Retreat to the shed

If you don't like the look of a shed in the back garden, then look again. This is a pretty, cozy, backyard retreat with heaps of storage. For decoration, the shed design features an attractive bargeboard, a rustic weathervane, and sign made of silver souvenirs. And for the weathervane, we've put together a photo gallery so you can watch Tara put it together (see below).

(NB We have now added supplies and measurements to this list, under Gather your supplies)

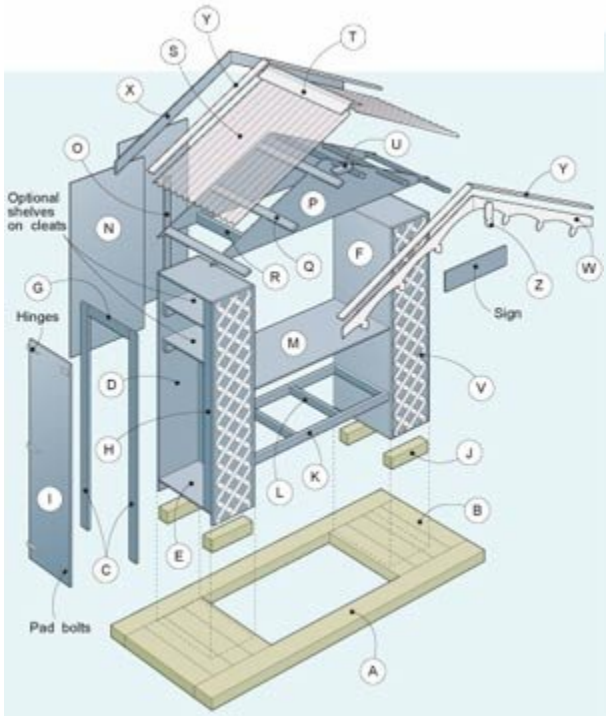
Gather your supplies

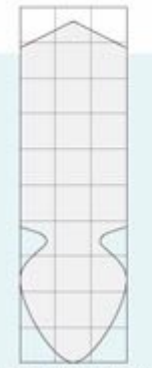
- **A** Long sleepers (2) 200 x 100 x 3000mm treated pine
- **B** Infill sleepers (8) 200 x 100 x 750mm treated pine
- **C** Door jambs (4) 2100 x 75 x 19mm plywood
- **D** Cupboard sides (4) 2100 x 410 x 19mm plywood
- **E** Top/base (4) 410 x 562 x 19mm plywood
- **F** Cupboard back (2) 2100 x 600 x 19mm plywood
- **G** Top jambs (2) 450 x 75 x 19mm plywood
- **H** Door stops (2) 1992 x 75 x 19mm plywood
- **I** Doors (2) 2020 x 445 x 19mm plywood
- **J** Bearing blocks 90 x 90 x 400mm H4 treated pine
- **K** Seat rails (2) 70 x 35 x 1500 treated pine
- **L** Seat cross-rails (4) 70 x 35 x 500mm treated pine
- **M** Seat 580 x 1500 x 19mm plywood
- **N** Back (2) 1800 x 800 x 19mm plywood
- **O** Cover strip 1671 x 70 x 19mm plywood
- **P** Gable ends (2) 2400 x 600 x 19mm plywood
- **Q** Roof battens (6) 70 x 35 x 838mm treated pine
- **R** Roof locators (2) 70 x 35 x 562mm treated pine
- **S** Roofing (2) 838 x 0.42 x 1450mm zincalume steel
- **T** Ridge capping 350 x 900mm zincalume steel
- **U** Support block 70 x 35 x 220mm treated pine
- **V** Lattice (2) 2050 x 370mm treated lattice
- **W** Decorative front bargeboards (2) 1550 x 190 x 19mm plywood
- **X** Back bargeboards (2) 1520 x 90 x 19mm plywood
- **Y** Barge caps (4) 1500 x 90 x 19mm plywood
- **Z** Finial 70 x 220 x 19mm plywood

NOTE: Check all components against actual unit before cutting.

YOU'LL ALSO NEED

6 bags clean or river sand; construction adhesive; range of screws, including 35mm and 75mm; 6 x 150mm T-hinges; roofing screws with neoprene washers; 4 pad bolts; paint; pebbles





Item Z

Item W

Garden retreat

STEP 1 Set out the position for the garden shed-cum-retreat and prepare the foundations. For a job like this, the easiest way to do this is to lay out the base sleepers and excavate around them to remove the vegetation and level the ground as necessary.

