

A Versatile Planter

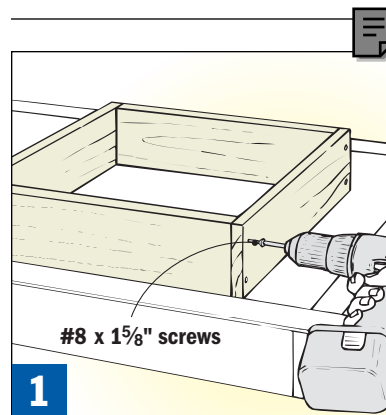
As I finished building a new deck (see the Showcase Deck Plan in PlansNOW's Outdoor Plans), I wanted to add more color and personality, and soften the yard-to-deck transition. A matching planter was just what I needed.



A planter stationed near the steps proved to be a great solution. Built from the same materials as the deck, the planter will stand up to years of weather, and the design was the perfect way to use up short cutoffs left-over from the deck construction. The first planter turned out so well I ended up buying additional ipe (the tropical hardwood used on the deck) to build a few more, three of which support sitting benches on the raised tier deck.

SLAT-WRAPPED FRAMES

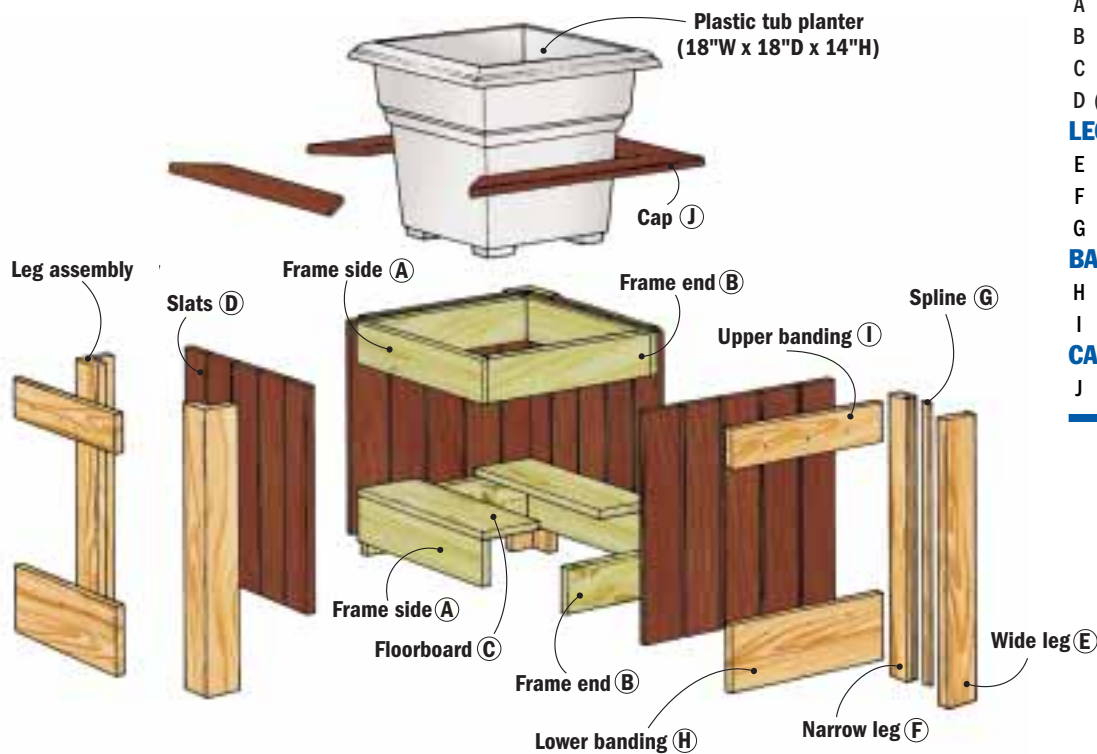
Even though the planter is built from weather-resistant lumber — cedar, ipe, and pressure-treated pine — I wanted to keep the soil contained and away from direct exposure with the wood. By designing



