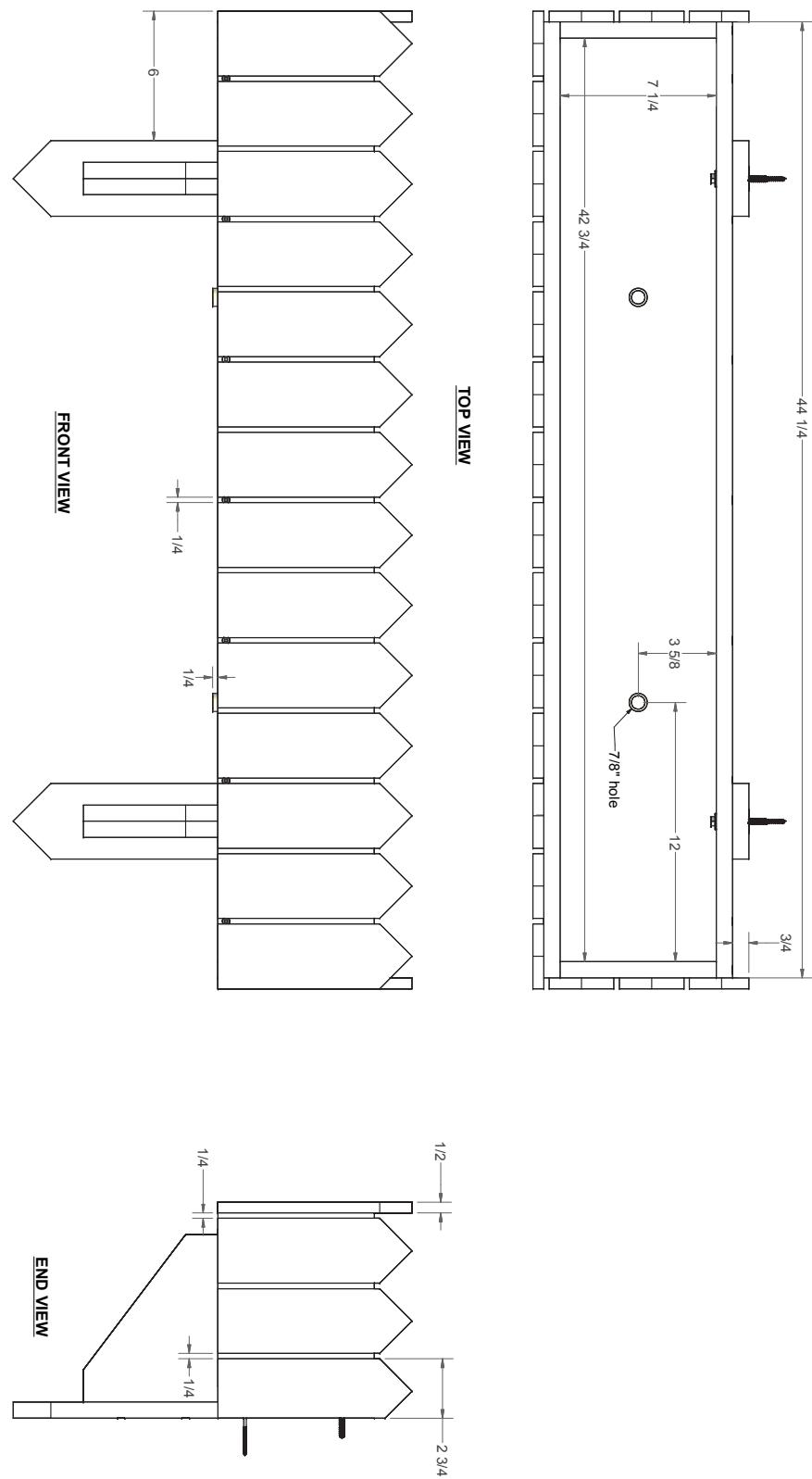
*Would you believe
that run-of-the-mill
galvanized tubs
have a place at
your summertime
gatherings? By
coating sections with
chalkboard paint
and adding a few
colorful stripes,
you can turn them into
drink coolers and
side tables that are
quite entertaining!*