STEP 2 Cover the area with about 50mm of clean, washed sand to make levelling easier and allow for drainage. Compact with a wooden float, then use a level to ensure the whole area is level in both directions. Leave excess sand in the centre at this stage.

STEP 3 Place a 3m-long sleeper (A) at the front, then add 4 shorter infill sleepers (B) at each end before bringing in the long back sleeper. Check that all is square and the short sleepers are butted closely together, then pre-drill and screw together on the skew using 75mm screws coated for treated pine.

STEP 4 To make the 2 side storage cupboards, glue and screw the 2 door jambs (Q) to the cupboard sides (D). Use construction adhesive as the glue. Then screw the top and base (F, I) in place. The top is flush at the top, but the base is located 70mm up from the bottom to keep the plywood base dry and allow for bearing blocks to fit underneath. Add the cupboard back (H). Screw the small top jamb (G) between the door jambs. The jambs help to stiffen the edges of the plywood and give a flat surface on which to attach hinges.

STEP 5 Screw the door stop (H) to the back of the front door jamb, then attach the door (I) with 3 hinges. Screw the hinges to the door first, about 100mm from the top and bottom, then, making sure the gaps around the door are even all the way around, screw to door jamb. Then, make a second cupboard with the door opening the other way. Remove hinges and paint the 2 cupboards with 2 coats of acrylic paint. Paint both inside and outside to help prevent the plywood from bowing.

STEP 6 Set out 4 bearing blocks (J) on the sleeper base so the inside spacing between the left and right pair is 1540mm (a fraction wide to allow for play), and they are 560mm apart at each end. We set the blocks to the back slightly to allow enough space for a pair of large pots to stand at the front of the shed. These blocks elevate the 2 cupboards so they will not be sitting in puddles of water when it rains, and also to allow air to circulate underneath. Spread out and compact the excess sand in the centre.

STEP 7 Stand the 2 cupboards on the blocks – they should just slip in place. Do not screw off at this stage as you may need to shuffle things around a little to fit the other bits and pieces in place, and square everything up. Join the 2 cupboards with a seat frame that is 1500mm wide. Simply glue and screw the long seat rails (M) to the cross rails (L). To make fitting easy, cut a few temporary 360mm-long blocks to hold up the seats. The back of the frame is flush with the back of the cupboards. Screw from the frame into the back of the cupboard to secure, then for strength, screw through the back of each cupboard back into the seat frame so screws are driven into solid timber. Screw the seat (V) to the frame.

STEP 8 Use the same temporary blocks as you used for the seat to support the backs (N) behind the seat. **Continued overleaf**

and screw to the back seat rail. Check that the cupboards are plumb, then screw to the rear side of the cupboards with short 35mm screws so they do not go through on the inside of the cupboard. Cover the joint on the front with a cover strip (O), screwed on from the back.

STEP 9 Prepare the 2 end gables (P) by drawing 2 diagonals across a 2.4 x 1.2m sheet of plywood. The 2 wide triangles become the end gables. Cut out with a power saw right on the line because as you cut across the centre of the board, you will be passing from waste side to wanted side rather than aligning the edge of the cut with the line.

STEP 10 From the top of the 2 gables, measure 130, 550 and 970mm down each side. At each of these points, mark in a 70 x 35mm-deep notch on each of the gables. Use a jigsaw to cut out the notches on the front gable only. Do not cut out the notches on the back gable.

STEP 11 Glue and screw the battens (Q) to the back (un-notched) gable. Then measure 562mm along each of the battens from inside the gable, and slide the front gable down to the marks. Screw the battens into the plywood. The final width to the outside of the gables should be 600mm.

STEP 12 Add 2 roof locators (R) which will support the roof assembly on the end cupboards. They are located 750mm from the centre of each gable to match the 1500mm between cupboards. Once completed, paint gable assembly before fixing roofing in place.

STEP 13 Bend up the top of the valleys of the roof sheets (S) to help prevent wind from blowing water into the ridge. Screw roofing to bottom 2 battens using roofing screws with a neoprene washer in every second corrugation. Punch the point of the screw first, then use the self-drilling function to drive in the screws. Do not over-tighten as the roofing may buckle.

STEP 14 Cut the ridge capping (T) to length with snips, if necessary, then screw it to the roof with 6 screws into the top batten.

