

THE BACKYARD FARMER GARDEN COMPOST BIN

Three stackable 3' x 3' x 1' bin sections that you can build
(only two of the three bin sections shown in illustration)

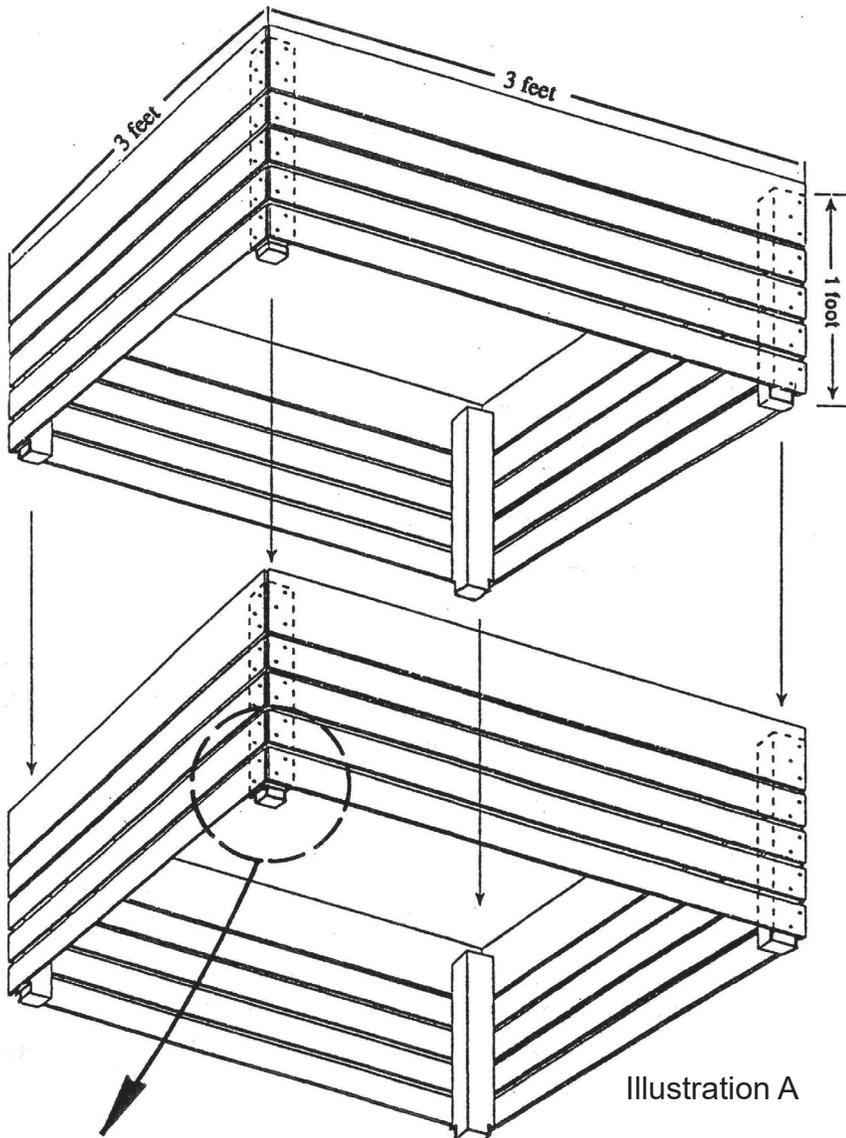


Illustration A

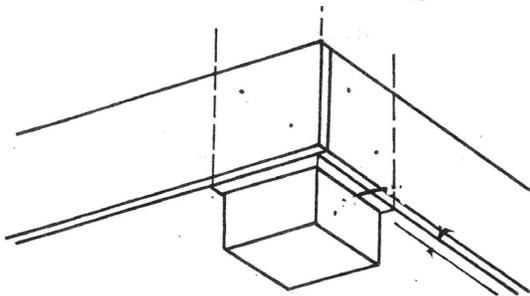


Illustration B

Materials you will need:

- 3 - 12' x 1" x 3"
- 12 - 12' x 1" x 2"
- 1 - 12' x 2" x 2"
- Cedar or treated wood can be used
- One lb. - 2" deck screws
- Miter saw
- Screwdriver
- Tape measure
- Drill
- Power Screwdriver

Material Preparation Instructions:

1. Build a support for your miter saw. On the left side (if you are right handed), install a stop so each slat you cut will be exactly the same length. We cut the slats to 36" length, as this results in a bin which contains about 1 cubic yard. The stop used in the video is simply a piece of scrap wood nailed to a 4" x 6" x 3' board found in the trash at a completed construction site.
2. Put on your protective glasses, remove your watch and jewelry, and saw all the 1"x3" lumber and 1"x2" lumber into 3' lengths.
3. Move your saw stop to 12" from the side of the saw blade and saw the 2"x2" lumber into 12" lengths.