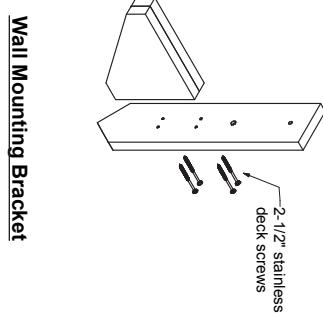
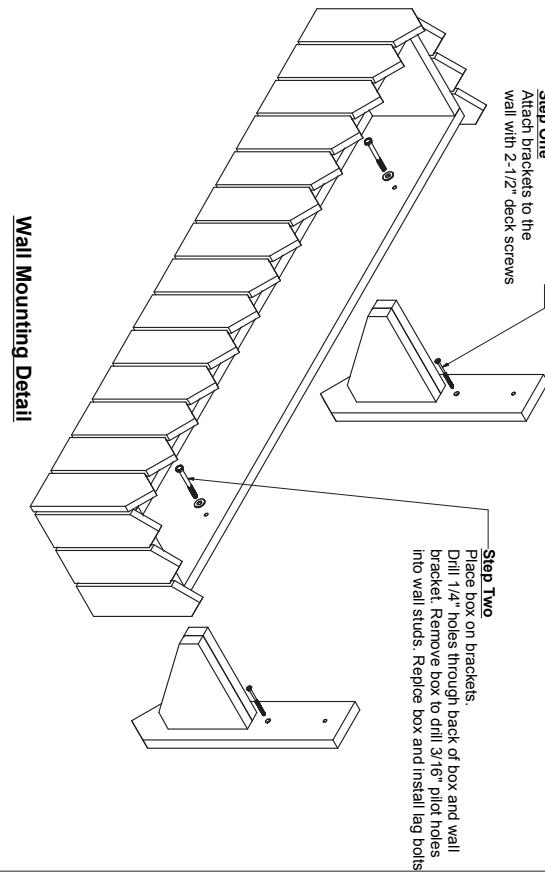
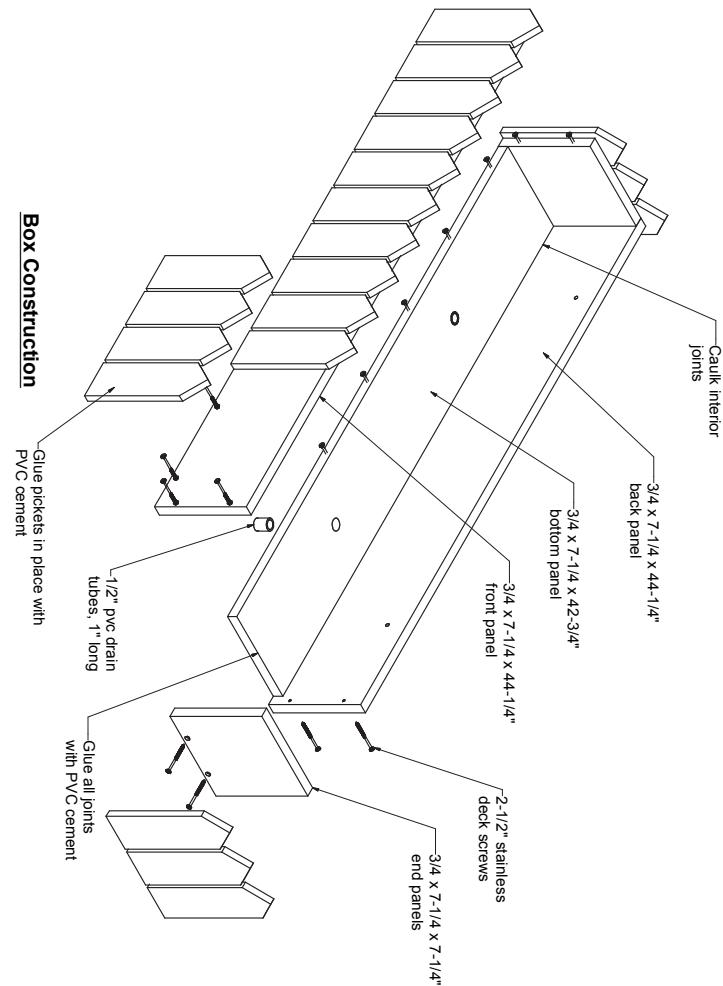


*With an easy-to-build daybed and stylish accessories,
your spare room will be fabulous and functional whether
you're hosting overnight guests or just hanging out.*