1 Exterior glue and screws hold each frame together. Be sure to check each assembly for square.

PLANTER CONSTRUCTION VIEW

OVERALL SIZE: 21³/₄"H x 22¹/₄"W x 22¹/₄"L



MATERIALS LIST

PLANTER BOX:

- A (4) Frame Sides $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x $16\frac{3}{4}$ "
- B (4) Frame Ends $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x $15\frac{1}{4}$ "
- C (2) Floorboards $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $5\frac{1}{2}$ " x $16\frac{3}{4}$ "
- D (20) Slats $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x 17"

LEGS:

- E (4) Wide Legs $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 3" x 21"
- F (4) Narrow Legs $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $2\frac{1}{4}$ " x 21"
- G (4) Splines $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 21"

BANDING:

- H (4) Lower $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 5" x $14\frac{1}{4}$ "
- I (4) Upper $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 3" x $14\frac{1}{4}$ "

CAP:

- J (4) Sides/Ends $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x $22\frac{1}{4}$ "

the planter around an 18" square plastic tub I found at a local home-center (Countryside Patio Planter by Novelty Mfg., 1-800-442-7336), the wood stays clean and dry. This also makes it easy to replace the old plantings and potting soil at the start of each growing season.

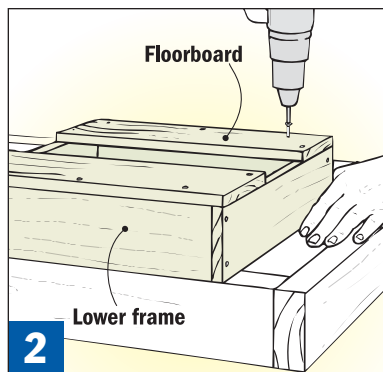
Construction is simple — you build the planter from the inside out (PLANTER CONSTRUCTION

VIEW). Starting with two pressure-treated frames (that give the planter its shape), you add a layer of ipe slats, and wrap that layer with cedar legs and banding. Screws hold the various layers together.

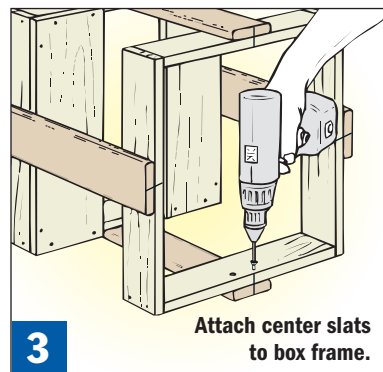
Building the pressure-treated frames is the place to start on this project. Cut the frame pieces to size and screw them together, making sure to check for square (FIG. 1).

Next, add two floorboards to the top edge of the lower frame (FIG. 2).

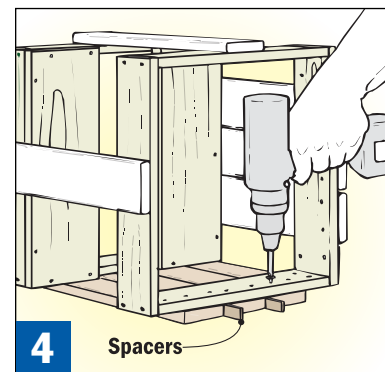
After cutting the slats to length, I realized it would be easier to apply the oil finish to them before they were installed. Once the oil dried, I secured four slats to the two frames, centering these slats on the frame sides (FIG. 3). Then I used $\frac{1}{8}$ "-thick spacers to position a slat on either side of each centered slat (FIG. 4).



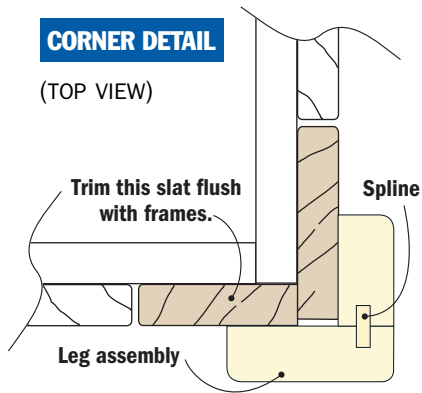
2 Screw the floorboards to the lower frame to provide support for the plastic tub and stiffen the lower frame.