Backyard Farmer has a video that will help you get started with your new compost bin project

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Af6KkKAicok>

**BACKYARD
FARMER**

N EXTENSION

4. Each of the 12" supports must be marked with a pencil line 1" from one end on at least two sides. Use your miter saw or a wood rasp to slightly taper two adjoining sides up to about 7/8" from the bottom. The distance is not critical; it allows the bin sections to fit together easily. (*Illustration B*)

5. Prepare a work surface to speed assembly of sections. Clamp or nail scrap lumber to create a 90 degree angle, on your right if right handed. The back support should be at least 12" from the front edge of your work surface, and the work surface should ideally extend about 3 feet left from the right-hand support. You will need a spacer which is 1" wide and less than the thickness of the corner supports. Put that spacer against the back support. Use a scrap piece of the slat material to place against the right side support as a spacer.

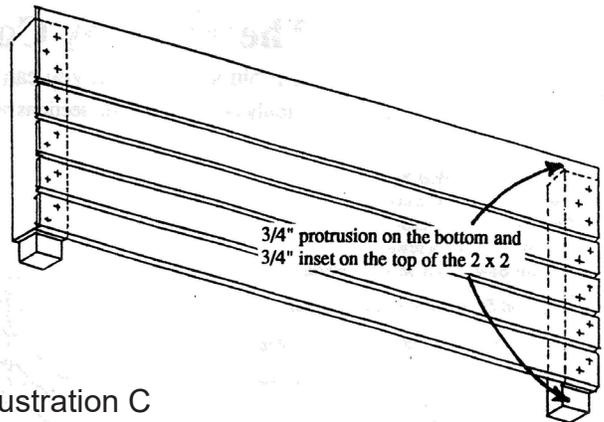


Illustration C

6. Place the 2"x2" leg against the spacer at the right end of the work surface. The tapered end must point toward you with one taper on top and one on the right. (*Illustration C*) Place another 2" x 2" leg about 30" left of the right side support to keep the slats level. The two tapered sides must face up and right if you are right handed.

7. Place the 1" x 3" x 3' board at the top, fitting snugly against the back of the jig. Place one of the 1" x 2" x 3' slats at the bottom of the leg so the bottom of the slat is on the line you drew 1" from the bottom. Check to be sure everything is snug against the jig. Drill two pilot holes in the 1" x 3" top piece and one in the middle of the bottom slat. Drive the deck screws into the bottom slat and in the bottom hole of the top slat. Re-check to be sure everything is straight and snug against the jig, then drill a pilot hole and drive the top screw in the top rail.

8. Remove the right-hand spacer and arrange the other three slats so they are evenly spaced between the top and bottom slats. Drill a pilot hole in each, then drive a deck screw in each slat. Use a pencil to mark the location of the slats to make it easier to place slats in the next bin sides.
Note: Pilot holes are necessary because cedar splits very easily. Be careful to place screws as far as possible from the ends of the slats and do not over-tighten the screws.

9. Carefully lift the section you just completed and place it in a safe place to await assembly. Replace the spacer on the right side, then repeat Steps 6 through 8. Take two sides you just completed. Place it vertically against your work surface with the leg on top and facing away from you. Place another side horizontally atop your work surface, supported so it's about level. Align the slats so they exactly match the slats which are screwed together. An assistant at this stage of the process is very helpful. Drill pilot holes in the top and bottom slats, then drive deck screws. Align the middle three slats, drill pilot holes, and drive the deck screws.

10. Lift the two assembled sides and rotate so the vertical side is on the floor. Add another side, and fasten as described in Step 10.

11. Move the three assembled sides to open floor space and rotate so the open side is up. Add the fourth side and align and fasten as in Step 10. (*Illustration A*)

12. TADA! You've completed one bin section. Admire your work. Return to Step 10 and complete the final two sections.

IF YOU HAVE A SHOP WITH A TABLE OR BAND SAW:

Several bins are in use in the Backyard Farmer Garden which were constructed using cedar fence panels 6" wide and 6 feet long. These are less expensive, but not as thick, not as strong, and not as durable. There is also more waste because the cedar is lower grade and there are more knots and an even greater tendency to split. The fencing is dog-ear, which means a small cut has been made from each corner at the top.

If you want to try this with cedar fence panels, here are the changes to the purchasing list:

- Cedar Fence Boards, Dog-Eared, 6" wide by 6 feet long – 11 needed, but buy at least 12 or 13 to allow for waste.
- Deck Screws - #8 x 1-1/4" long.

Cutting Instructions:

1. Rip cut 3 of the fence boards in half, then cross-cut the resulting pieces into 3' sections.
2. Rip cut 11 of the fence boards into 3 strips (about 1-1/2"). One slat will be wider. Use that as the bottom slat on each side. You may want to cut an extra board to allow for waste.

Assembly Tips:

Place the dog-ear end so it faces the right-hand jig support. This allows you to drive the screw into the full width of the slat and places the dog ear over the overlap.

Discard weak or badly warped slats. Use the straightest and strongest on the bottom.

Be especially careful when driving screws. A deck screw driven in too far will easily split the slat.

Adapted from the Lincoln Water System Pokorny Compost Bin

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.