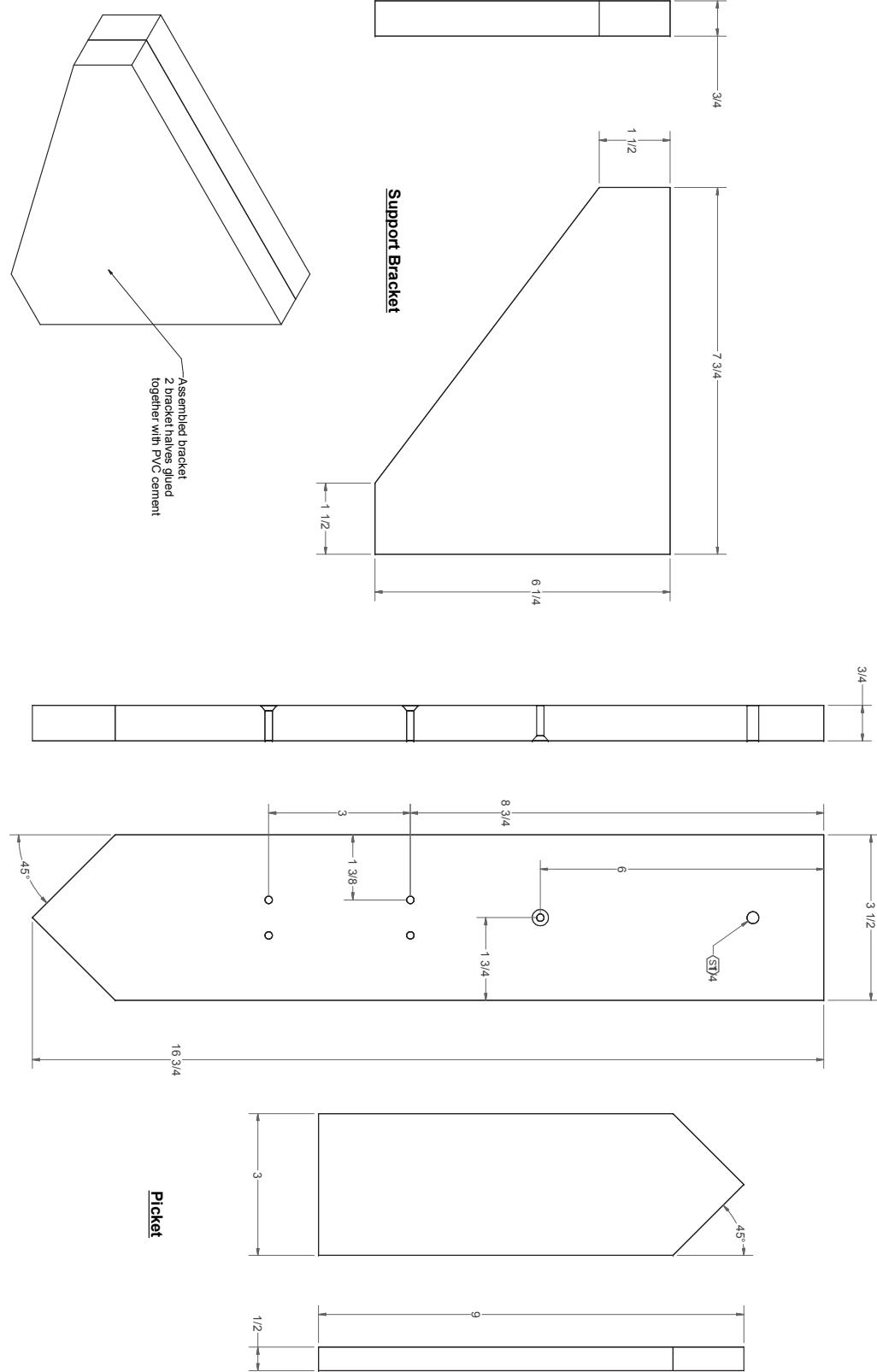


myHOME workbench mv style Window Box

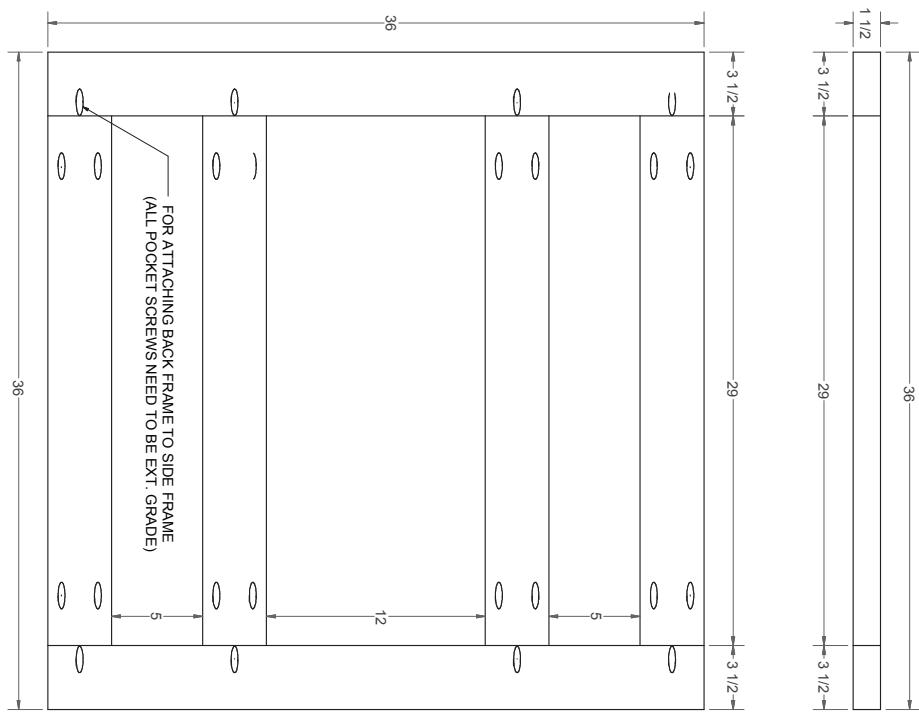




