

# Potting Bench



A potting bench is surprisingly easy to build. After you're finished, you'll wonder how you ever did get through gardening chores without one!

## Materials List:

1x2: one 8-foot and one 3-foot length

1x4: one 4-foot length, seven 6-foot lengths, three 8-foot lengths and one 10-foot length

1x8: two 6-foot and one 10-foot length

3/4-inch plywood: one 4x4-foot sheet

2-inch galvanized deck screws

Two 12-inch piano hinges

Two wooden knobs

Exterior wood glue

Circular saw with straight edge or edge guide

Miter saw

Jig saw

Drill with bit and driver to fit screw head size and a 2 1/2 inch Forstner bit

## Project Note:

After making all of the cuts and before assembly, I painted all of the pieces, first by priming and then applying a finishing coat of exterior latex paint. If you decide to use the bench outside, I would suggest a spar varnish to be applied after assembly.

## Instructions:

### Potting Bench Base:

Cutting material to size:

1 From each of two 6-foot 1x4s, cut two 35 1/4-inch lengths for a total of four front/back legs (A).

2 Rip two 6-foot 1x4s to 2 3/4 inches wide. Cut two 35 1/4-inch lengths from each for a total of four side legs (B).



3 From each of two 6-foot 1x4s, cut one 46 1/2-inch length for bottom rail (E) and one 21 1/4-inch length for bottom stile and center supports (F) for a total of two each E and F.

4 From the remaining 6-foot 1x4, cut two 24-inch lengths for top stiles (D).

5 From 10-foot 1x4, cut two 49 1/2-inch lengths for top rails (C).

6 From 8-foot 1x2, cut two 42 1/2-inch lengths for front/back cleats (G).

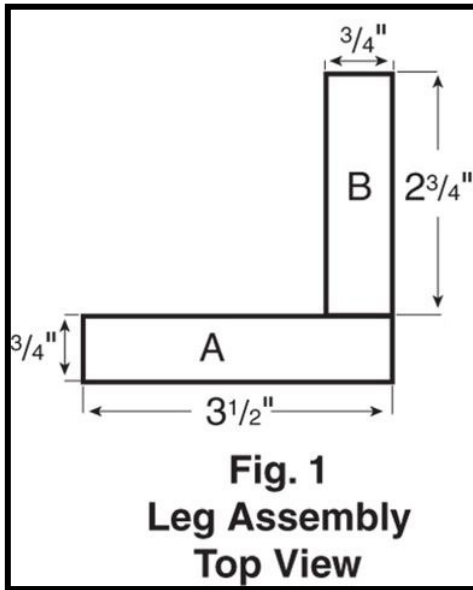
7 From 3-foot 1x2, cut two 17-inch lengths for side cleats (H).

8 From the 4-foot 1x4, cut one 46 1/2-inch length for back lip (I).

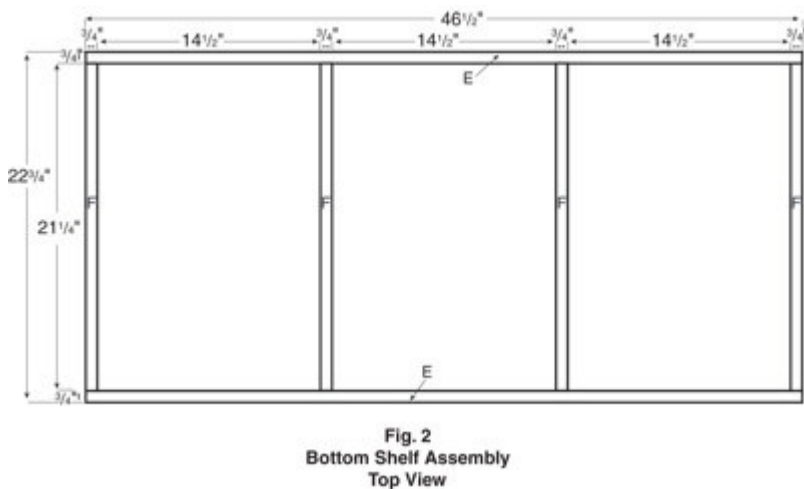
9 From the 3/4-inch plywood, cut one 24 x 48-inch piece for the top shelf and one 22 1/2 x 46 5/8-inch piece for the bottom shelf.

Note: Pre-drill and countersink all screw holes.

Assemble base:



1 Referring to Fig. 1, butt side leg (B) into front/back leg (A) and secure with three screws along length. Repeat with remaining side legs and front/back legs for a total of four leg units.



2 Referring to Fig. 2, butt bottom stile and center supports (F) into bottom rails (E) and secure with two screws through E into ends of each F.

