

COMPACT GARDEN SHED

The perfect shelter for your rakes, shovels, clippers and spades, sized to suit the smallest of gardens BY SHANE EAGEN

GARDENS AND TOOLS go together like seeds and soil, but not all yards have room for a full-size tool shed. This mini-shed is the answer. It's small enough to fit comfortably into the tiniest of spaces, is easy on the lumber budget and looks great. The shape of the mini-shed is ideal for storing a typical bunch of garden tools—tall and narrow. Since the shed's so small, it doesn't need a conventional wall frame, relying instead on light-duty frame members plus wall sheathing for strength. The roof uses a pair of rafters on the inside faces of the front and back walls, with angled fascia rafters defining the outside edge of the roof line at its gable ends. The plywood floor keeps your tools off the ground between uses and strengthens the whole bottom of the shed.

Building the Frame

RIp UP ENOUGH 2-BY construction lumber on your table saw for all the 1½" x 1½" framing material. Since this frame is small, use 3" deck screws for the joinery instead of nails. Nails are fine for conventional building frames, but the hammer blows necessary to drive them can throw a small frame out of whack. If you encounter splitting, drill some small pilot holes.

Fasten the side and back wall frames separately (including diagonal braces) on a flat surface like your driveway or patio, leaving the upper top plates off for now. Next, join the walls into a complete, four-sided frame, overlapping the upper top plates for

strength. The 2 x 4s on each side of the doorway provide a solid base for the hinges and latch. Adding the floor and bottom frame will beef up the frame a lot.

Sheathing the Walls

THE WALL SHEATHING shown here is vertically laid tongue and groove cedar. Start by deciding exactly where to start board installation on either side of the shed (not the back or front). Since the width of your boards may vary from those used here, piece together enough boards to cover one side wall, with the excess from the full-width outer boards overhanging on both sides. Shift this group of boards left or right to create a convenient width of partial board at each corner. Your aim is to avoid dealing with, say, a ½"-wide strip at one corner. Should you glue the wallboards to the frame as well as nail them? Though there is a danger gluing may cause a few wall boards to crack as they expand and contract seasonally, the risk is small. Using weatherproof glue and nails to hold down the wall boards will give you solid results. If you opt for glue, be sure it's weatherproof, not just water resistant.

The plans show how all the wallboards extend up higher than the top plate of the frames, either to fill in the triangular gable ends or the spaces between rafters. Leave all the boards longer than necessary for now, so they can be trimmed to suit as a group at the next stage. Leave the short wallboards above the doorway off for now.

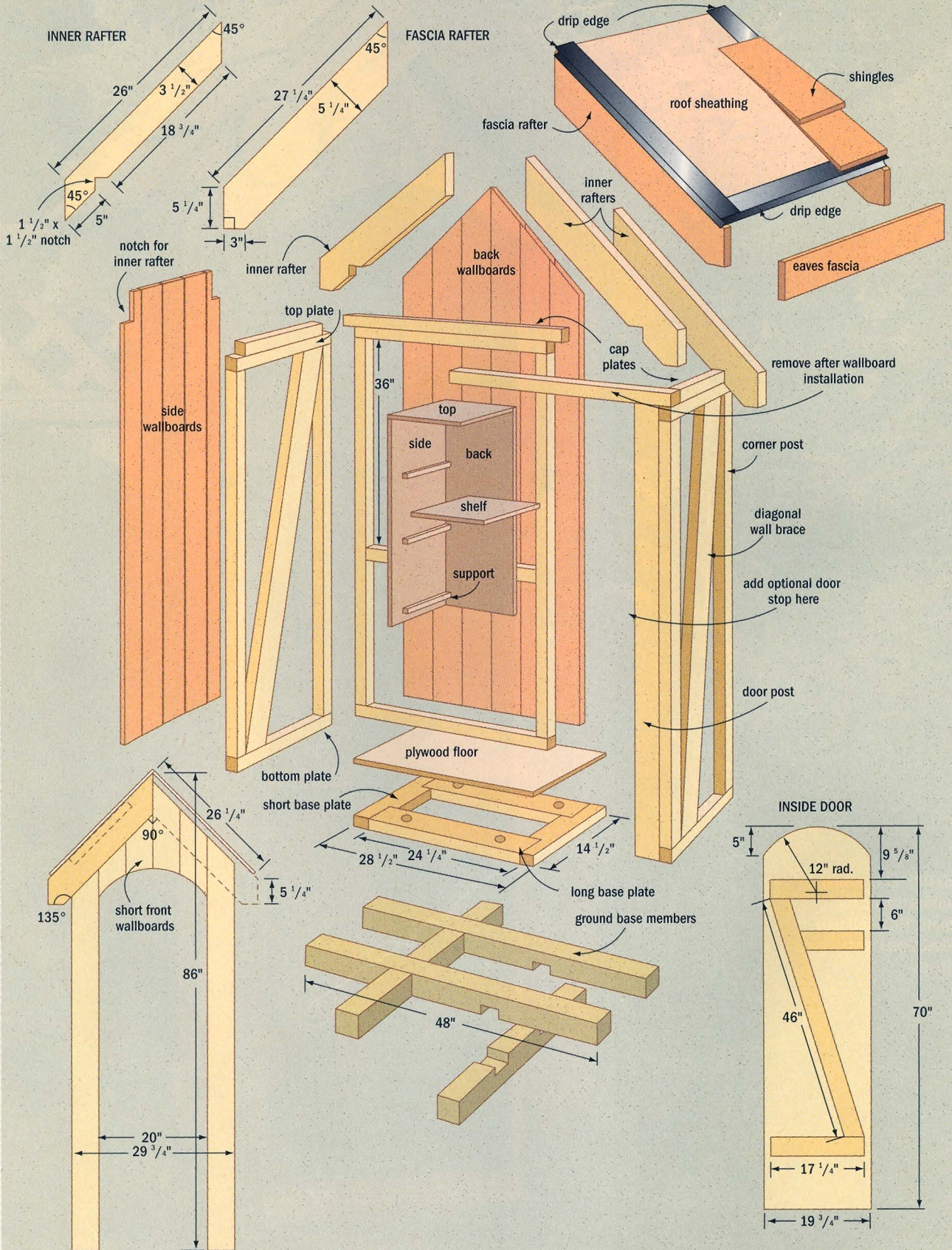


LATCH AND HINGES complement tongue and groove cedar



THE SHED OPENS to reveal ample storage space for garden tools. The shelf unit is the perfect spot for smaller items