workbench my HOME Window Box

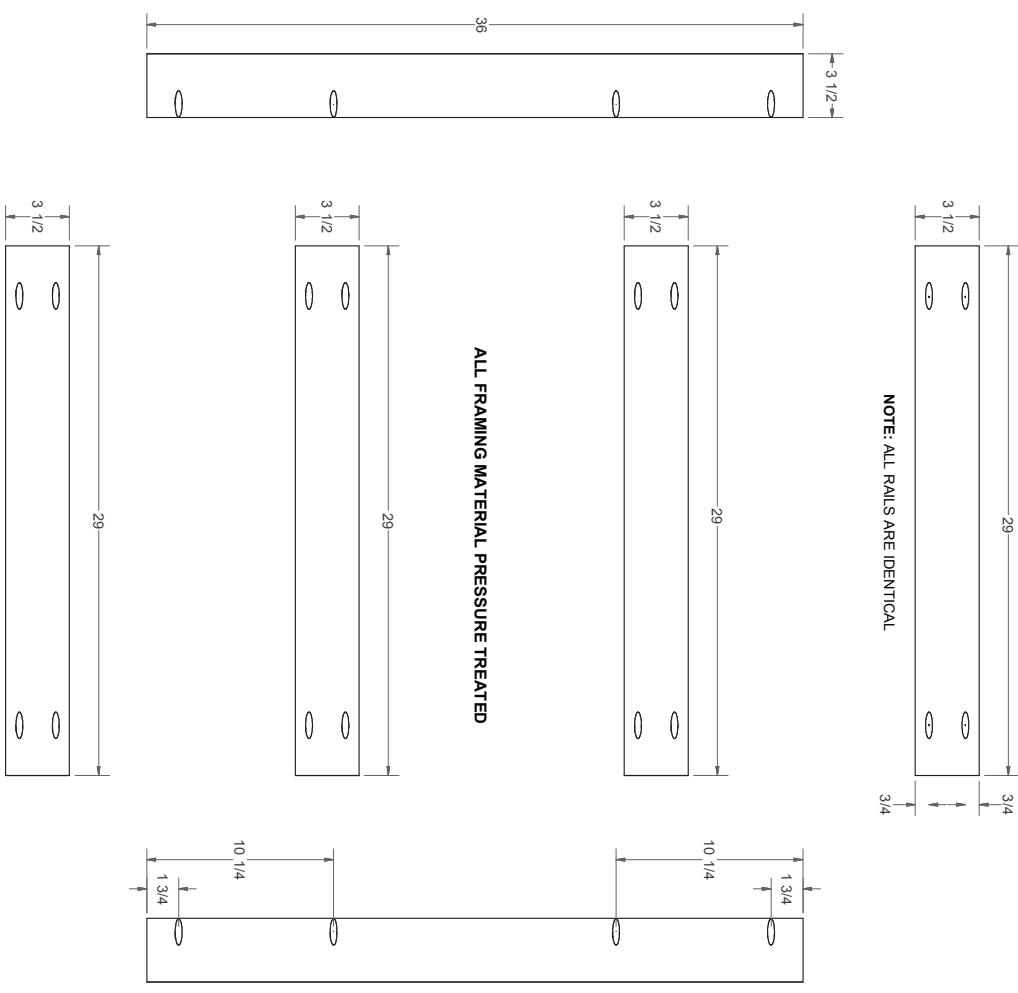


BACK FRAME ASSEMBLY

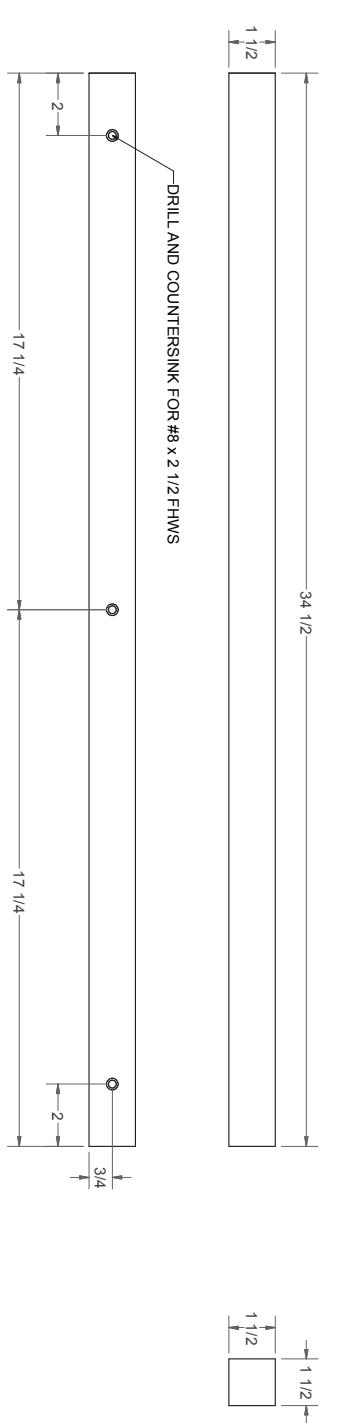


NOTE: ALL RAILS ARE IDENTICAL

