

Front Porch Mailbox

BUILD THE SIDES.

The sides are the trickiest parts to build in this mailbox design. But if you can use a ruler and cut a straight line, you should have no problems.

1. Cut two 8" × 14 1/4" pieces to make the sides (A).
2. Pieces of wood that will be shaped into parts are called "blanks" in the woodworkers' language. Lay out the cutting pattern onto one side blank. Mark all of the cutting lines, then double-check the dimensions to make sure the piece will be the right size when it is cut to shape. Make the cuts in the blank, using a jig saw, to create one side. Sand edges smooth.
3. Use this side as a template to mark the second blank. Arrange the template so the grain direction is the same in the blank and the template. Cut out and sand the second side (**photo A**).



Cutlines are drawn on the sides, and the parts are cut to shape with a jig saw.

ATTACH THE BACK AND TOP .

Fasten all the pieces on the mailbox with exterior wood glue and 2" deck screws. Although cedar is a fine outdoor wood, it can be quite brittle. To prevent splitting, drill 1/8" pilot holes and counterbore the holes 1/4" deep, using a counterbore bit. Space the screws evenly when driving them.

1. Cut the back (B) and top (C) to length. Fasten the top between the 2 1/2"-wide faces on the two sides with glue and 2" deck screws. Position the top so that the rear face is flush with the rear side edges, and the top face is flush with the top side edges.
2. Use glue and deck screws to fasten the back between the sides, flush with the 10 1/4"-long edges (**photo B**), and butted against the top.



After fastening the top between the sides, fasten the back with deck screws.

ATTACH THE BOX BOTTOM AND FRONT.

The bottom and front pieces form the letter compartment inside the mailbox.

1. Cut the bottom (D) and front (E) to length. Fasten the bottom to the back and sides, making sure the bottom edges are flush.
2. Once the bottom is attached, fasten the front to the sides and bottom, keeping the bottom edges flush (**photo C**).



Attach the box bottom to the back with glue and screws driven through the back and sides.

Tips

If you are planning on stenciling your name or address on the front of the mailbox, remember these helpful hints:

- Secure the stencil pattern to the surface with spray adhesive and drafting tape.
- Dip a stencil brush into the exterior latex paint, then wipe most of it off on a paper towel before painting.
- Let the paint dry thoroughly before removing the stencil

ATTACH THE NEWSPAPER SHELF.

The lower shelf on the underside of the mailbox is designed for overflow mail.

1. To make the lower shelf, cut the shelf bottom (F) and shelf lip (G) to size. Fasten the shelf lip to the leg of the "V" formed by the sides that are closer to the front.
2. Fasten the shelf bottom to the sides along the back edges to complete the shelf assembly (**photo D**).



Keep the lip edges flush with the side edges to form the newspaper shelf.

CUT AND ATTACH THE LID.

1. Cut the lid (H) to length (9 1/4" is the actual width of a 1 × 10). Draw a reference line parallel to and 3/4" away from one of the long edges.
2. With a jig saw, make a 3 1/2"-long cut at each end of the line. Mark the midpoint of the edge (8 3/4"), then cut a shallow scallop to connect the cuts with the midpoint. Smooth out the cut with a sander.
3. Attach a brass, 15"-long continuous hinge known as a piano hinge to the top edge of the lid. Then position the lid so the other wing of the hinge fits squarely onto the top of the mailbox. Secure the lid to the mailbox with masking tape. Attach the hinge to the mailbox (**photo E**).



Once the pieces are taped in place, the continuous hinge is attached to join the lid to the top.

APPLY FINISHING TOUCHES.

1. Sand all surfaces smooth with 150-grit sandpaper.

2. Finish the mailbox with a clear wood sealer or other finish of your choice. Add 3" brass house numbers on the lid. Or, stencil an address or name onto it. Once the finish has dried, hang the mailbox on the wall by driving screws through the back.