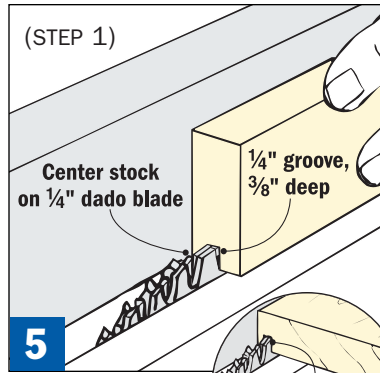
3 Mark centers on four slats and on the frames. Align each slat on the frames, drill pilot holes and drive the screws.



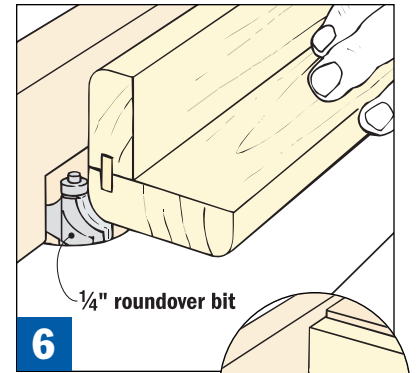
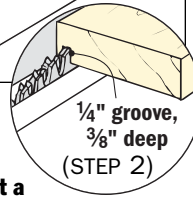
4 Use $\frac{1}{8}$ "-thick spacers to position slats to either side of each center slat. Drill pilot holes and install #8x $1\frac{1}{4}$ " screws.



NOTE: Two opposing sides of the planter get five full-width (3½") slats, the outside slats on the other two sides must be trimmed flush with the frames.



5 Cut a spline groove into the edge of the narrow leg piece. Cut a groove in the face of the other piece.



6 Rout a ¼" roundover on the three exposed edges of each leg as well the bottom ends.

The outermost slats overlap at the corners (CORNER DETAIL). I used full-width outside slats on two opposing faces of the planter. With the spacing I used they extend about 5/8" beyond the frame corners. The outside slats on the adjacent faces have to be ripped to fit inside these. Don't worry about any small gaps at the corners. They'll get covered by the leg assemblies.

ADD THE LEGS

Adding legs to the planter accomplishes a couple of things. First, it raises the planter off the deck so water doesn't get trapped underneath. Second, the legs add muscle, echoing the look of the deck posts.

Cut your leg material to size, bearing in mind that like the outside ipe slats, one leg of each pair is narrower (CORNER DETAIL). This is done so the assembled pairs of legs appear symmetrical.

To ease alignment and avoid shifting during the glue-up, I added a spline to each leg assembly. Cut grooves for the splines using a ¼" dado blade, and set the fence to center the blade on the thickness of your stock (FIG. 5, STEP 1). First rip grooves in one edge of the narrower legs, then, without changing your saw setup, cut a groove in the inside face of the wider legs (FIG. 5, STEP 2).

