

HOW TO BUILD A FERAL CAT WINTER SHELTER

Materials

- hard Styrofoam sheet, 2 ft. wide, 8 ft. long, 2 inches thick
- one tube (that fits caulk gun) of clear silicone sealant (such as GE II Window & Door Sealant)
- OR two smaller hand-squeezable tubes of clear silicone sealant
- three one-foot square pieces of thin linoleum tile with adhesive backing
- latex deck paint (approx. 1 quart)
- straw

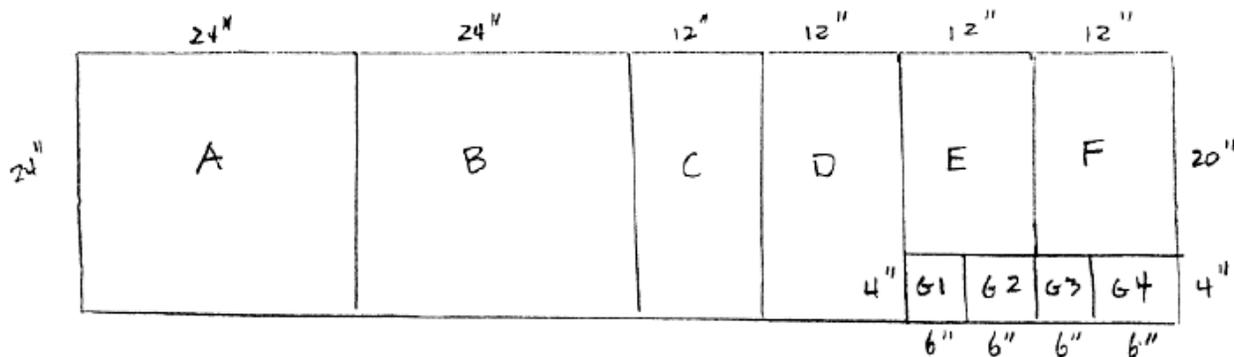
Tools

- table saw
- utility knife (with extendable blade) or jigsaw
- caulk gun
- painting equipment: brush/roller, paint tray, ground cloth
- felt tip marker
- yardstick

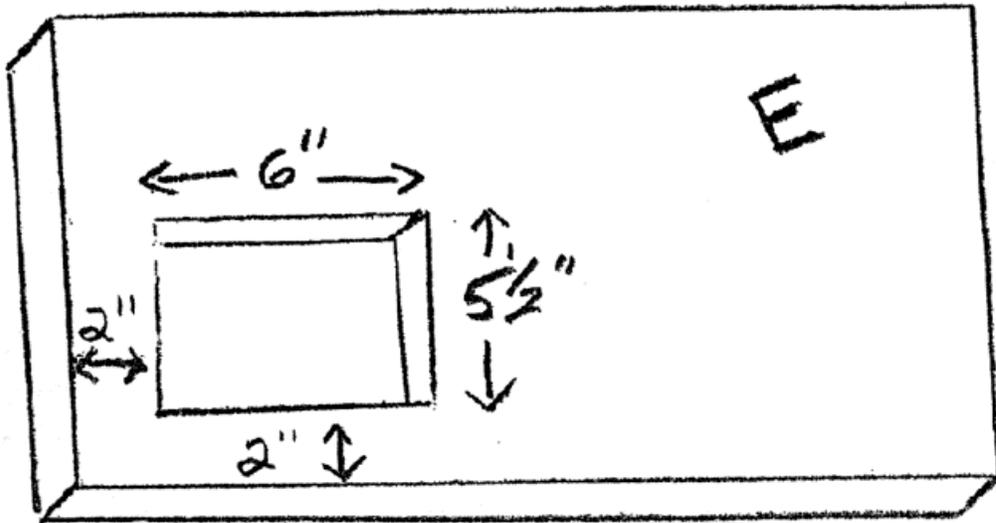
Instructions

1. Using a table saw, cut the Styrofoam sheet into the following pieces:

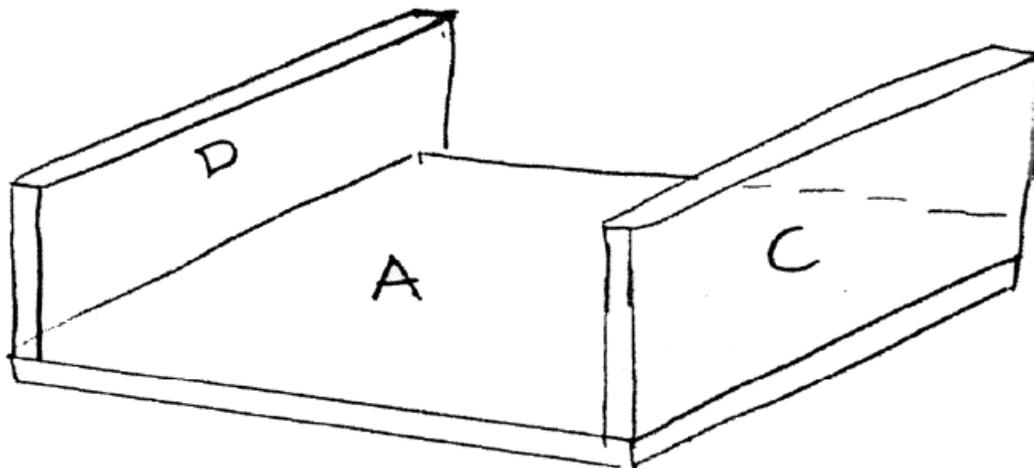
- two pieces of 24" x 24" (pieces A & B)
- two pieces of 12"x 24" (pieces C & D)
- two pieces of 12" x 20" (pieces E & F)
- four pieces of 4" x 6" (pieces G1, G2, G3 & G4)