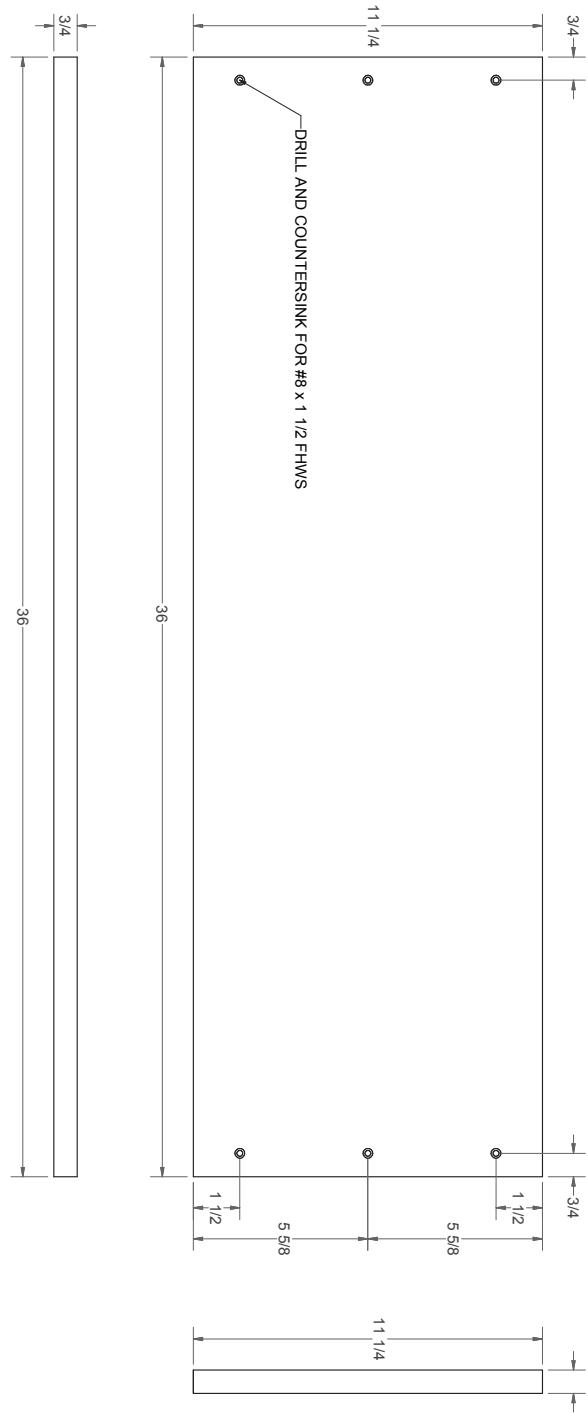
ALL FRAMING MATERIAL PRESSURE TREATED



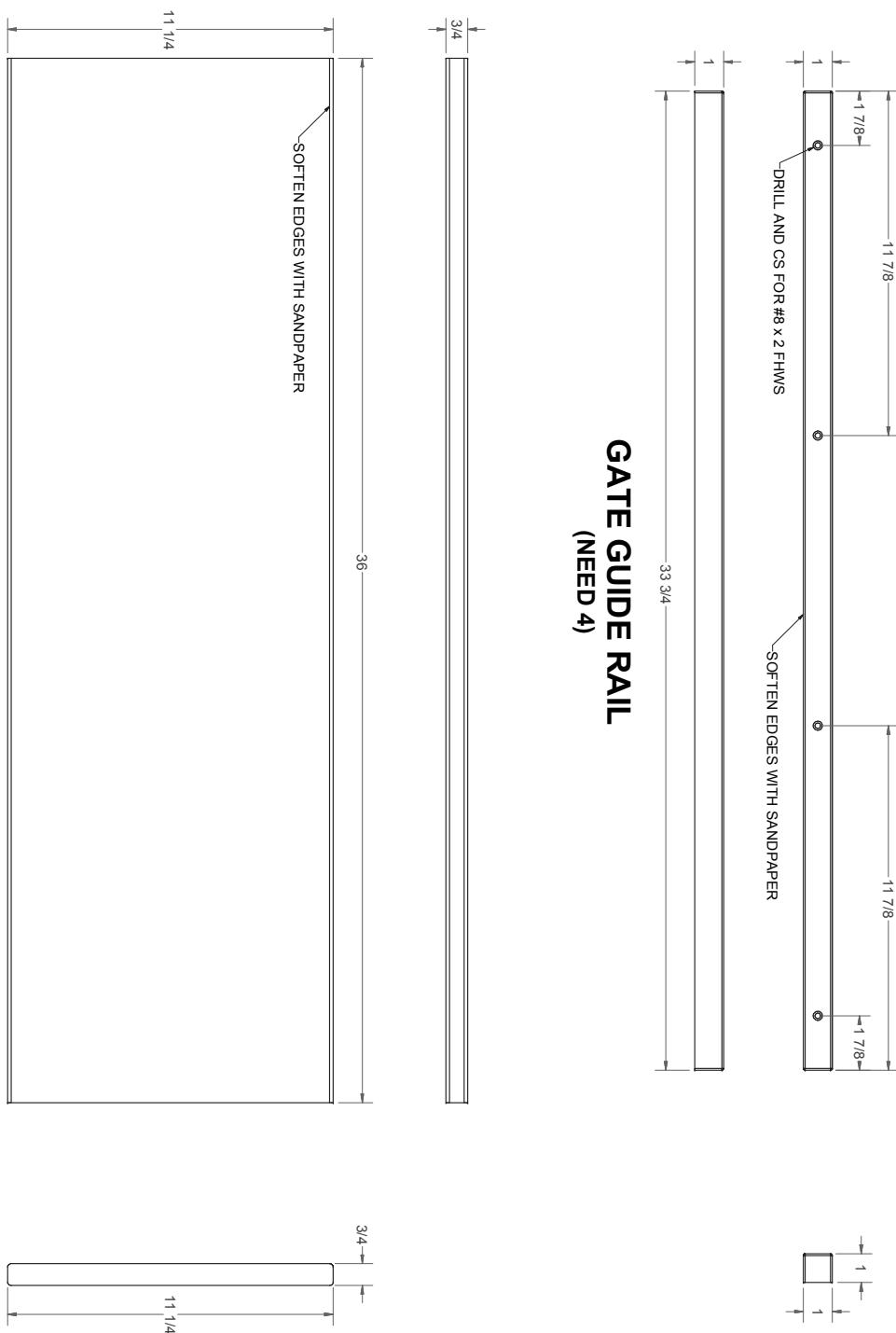