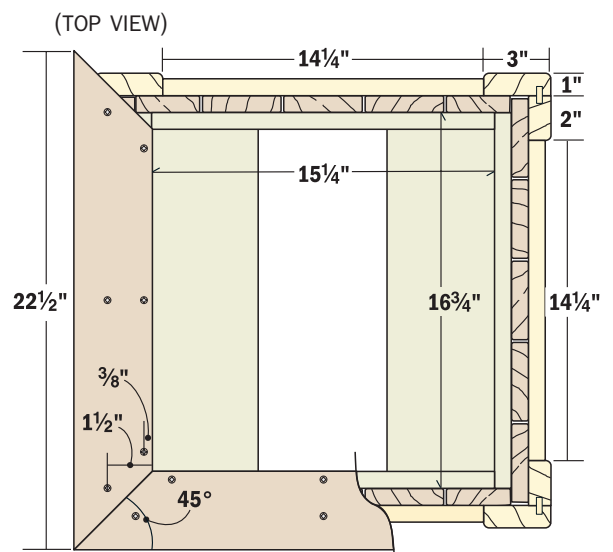
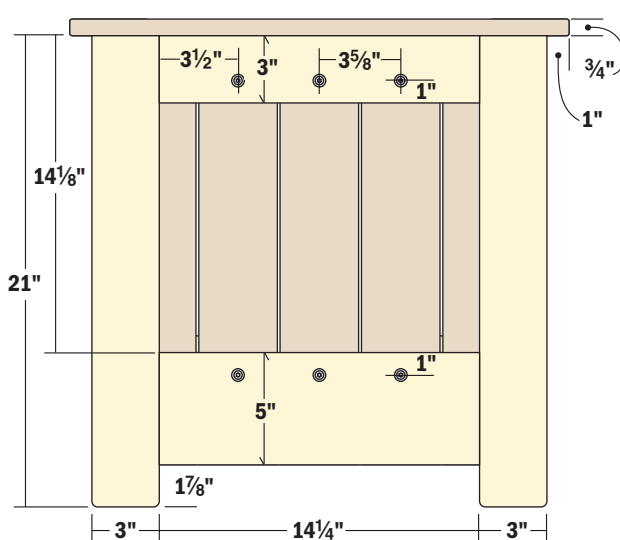
For most furniture projects, I use hardboard splines, but since this is

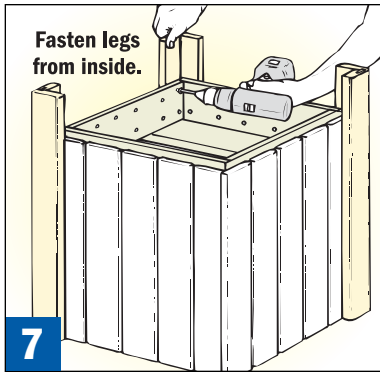
an outside project I used cedar. Rip splines to size, then glue and clamp each leg assembly together. Once the glue dries, roundover the outside edges and the bottom end of each leg assembly before fastening them to the planter.

Installing the legs is easier with the planter upside down (FIG. 7). This keeps the top end of the legs flush with the top edge of the slats while you drive the screws.

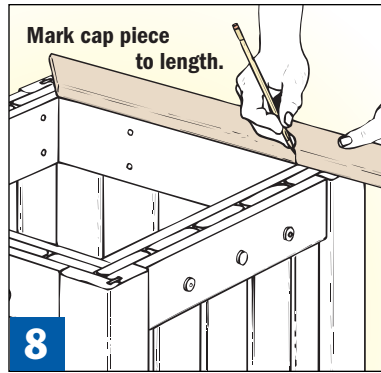
Now you can measure the distance between the legs on each side and cut the cedar for the upper and lower banding pieces. Here again, I recommend staining the pieces before the installation.

PLANTER ELEVATION (SIDE VIEW)





7 Turn the planter upside down to position the legs, then drive in the screws. You'll also want to drive screws through the upper frame into each leg.



8 Miter one end of a cap piece, position it on the planter to mark its length, then miter the other end. Clamp it to the planter to fit the next cap piece.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

LUMBER (FOR ONE PLANTER)

- (2) 8-ft. pressure-treated 1x4's
- (1) 4-ft. pressure-treated 1x6
- (5) 8-ft. ipe 1x4's
- (1) 8-ft. cedar 1x6
- (2) 10-ft. cedar 1x4's

HARDWARE (FOR ONE PLANTER)

- (24) #6 x 1⁵/₈" deck screws
- (26) #8 x 1⁵/₈" deck screws
- (24) #10 x 2" washerhead deck screws
- (80) #8 x 1¹/₄" deck screws
- (1) 18" x 18" x 14" plastic tub planter
- (1) Quart of clear oil finish
- (1) Quart of colored stain

Like I did with the deck railing, I chose to make the banding fasteners a design element on the planter. I sprayed the same dark red paint on the RSS screws from GRK (see the **PLANTER ELEVATION**). At 2" long, these screws secure the cedar banding to both the ipe slats and the pressure-treated pine frames. Pilot holes are required in the ipe and pine.