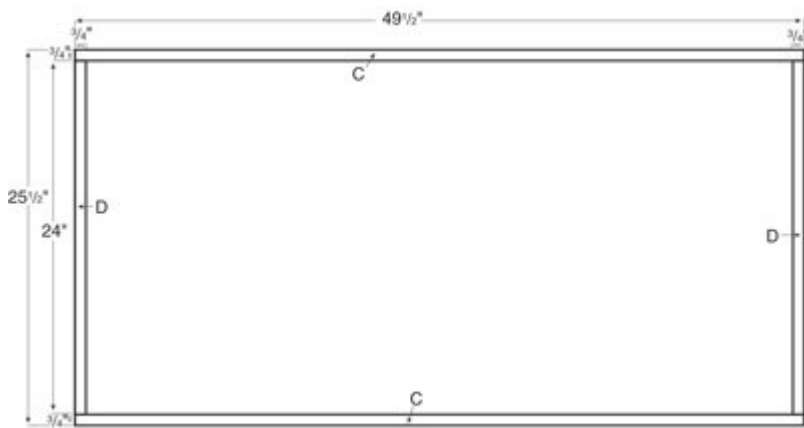


Fig. 3  
Top Frame Assembly  
Top View

3 Referring to Fig. 3, butt top stiles (D) into top rails (C) and secure with two screws through C into ends of each D.

4 Measure 12 inches from the bottom of each leg unit and mark. Position the bottom of the shelf assembly at the 12-inch marks and secure with screws to each leg.

5 Position the top frame assembly so that the top of the assembly is  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch above the top of the legs and secure with screws.

6 Attach the front, back and side cleats to the inside of the top frame with the tops of the cleats flush with the tops of the legs.





7 Position the 22 1/2 x 46 5/8-inch piece of 3/4 inch plywood on the bottom shelf support and secure with screws. Position the back lip (I) on top of the shelf between the back legs and secure with screws. Position the 24 x 48-inch piece of 3/4 inch plywood on the cleats so the top of the

plywood is flush with the top of the frame. Secure with screws.

## Pickets and Birdhouses:

Cutting material to size:

1 Cut one 8-foot 1x4 in half for back picket supports (J).

2 From another 8-foot 1x4, cut one 27 1/2 inch length for center picket (K) and two 26 1/2 inch lengths for pickets (L). From another 8-foot 1x4, cut two 24-inch lengths for pickets (M) and two 21 1/2 inch lengths for pickets (N).

3 From one 6-foot 1x8, cut two 28-inch lengths for birdhouse back (O), one 20-inch length for one door (P), two 5 1/4 inch lengths for birdhouse top fronts (Q) and one 2-inch length for one birdhouse bottom front (R).

4 Rip another 6-foot 1x8 to 6 1/2 inches wide. Cut four 8 1/2 inch lengths for outside roof sections (S). Rip the remainder of the board to 5 3/4 inches wide. Cut four 5 3/4 inch pieces for shelves (T).



5 From 10-foot 1x8, cut one 20-inch length for another door (P) and one 2-inch length for another birdhouse bottom front (R). Rip the remainder to 5 3/4 inches wide. Cut four 24-inch lengths for sides (U).

Note: Refer to Fig. 4 for steps 6-8.

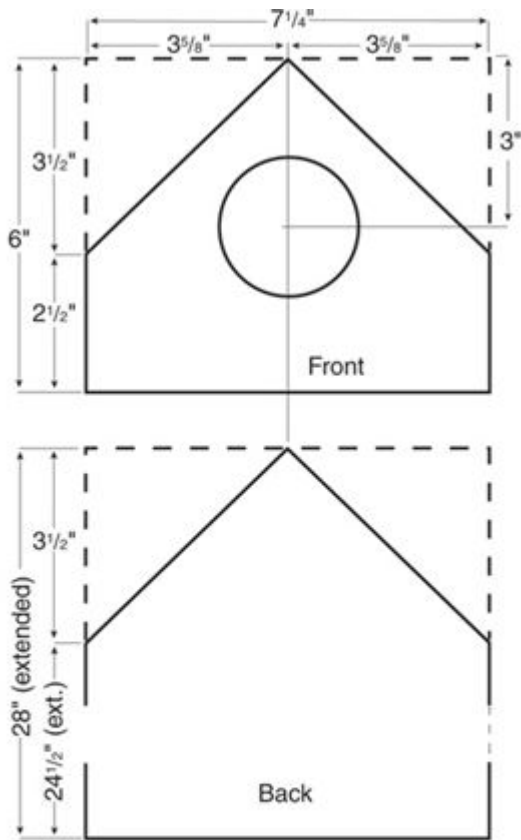


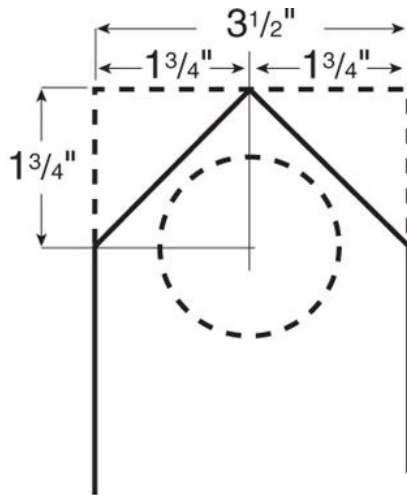
Fig. 4  
Birdhouse  
Front & Back Peaks

6 Find the center of the top of the birdhouse top front pieces (Q) and mark (approximately 3 5/8 inches from each side). Measure and mark 2 inches up from the bottom corners and connect these points with the top center point by drawing a line. Cut on the lines to form the birdhouse peak.