STEP 15 From the underside, fit a support block (U) for the weathervane between the 2 top battens behind front gable. This is cut with a matching angle at each end, but slightly short so you can fix it in place. Let it settle on the battens, then screw from the gable into the block. At the top of the ridge, measure 310mm in from the front of the roof and drill ever-increasing diameter holes until you have a 10mm-diameter hole. Then switch to a 10mm auger bit to drill through the support block.

STEP 16 With a helper or two, lift the roof assembly onto the cupboards. Make sure the back gable sits in front of the back boards. Align it left and right so the gable ends are centred on the cupboards and the 2 roof locators are flush with the cupboard backs. Screw through the tops of the cupboards into the roof locators.

STEP 17 Screw lattice (V) to face side of cupboards with short screws. If any short slats come loose, nail them back in place.

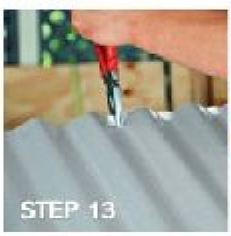
STEP 18 Cut the front bargeboards (W) to length and shape as shown in the Instructions below. Also cut the back bargeboard (X) and the barge caps (Y) to length. All the bargeboards and caps will need a plumb cut at each end. A plumb cut ensures that, once installed, the ends will look vertical and the joint at the top of the gable will be a mitre. You will need left- and right-hand bargeboards. Screw the caps onto the bargeboards so the plumb cuts are flush at the top and there's a 10mm overhang at the front.

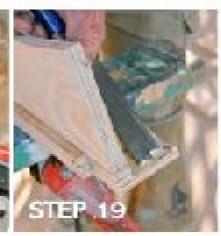
STEP 19 Hold the barge caps against the roof at the front and back. Mark in the section that needs to be chiselled out to fit over the roll of the ridge cap. Chisel out the sections until the barge assemblies can meet at the ridge. Also chisel out a 10mm housing in the overhang of the front to allow the fitting of the finial (Z) at the front so it can fit against the face of the bargeboards. Paint the bargeboards white.

STEP 20 When dry, screw the barge assemblies to the ends of the battens, making sure the joints at the top are closed and neat.

STEP 21 To complete the retreat, install the weathervane. See Instructions (far right) for making the weathervane. Have a helper feed the bottom of the threaded rod just through the roof ridge, then sufficiently wind on a nut so the bottom of the rod comes through the support block. Slip on a washer and feed through the block. Add another washer on the bottom and another nut, and using 2 spanners, tighten. Use a compass to find north and point your weathervane accordingly. Then make and add the centre finial (Z) using the diagram on the previous page. Add pebbles to the centre, under the seat.

Stockists: Garden shed retreat developed and built by John Rae, Serendipity Furniture, 0402 626 993 (Sydney only) and Darren Damach, DID Constructions, (02) 9900 1292. CD plywood, Mister Ply&Wood, 1800 199 771





Front bargeboards

A decorative bargeboard can certainly lift a humble backyard structure and turn it into a thing of beauty.

STEP 1 Cut boards (W), slightly longer than given measurements. Enlarge diagram (Item W) on previous page, to suit, and draw onto cardboard. Cut out template.

STEP 2 Using the cardboard template, put the bottom acorn about 235mm in from the bottom end of the board. Draw in the first 2 acorns, then move the template to draw the 3rd acorn. Continue drawing, freehand, the top curve towards the top of the board. The extra length of the bargeboard allows you to make a plumb cut (vertical) at each end for fixing to the roof.

STEP 3 Cut out the barge with a jigsaw fitted with a scroll saw blade to cut around the tight curves.

STEP 4 Once cut, sand smooth to remove rough edges and splinters. Flip over the board and use it as a pattern for second board. See Steps 18-20 (above) for fitting bargeboards.

Spoon sign

Souvenir teaspoons from travels long ago are the raw material for making a great sign for your shed (or house), and in op-shops they'll only cost about 50 cents each. You could even recycle Granny's spoon collection.

STEP 1 Paint a piece of timber or plywood (ours is 900 x 190mm) as the background for the sign. Arrange the silver to form letters. Use pliers to cut them if needed, and to form any curvy shapes you may need.

STEP 2 To make gluing the cutlery in place easy, hammer the spoons and forks flat. Put the item on a steel block (anvil, vice, old railway line) and pound away with an engineer's hammer, being careful not to hit your fingers.

STEP 3 Glue cutlery to the painted board. Screw the sign above the opening of your retreat, using a level to make sure it's on the level.