FRAME THE TOP

Capping the project is a mitered frame of ipe. For most projects I take pains to get the miters to fit perfectly, but months in the sun and rain will undo that kind of effort here. So shooting for reasonably tight joints is good enough.

Start by mitering one end of any cap piece, then position it on the planter to mark the miter for the other end (**FIG. 8**). With both ends mitered, clamp this piece in position, cut and fit the next mitered piece to the first one, and so on, working your way around the top.

Before attaching the cap pieces, apply the oil finish and let it dry. When you drill the countersunk pilot holes for the screws, position the holes so the screws go into the upper frame and upper banding.

ADD AN OPTIONAL BENCH

As I mentioned earlier, I built a few more planters and used them to support a pair of benches on the tier

deck (**BENCH CONSTRUCTION VIEW**). A simple box frame made of 2x4 cedar rests on cleats fastened to the planters and its length can vary to fit your situation. (The corner planter supports an end of each bench — see inset photo on front cover.)

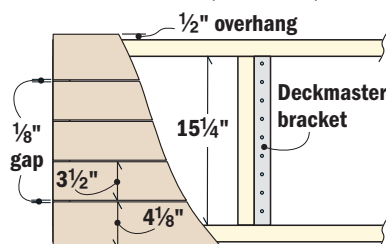
A pair of retainers made from 1x4 ipe keeps the bench ends tied to the planters. The ipe seat planks are secured with another deck project leftover — extra DeckMaster brackets. Screw the brackets to the frame, then drive screws from below to hold the planking (**BENCH ELEVATION**).

Filled with flowers, the planters add color to the already handsome deck and invite you to take a seat, relax, and enjoy the view. 🌻🪑

BENCH MATERIALS LIST

- A (2) Rails* 1¹/₂" x 3¹/₂"
- B (3) Stretchers 1¹/₂" x 3¹/₂" x 15¹/₄"
- C (2) Outer Planks* 3/4" x 4¹/₈"
- D (3) Inner Planks* 3/4" x 3¹/₂"
- E (2) Cleats 1¹/₂" x 3¹/₂" x 18¹/₄"
- F (4) Retainers 3/4" x 3¹/₂" x 3¹/₂"

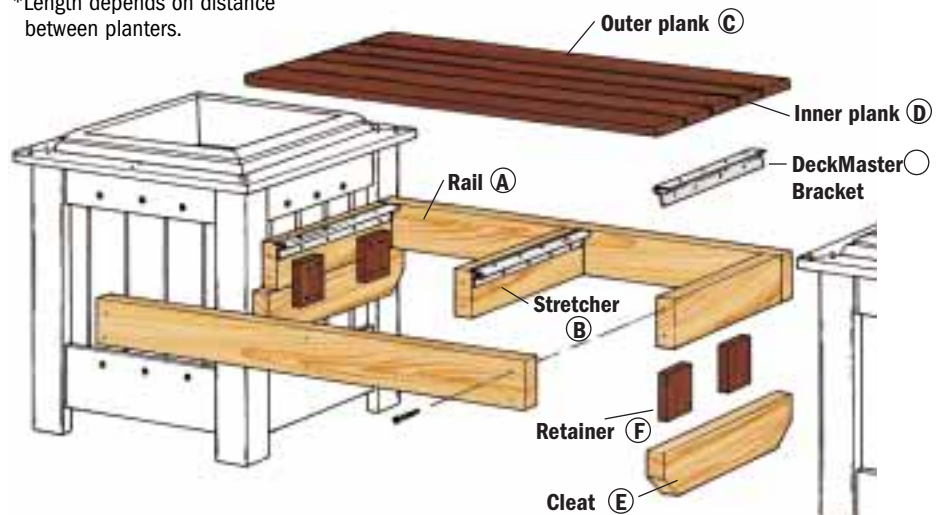
BENCH ELEVATION (TOP VIEW)



BENCH CONSTRUCTION VIEW

OVERALL SIZE: 4¹/₄" H x 19¹/₄" W

*Length depends on distance between planters.



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