7 Using the Forstner bit cut a 2 1/2 inch hole centered in the piece.

8 Find the center of the birdhouse back pieces (O) and mark (approximately 3 5/8 inches from each side). Measure and mark 4 1/2 inches down from the top corners and connect these points with the top center point by drawing a line. Cut on the lines to form the birdhouse peak.

**Note:** Refer to Fig. 5 for steps 9 and 10.



**Fig. 5**  
**Picket Top**

**9** Find center of each picket (K, L, M and N) and mark (approximately 1 3/4 inch from each end). Measure down 1 3/4 inch on each side and mark. Draw lines to connect the points and trim off points with jig saw.

**10** Using Forstner bit, drill a 2 1/2-inch-diameter hole, centered on a point 1 3/4 inches from the top and sides of the picket.

### Assemble birdhouses:

**Note:** You may build one birdhouse at a time or build them simultaneously. Be aware of which side of the potting table the birdhouse will be attached to, and make sure the birdhouses are mirror images of each other.

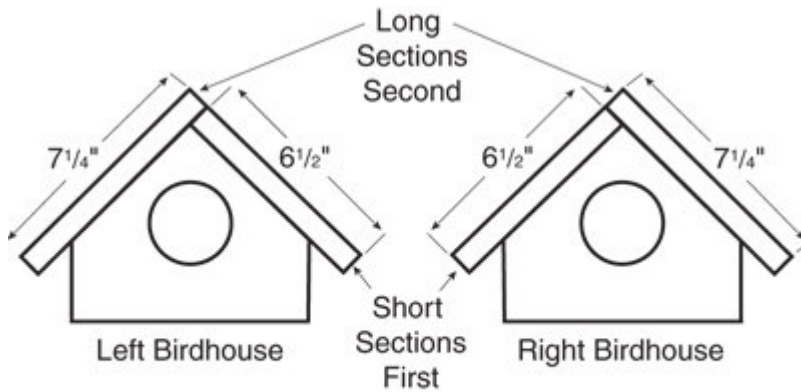
**1** Butt sides (U) into birdhouse back (O) with bottoms flush and secure with two screws through back into sides.

**2** Butt bottom front (R) against sides (P) with bottoms flush and secure with screws through front into sides.

**3** Position the shelves (T) inside the birdhouse and secure with screws through the sides and back.

**4** Attach hinges to doors (P), then attach hinges to birdhouse sides (U), allowing a slight space between the door and the bottom front so the door swings freely. (Note: Hinges should be located on the outer sides of the two birdhouses, so the doors open from the center to the outside). Attach knobs to doors.

5 Attach top front pieces (Q) to sides (U), again allowing a slight space between the door and top front so the door swings freely.



**Fig. 6**  
**Roof**

6 Attach the short roof sections (T) (the right section for the left birdhouse, and the left section for the right birdhouse) with screws through the roof into the front and back (see fig 6). Attach the long sections of roof (S) on the opposite sides.

### Assemble picket section:

1 Locate and mark center of back picket supports (J) and 7 inches from each end.

2 Center picket (K) face down on work surface. Place next two pickets (L) on each side of K, approximately 1 1/4 inches away. Lay out remaining pickets (M and N), using back picket support (J) as a straight edge to line up the bottoms of the pickets. Note: Pickets should not go past the 7 inch mark at each end of the back picket support (J). If they do, readjust the spacing between them until all pickets fall within this space.

3 Lay one back picket support (J) over the pickets arranged on the work surface, approximately six inches from the bottom of the pickets. Make sure the centers of back picket support (J) and picket K are lined up. Secure back picket support (J) to pickets with screws driven through support into pickets. Position the other back picket support (J) approximately 6 inches from the

top of center picket (K) and secure with screws through back picket support (J) into pickets.

## Final assembly:

1 Position the birdhouses at the rear corners of the potting bench with back and side edges flush. Lightly mark the outlines of the birdhouses in pencil on the potting bench top. Pre-drill several pilot holes through the bottom of the bench top inside the pencil lines.

2 Run a thin bead of glue around the bottom edges of the birdhouses and reposition on the bench top. Attach with screws through the pre-drilled pilot holes. Remove excess glue if necessary.



3 Set the picket section in place on the bench top between the birdhouses and mark the location of the back picket supports on the backs of the birdhouses. Pre-drill several pilot holes through the back picket supports into the birdhouse backs. Apply glue to the bottoms of the pickets and secure back picket supports to the birdhouse backs. Remove excess glue if necessary.

Tip: If you can't find a 2 ½ inch forstner bit, a door hole saw can also be used.

If you decide that you want the birdhouse and the top picket to be removable, don't attach the birdhouse to the table, assemble the pickets to the houses as stated above, but use mending plates to attach the entire assembly to the table. Use two plates, one on each bird house, and attach to the bench with screws. When you want to remove the birdhouses and pickets for storage, just simply unscrew the plates and remove.

This potting bench won't attract just gardeners, don't be surprised if your winged and footed friends make use of this as well!

Matt



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