

# Build this clever garden sink

Make outdoor cleanup easier with this clever garden sink

When working in your garden, it often isn't long before you need to wash your hands, rinse off some pots or give a plant a good soaking. I built this outdoor sink to make all these jobs more of a pleasure. The sink can be installed close to the action, and beyond its water-related duties it also provides a work surface and storage shelf for garden bits and pieces. The simple faucet makes cleanup easy without any complicated plumbing. Add a "Y" fitting to your hose connection and you can leave the plumbing hooked up to the sink all season long. My design is based on a 10"-tall stainless-steel bucket. Buy a bucket before you begin work, just in case you need to adjust the project's dimensions.

YOU WILL NEED			
PART	MATERIAL	SIZE (T x W x L*)	Qty.
Slats	cedar	1" x 2" x 48"	10
Uprights	cedar	1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 30"	4
Shelf supports	cedar	1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 12"	8
Soap shelf	cedar	3/4" x 3" x 48"	1
Angled brackets	cedar	1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 9 5/8"	8
<b>Faucet</b>			
Pipe	copper	1/2" x 1 1/2"	1
Pipe	copper	1/2" x 3 1/4"	1
Pipe	copper	1/2" x 5"	1
Pipe	copper	1/2" x 22"	1
Shut-off valve	copper, with drain	1/2"	1
Plumbing elbows	copper	90°	2
Hose coupling	brass, threaded		1
Pail	stainless steel	10" - tall	1
<b>*Length indicates grain direction</b>			

## Prepare your materials

Start by milling enough cedar for the parts from 2x6 or 2x8 lumber, resisting the

temptation to make this project from off-the-shelf 2x2s. While they might work, the factory-rounded edges won't look as good as the crisp edges you'll get by sawing parts from wider boards. You should even rip off the milled edges on the wider lumber first to make the unit's appearance the best it can be.

Another reason to begin with wider stock is wood quality. You're more likely to get straight, sound project parts by beginning with wide boards that allow you to cut out defects, such as wavy grain and big knots. All this makes wider lumber a better choice for an outdoor project that will see a lot of water.

### **Start with the uprights**

The backbone of this project is the uprights. They're the pieces from which all the other components are hung, so preparing them accurately is crucial. Start by cutting the four uprights to length, refining them with 1"-wide chamfers on the ends. Next, mark the position of the five notches that will accept the shelf supports, the angled brackets and soap shelf.

There is a trick to improve the speed and accuracy of the crucial notching operation; clamp the four uprights together, then use a carpenter's square to mark notches across all the pieces at the same time for accuracy. I cut the notches on my sliding compound mitre saw all at the same time as well. To do this properly, you'll need to extend the surface of the fence toward you with a scrap piece of 2x2. This is necessary to make flat-bottomed notches across all the uprights. Without it, the arc of the blade will leave a little ramp on the bottom of all the grooves closest to the fence.

Set the depth of cut on your saw to 1/2", then take multiple passes to clear out the waste. I like to cut the dado a hair shy of my layout lines and do a test fit with an accurately sized scrap of wood. This process results in a snug-fitting joint every time. Clean up the bottom of the notches with a razor-sharp chisel if necessary. Saw all of the 90° grooves first, then adjust the bevel angle of your saw and reset the depth of the cut to 1/2" to mill the 45° dados.

Once the uprights are complete, cut the shelf supports to length and cut 45° chamfers on the outward-facing ends. Cut the angled brackets to length next, adding 45° angles on their ends as well.

Before cutting notches on the underside of the shelf supports, dry-fit the shelf supports into the uprights and use the angled brackets to mark the position and depth. Before assembly, smooth all parts using 150-grit sandpaper.

### **Assemble the brackets**

Attach the shelf supports and angled brackets to the uprights with an outdoor-rated Type II PVA glue and coated exterior grade #8 x 2 1/2" screws. Drill a countersunk pilot hole at each connection before installing the screws.

The next step is to attach shelf slats to the shelf supports with more glue and screws. I

drilled all the countersunk holes (there are 40 of them) on a drillpress fitted with stop blocks to position them accurately. Once you're done drilling, position the brackets on their backs on a flat work surface.

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Attach the slat closest to the uprights first, then use a couple of scraps of 1/2"-thick material as spacers to find the location of the next slat. Continue this process until all 10 slats are installed, checking the assembly for square as you go. Each one of the countersunk holes in the shelf surfaces calls for a cedar plug for best looks. I cut these with a drillpress spinning a tapered plug cutter. Tap the plugs into place with a thin coating of glue and trim; sand them flush when they're dry.

Lastly, fit the soap shelf into the uprights with glue and clamp until the glue has dried.

### **Sink hole**

To make sawing the hole for the pail easier, temporarily attach the shelf and bracket assembly so that it's upright. Screwing the piece to the wall where it'll live would be ideal, or you can clamp the frame to a sawhorse. Either way, mark the centre of the sink hole on the middle slat of the top shelf and use a compass to mark the 9"-diameter hole to accommodate your bucket.

Cut the hole using a jigsaw fitted with a fine blade. Take the time to sand the cut edges. Drill 3/4"-diameter holes in the top and bottom shelves for the faucet pipe using a spade bit.

### **Water works**

The faucet is made from copper pipe and a few plumbing fittings.

To make the faucet for this project, you'll need to sweat a few plumbing joints using lead-free solder and a propane torch. Joining copper pipe is easy when you don't have to contend with any water in the pipes and you have control over the position of the pieces. Start by cleaning all the mating surfaces of copper with a strip of emery cloth—that's the cloth-backed abrasive found in the plumbing aisle. Next, brush a coating of flux paste onto the mating surfaces of each joint and push the fittings together. Unroll a length of solid-core solder about 8" to 10" long and clean it with emery cloth too. Heat each connection with a propane torch until solder touched to the opposite side of the fitting flows easily around the entire joint. Wipe the joint immediately after you're done using a damp rag, while the solder is still molten, for best appearance. Before sweating the shut-off valve in place, take it apart. Remove the rubber washer inside the valve to prevent it from melting when heated.

Wear safety glasses when soldering pipes, and work far away from flammable materials.

Cut the copper pipe pieces to length with a pipe cutter and solder them together with 90° elbows and a shut-off valve. Don't sweat the threaded hose coupling on until you've slid

the pipe down through the shelf holes. The shut-off valve acts as a stop to prevent the faucet assembly from slipping down too far, while still allowing it to swing out of the way if needed.

**Finish, or not**

Like many of my outdoor cedar projects, I chose to leave this one unfinished. I like the way cedar eventually ages to a soft silvery surface—even if the interim stages are a bit ugly.

If you prefer to add a finish to the project, I recommend three coats of Sikkens Cetol 1. Then turn on the tap and make a splash!

**Fill up or wash up**

A stainless-steel bucket doubles as the sink's basin—take water wherever a splash is needed or remove garden grime. The sink's plumbing makes it a breeze to fit to a garden hose. The project is made with cedar, a weather-hardy species that resists insects. Mount it to your wall with screws driven through the uprights.