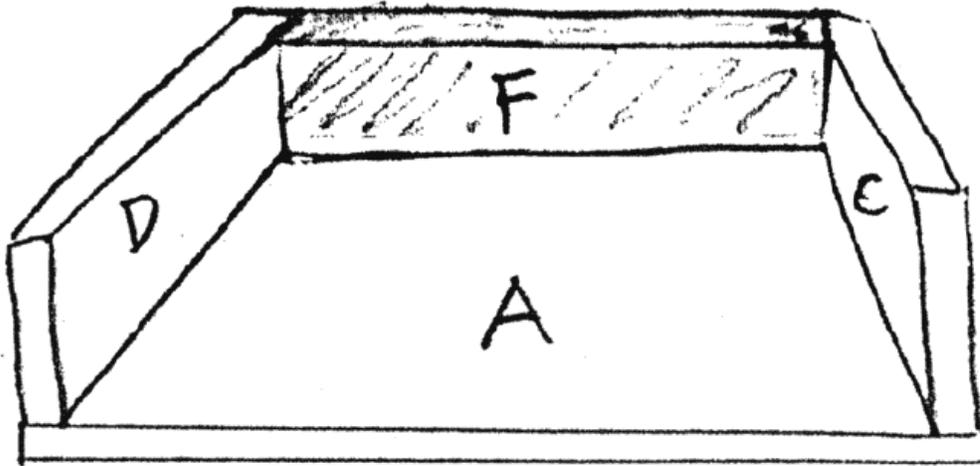
2. The first step is to cut out what will become the front door of the shelter. Take piece E (12" x 20"). Using the yardstick and felt pen, draw a rectangle that measures 5 2" high and 6" wide, and that is located 2" from the right or left edge of piece E and 2" from the bottom. Use the utility knife (or preferably a jig saw) to cut out the rectangle:



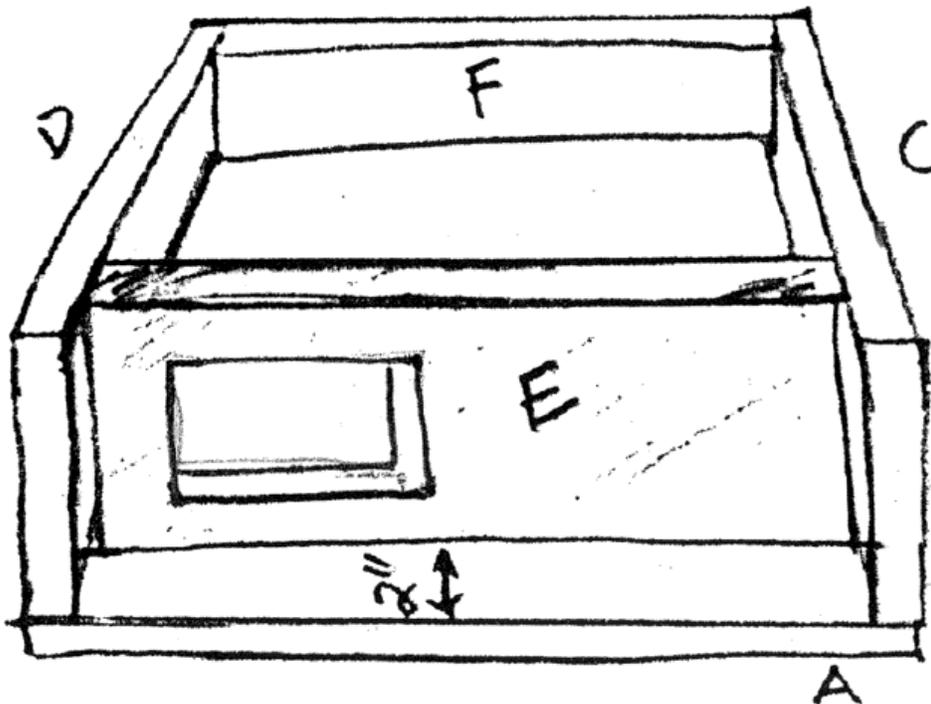
3. Next step is to line up the sides of the shelter onto the floor. First, place pieces C & D (the 12" x 24" pieces) onto the right and left outer edges of piece A (24" x 24").