PLANS FOR THE SHED



Building the Roof

START CUTTING THE FOUR inner rafters; the plans show the details. Temporarily set the rafters on top of the upright mini-shed for marking where to cut the excess wallboard. Notch the tops of the side wallboards so the rafters will sit flat on the wall frames. The side wallboards extend up between the rafters to seal the space between them once the roof is on. Mark the top of the back wall and cut it on an angle following the top edges of the rafters. After you've trimmed the boards, fasten the rafters permanently, then add the wallboards over the doorway. Leave the bottom ends of these boards long for now.

Cap the roof with plywood sheathing, then add the rafter and eaves fascia and sheet metal drip edge. You can shingle the roof now or later.

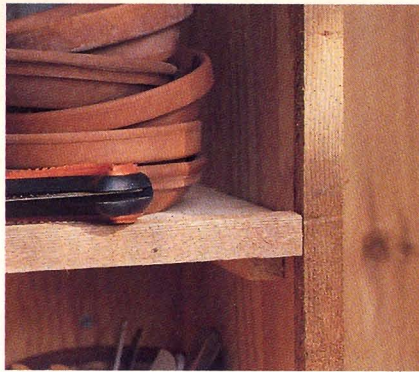
Building the Door

THE DOOR IS MADE of the same wallboards used everywhere else, with horizontal and diagonal bracing on its inside face. Leave all the boards longer than necessary to start, then use screws to hold everything together. Tie a string to a pencil and mark the arc you want on the door's top. Once cut, use the top of the completed door as a tracing template to mark the curve on the front wallboards. If the door posts on your shed don't cover the gap between the door and long front wallboards, add another strip of wood as a door stop. Install the hinges and door latch now.

Beating the Wind

SINCE THE MINI-SHED is so tall, you'll have to make a base frame to keep it from blowing over. The plans show one approach; using 4 x 4s lapped together in tic-tac-toe fashion, with the central square matching the footprint of the shed. Clamp the parts together, then mark them for the notches as shown. Set your circular saw to cut to a depth half the thickness of the 4 x 4s, then make multiple passes across the group every 1/4" or so. Chisel out the waste wood, unclamp the pieces, then fit the lap joints together. The four members that make up this frame are bolted or nailed together, then nestled into shallow trenches so the top of the frame is level with the earth. Fasten the shed to the frame with 1/2" x 5" lag bolts driven through the bottom plates. Ⓣ

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CEDAR NAILING STRIPS provide the edging for the plywood shelf unit. They also form a lip to keep round items from rolling off



THE INNER RAFTERS are notched where they pass through the wall boards. Note metal drip edge between sheathing and fascia

YOU WILL NEED

FOR THE DOOR	MATERIAL	SIZE	QUANTITY
Long diagonal door brace	softwood	1 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 47"	1
Top and bottom door braces	softwood	1 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 17 1/4"	2
Latch brace	softwood	1 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 11"	1
Door boards	cedar	5/8" x 5" x 70"*	4
Hinges	butt hinges	3 1/2" x 3 1/2"	2
FOR THE WALLS			
Corner posts	softwood	1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 59"	6
Back wallboards	cedar	5/8" x 5" x 86"*	6
Side wall top, bottom wall plates	softwood	1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 14 1/2"	4
Side wall cap plates	softwood	1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 11 1/2"	2
Back wall top and bottom plates	softwood	1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 25 1/2"	2
Back wall cap plate	softwood	1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 28 1/2"	1
Diagonal wall brace	softwood	1 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 62"*	2
Side wallboards	cedar	5/8" x 5" x 68"*	4
Back wallboards	cedar	5/8" x 5" x 87"*	6
Long front wallboards	cedar	5/8" x 5" x 74"*	2
Short front wallboards	cedar	5/8" x 5" x 26"*	4
Long base plate	softwood	1 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 24 1/4"	2
Short base plate	softwood	1 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 14 1/2"	2
Door posts	softwood	1 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 60 1/2"	2
FOR THE ROOF			
Roof sheathing	plywood	3/4" x 25" x 27"*	2
Inner rafters	softwood	1 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 29 1/2"	4
Fascia rafters	cedar	3/4" x 5 1/4" x 31 1/2"	4
Eaves fascia	cedar	3/4" x 5 1/4" x 23 1/2"	2
Drip edges (brown)	aluminum	2" wide x 28" long*	6
Shingles or shakes	cedar	10 sq. ft. coverage	
FOR THE SHELF			
Shelf sides	plywood	1/2" x 12" x 36"	2
Middle and bottom shelf members	plywood	1/2" x 9 1/2" x 11"	3
Shelf top	plywood	1/2" x 12" x 12"	1
Shelf back	plywood	1/2" x 11" x 36"	1
Shelf supports	softwood	1/2" x 1 1/2" x 9"	6
FOR THE GROUND BASE			
Ground base members	pres. treated	3 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 48"	4

*Trim to length as needed