

Construct a Japanese bamboo fountain



Add the comforting sound of water to your yard with this traditional fixture

The *shishi odoshi*, a traditional Japanese fountain, was originally used to scare away deer who would otherwise feed on tender shoots in rice paddies. I can't vouch for its efficiency at keeping herds of marauding deer from your daisies, but I will say the motion of this fountain is pleasantly mesmerizing.

Bamboo search

The most challenging aspect of this project is finding the raw bamboo. I found mine at The House of Bamboo in Thornhill, Ont. (905-889-5652), and paid \$30 for enough bamboo to make a few fountains. Start your search in the Yellow Pages under rattan, bamboo and wicker products.

The *dozuki* saw

In keeping with the spirit of the project, I used a small Japanese pull-saw, or *dozuki*, to cut the pieces to length. When cutting, pay attention to the location of the nodes, the darker raised rings that circle the shoots at regular intervals. The centre tube requires a node just in front of the pivot rod and the bottom of each leg should be free of any nodes that would impede the insertion of the base dowels. Once the pieces are cut to length, drill the 3/8" pivot rod holes in the centre tube and the legs. The holes in the crosspiece are drilled using a spade bit slightly smaller than the diameter of the legs and water spout that join with them. I then tapered each end of these parts slightly using a stationary disc sander. The final drilling procedure is to drill out the nodes inside one leg and the water spout to allow the plastic tubing through. I accomplished this by chucking a 1/2" spade bit on an 8" extension and guiding it through each tube.



Materials you will need:

Part	Size	Qty.
Legs	1 1/2" x 30"	2
Crosspiece	2 3/4" x 11 1/2"	1
Water spout	1" x 9"	1
Centre tube	2" x 27"	4
Pivot rod sleeves	1" dia. x 1 3/4"	2
Back leg	1 1/2" x 10 1/2"	1
Base dowels	1" dia. x 3"	1
Base (polyethylene board)	3/8" x 9 1/2" x 11"	1

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Three hands required

Before assembling the pieces, feed the plastic hose through the leg, crosspiece and water spout. Insert the brass ferrules into the holes on the centre tube and fix with a dab of glue. Arrange the bamboo pivot rod sleeves and centre tube onto the pivot rod, then capture the whole assembly between the legs. Dry fit the legs and water spout into their holes before the final assembly with polyurethane glue.

Image at left: The base is secured and hidden by river rock. A small pump feeds the fountain.

Base assembly

The base for the fountain is a 3/8"-thick polyethylene kitchen cutting board. Cut it to size using a tablesaw, then attach the hardwood dowels with stainless-steel screws countersunk from below. The legs of the fountain can now be slipped over the dowels and fastened with one screw each. If you don't have a pond, you'll need a reservoir to hold the circulating water. Any watertight container will do. Once your container is buried, drop in the pump and lay a sheet of hardware cloth over the opening. Position the fountain so the centre tube will empty into the reservoir, and cover the base and hardware cloth over with river rock. Fill up the reservoir with water and plug the pump into a GFCI-equipped outlet and it's *sayonara* to those pesky deer.

