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Cottage Mailbox

When we bought our house it came complete with a standard boring mailbox. When we shopped for a new one we discovered that all the good-looking mailboxes had a very healthy price tag attached to them. So we covered our standard boring mailbox with inexpensive plywood, we think a few delightful details. We're very happy with the result, and it brings smiles to people passing by.



Materials

- 1/2 sheet of 3/8"-thick exterior plywood, measuring 4' x 4'
- 2 linear feet of 2 x 4 pine
- 11 picket fence sections*
- 6-10 plants in 3" pots (optional)
- Pre-made numbers for your address
- Standard size mailbox
- *Pre-made pickets are available at most hobby and craft-supply stores, or you can construct your own.

Hardware

- 60 1" 3d finishing nails
- 1-1/2" wood screws

Special Tools and Techniques

- Beveling

Cutting List

Code	Description	Qty.	Materials	Dimensions
A	Front	1	3/8" plywood	11-1/4" x 13"
B	Back	1	3/8" plywood	11-1/4" x 13"
C	Sides	2	3/8" plywood	19-3/4" x 9-3/4"
D	Roof	2	3/8" plywood	9-1/4" x 23-1/2"
E	Chimney	1	2 x 4 pine	14" long
F	Base	2	3/8" plywood	9-3/4" x 6-1/2"

Making the Front, Back, and Sides

1. Cut one front (A) from 3/8"-thick plywood, measuring 11-1/4 x 13 inches.
2. Refer to *Figure 1* to cut a curved doorway and a peaked roof on the front (A). Double-check to make certain that the curved doorway is sized to accommodate your mailbox.

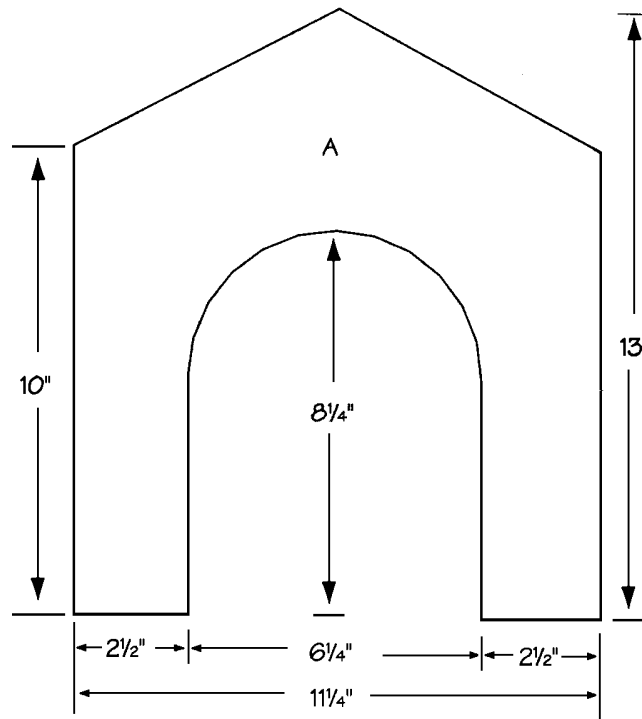
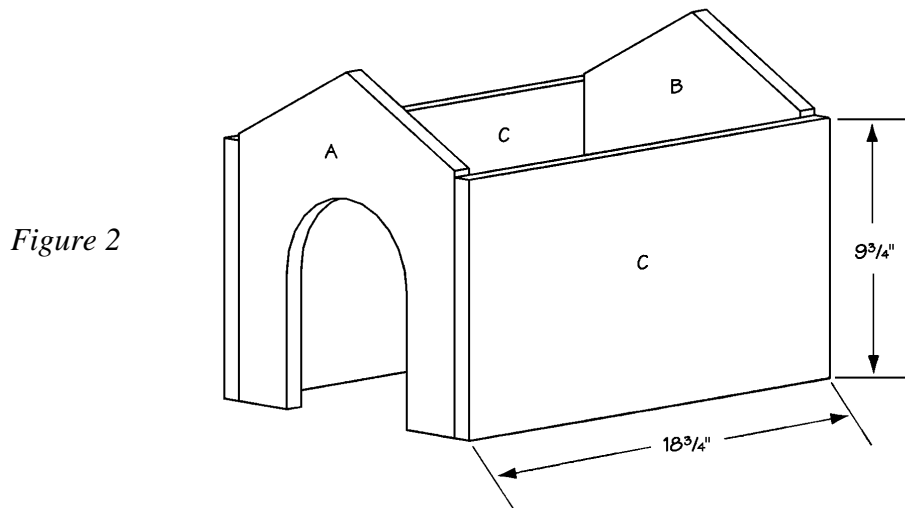


Figure 1

3. Cut one back (B) from 3/8"-thick plywood, measuring 11-1/4 x 13 inches.
4. Use the front (A) to cut a peaked roof on the back (B). Do not cut the curved doorway on

the back (B).

5. Cut two sides (C) from $\frac{3}{8}$ "-thick plywood, each measuring $18\frac{3}{4}$ x $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
6. Place the two sides (C) on a level surface, parallel to each other, and $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches apart. The $18\frac{3}{4}$ " long edge of the sides should face down. Fit the front (A) and back (B) between the two sides (D), as shown in *Figure 2*. Note that the sides (C) will be slightly shorter at the top edges than the front (A) and back (B). That distance will allow for the angle of the roof peak. Apply glue to the meeting surfaces and use four 1-inch-long nails on each joint.