BASE SLAT CLEAT



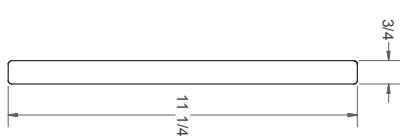
BASE SLAT



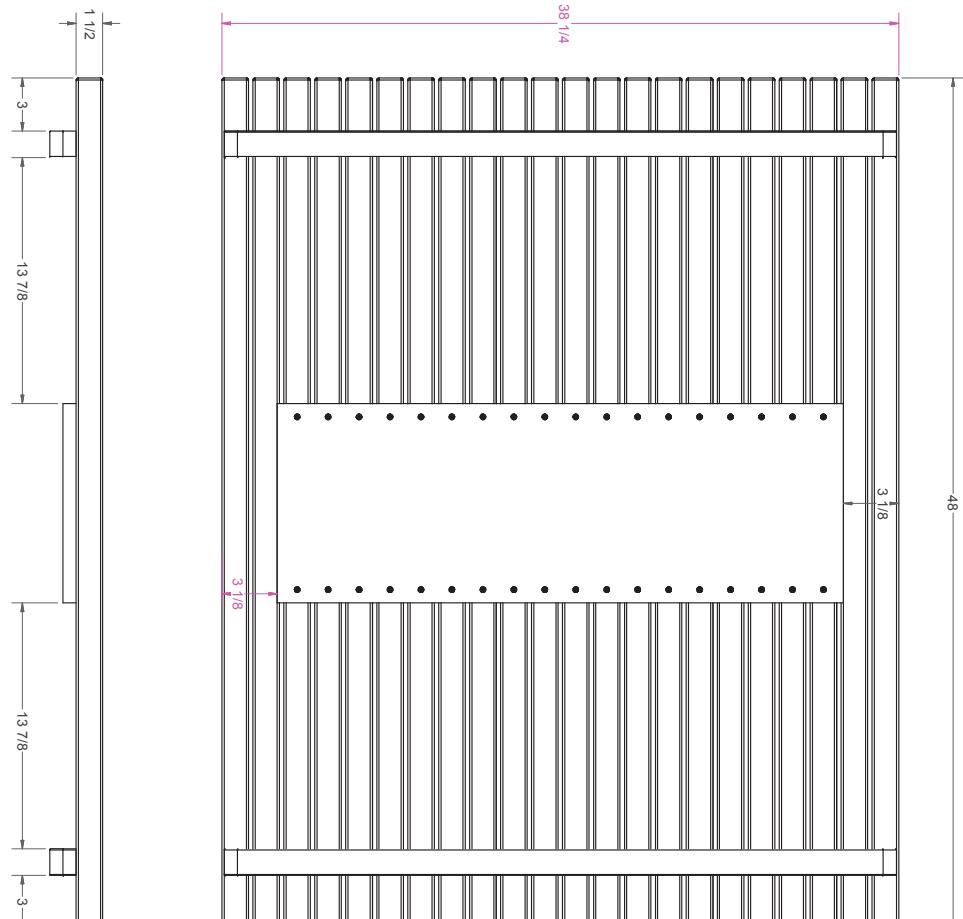
GATE GUIDE RAIL (NEED 4)