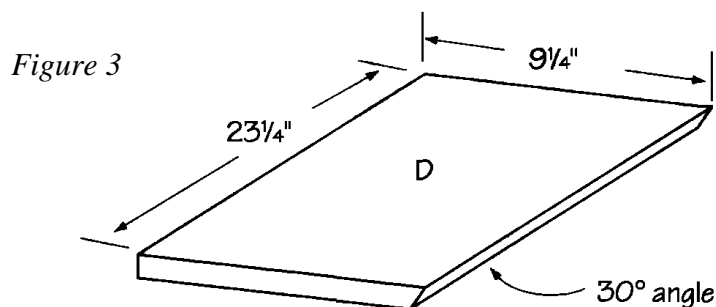
Adding the Roof

1. Cut two roofs (D) from $\frac{3}{8}$ "-thick plywood, each measuring $9\frac{1}{4}$ x $23\frac{1}{4}$ inches.
2. Bevel one $23\frac{1}{4}$ edge of each of the roofs (D) at a 30-degree angle, as shown in *Figure 3*.
3. Fit the two roofs (D) over the sides (C), front (A) and back (B) matching the bevels. The roof should overhang the front (A) and back (B) and equal amount. Apply glue to the meeting surfaces, and nail through the roof into the front, back, and sides (A, B, and C) using 1-inch-long nails.

Adding the Chimney

1. Cut one chimney (D) from 2 x 4 pine, measuring 14 inches long.
2. Measure $9\frac{3}{4}$ " from one end of the chimney (E), and mark the spot. Cut across the width of the chimney (E) at that point at a 30-degree angle, as shown in *Figure 4*.

3. Fit the shorter portion of the chimney (E) on top of the roof (D), just above where the longer portion of the chimney will fit. Screw through the underside of the roof into the short chimney, using two 1-1/2"-long screws. Countersink the screws.
4. Fit the longer portion of the chimney under the roof against one side of the house. Apply glue to the meeting surfaces, and screw through the inside of the side(C) into the chimney (E) using two 1-1/2"-long screws. (Note: The longer portion of the chimney is not visible in the project photograph.)



Adding the Base

1. Cut two bases (F) from 3/8-inch-thick plywood, each measuring 19-3/4 x 6-1/2 inches.
2. Attach one base (F) to the right bottom of the house assembly, flush on the inside with the front door and extending 1 inch from the house front. Apply glue to the meeting surfaces, and nail through the base (F) into the edges of the front, back and side (A, B, and C) using 1"-long nails spaced every 3 inches.
3. Repeat Step 2 to attach the remaining base (F) to the left side of the house.

Adding the Fencing

1. We purchased pre-made sections of white picket fence at a hobby store. Each section is 6-1/2 inches long.

If you prefer to make your own picket fence, simply cut two 5/8-inch-wide strips, each measuring 6-1/2 inches long. These will be the fence rails. Then cut eight pickets from 5/8-inch-wide strips, each measuring 4 inches long. Space the pickets evenly over the two fence rails and glue and nail together using small brads.

2. Cut and fit the picket fence sections to fit all the way around both of the bases.

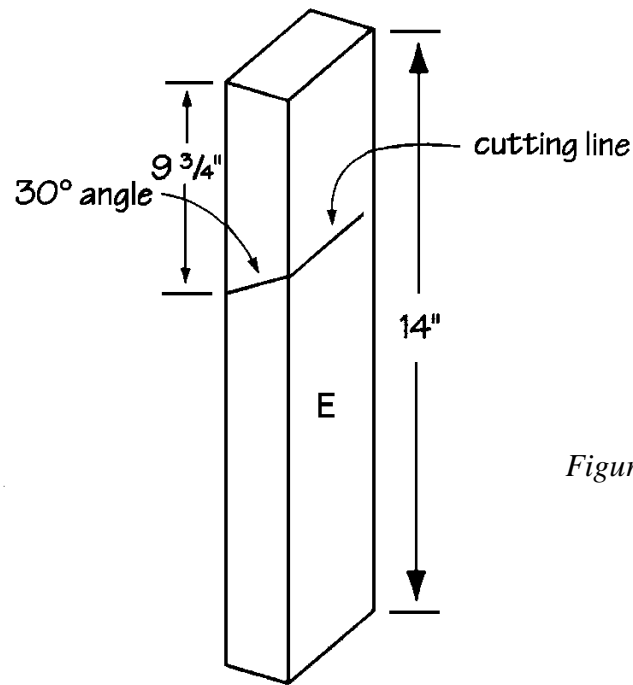


Figure 4

Finishing

1. Remove the flag from the old mailbox and attach it to the chimney.
2. Fill any cracks, crevices, or screw holes with wood filler, and thoroughly sand all surfaces of the completed birdhouse.
3. Seal and paint or stain your birdhouse the colors of your choice.
4. Attach the numbers for your address on the side of the mailbox.
5. Slip the cottage mailbox over your purchased mailbox.
6. As a final decorative touch, we placed several live plants in 3-inch containers in our mailbox "yard".