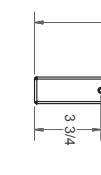
GATE (NEED 3)



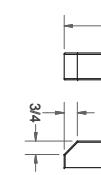
TOP ASSEMBLY



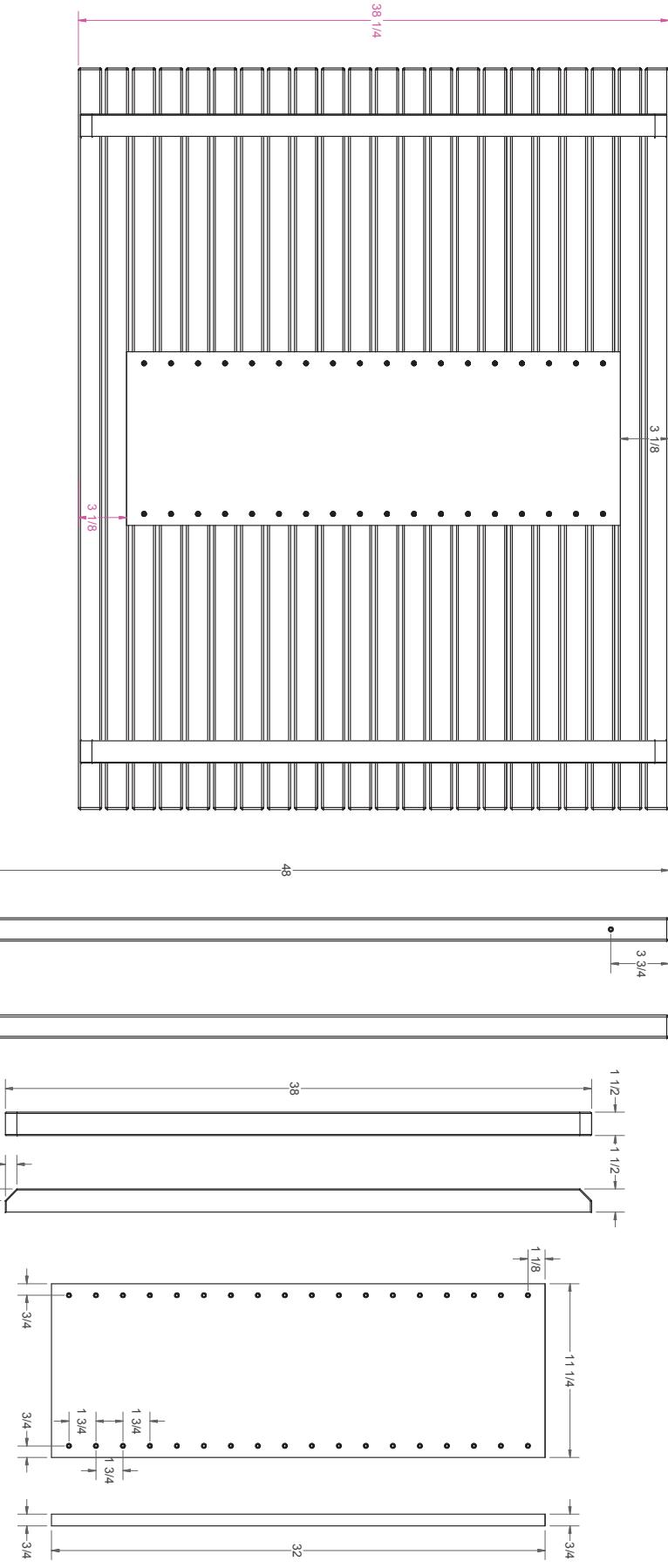
TOP SLAT



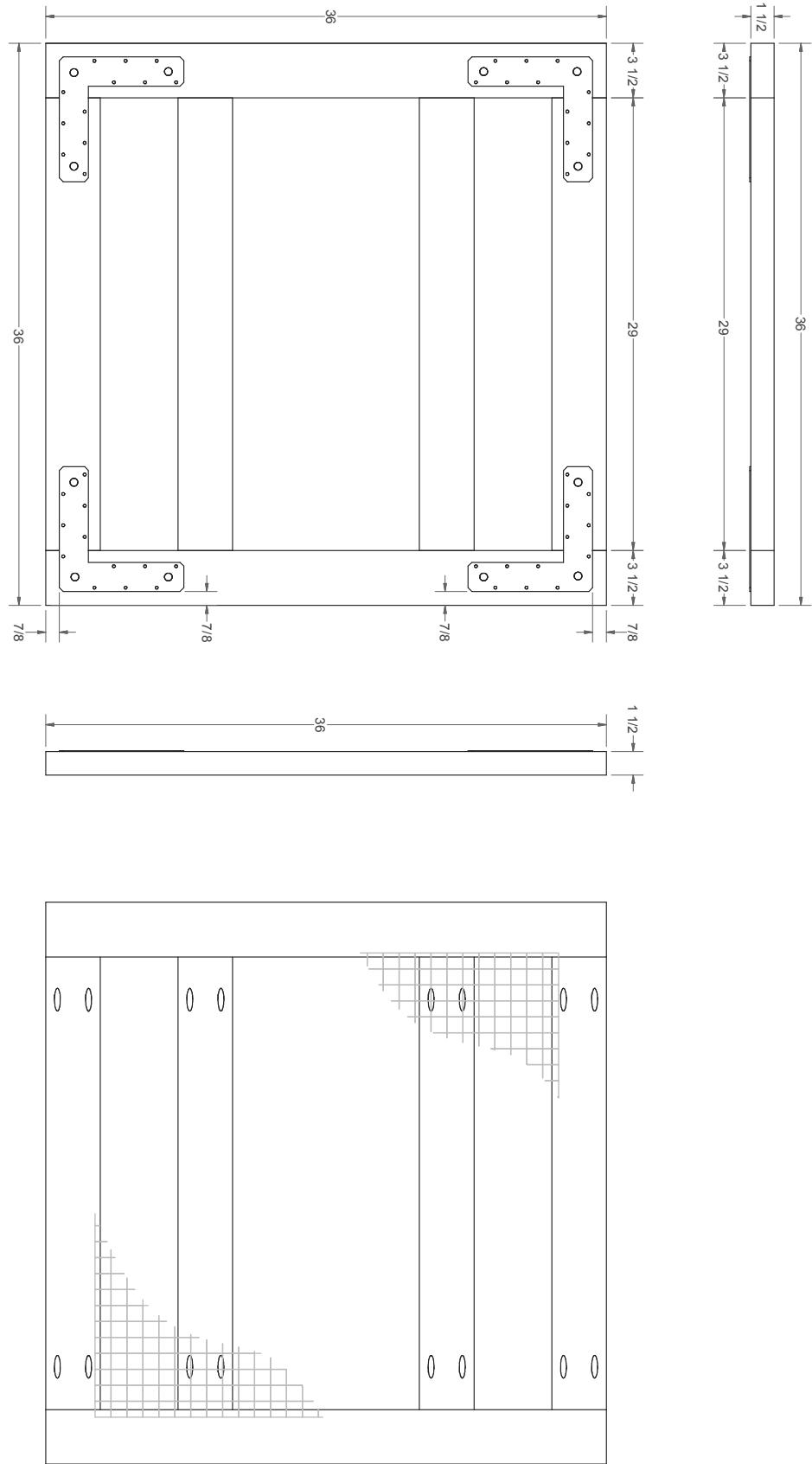
TOP CLEAT



STIFFENER



SIDE FRAME ASSEMBLY



{a look inside}

26] Easy Window Boxes Add Wow

Put a beautiful garden anywhere by making a custom window box. We'll show you three great styles that are easy to create and built to last.

32] Great Garage Makeover

Transform your garage from a cluttered catastrophe into an organized, attractive work and storage space for just a few hundred dollars.

44] Stunning Wall Stencils

You don't have to be an expert painter to take your walls beyond the ordinary. Learn how to create a serene scene using super-sized "masking pattern" stencils and ordinary artists' paints.

32



26



44