4. Next, place piece F (12" x 20") onto the back edge of piece A.



5. Finally, place piece E **two inches back** from the front edge of piece A, making sure the door is in the correct position:

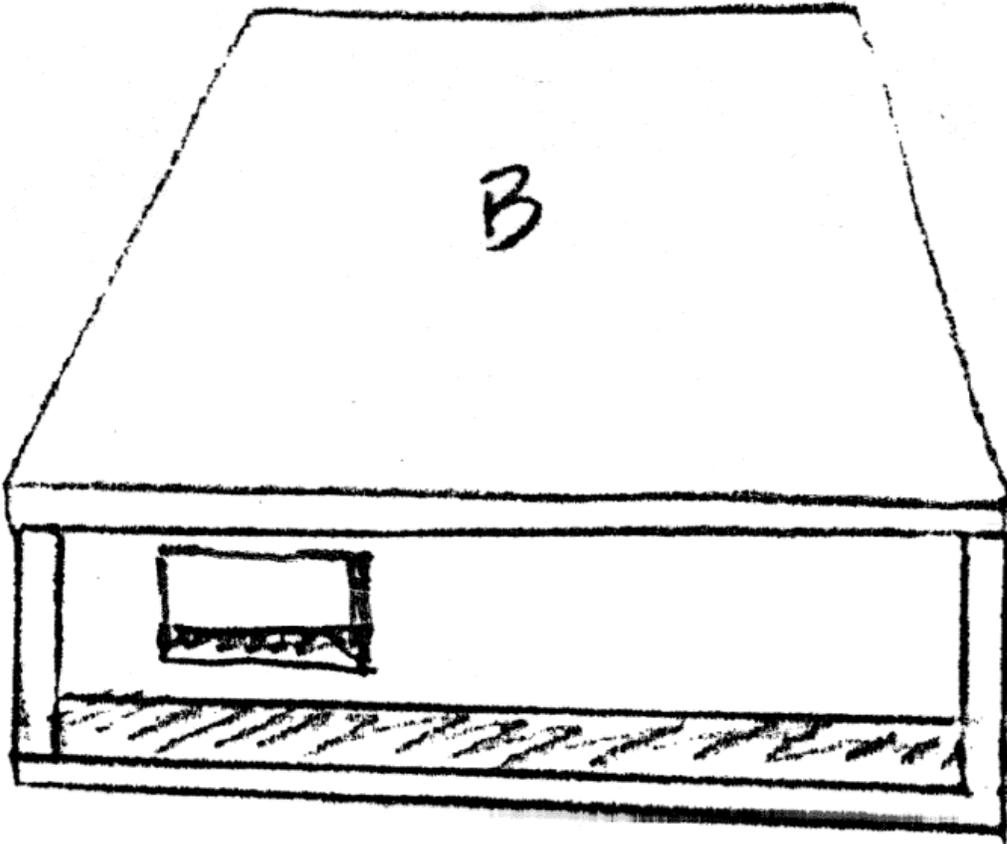


6. Once you've made sure everything lines up, use the caulk gun to apply the silicone sealant

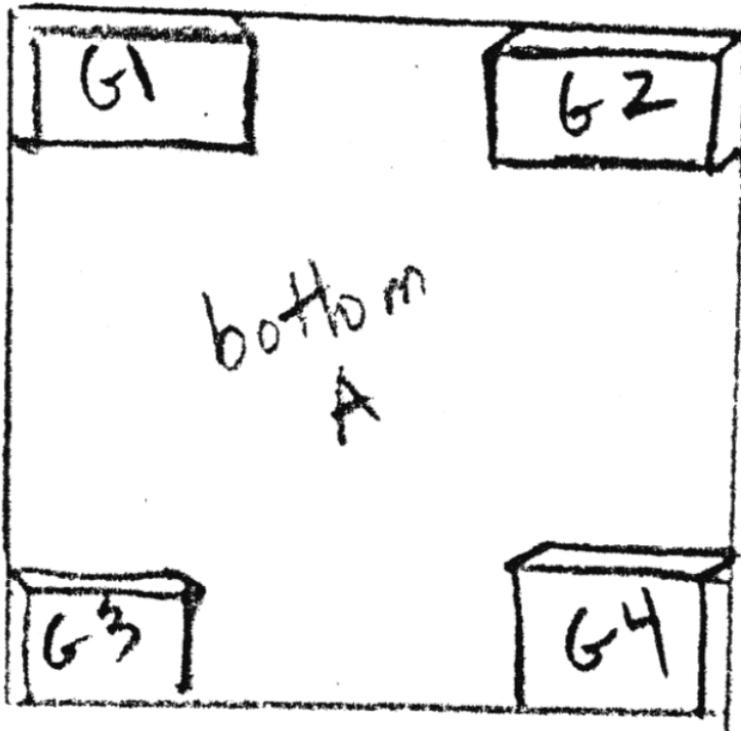
onto the bottom of pieces C, D, E & F and glue them in place, one at a time. Let the glue dry for a few minutes.

7. Take the three linoleum tiles and apply them to the floor, cutting the second and three pieces to fit the floor space.

8. Next, attach the roof. Glue piece B onto the top of pieces C, D, E & F:



9. Then attach the legs. Glue pieces G1, G2, G3 & G4 onto the corners of the bottom of piece A.

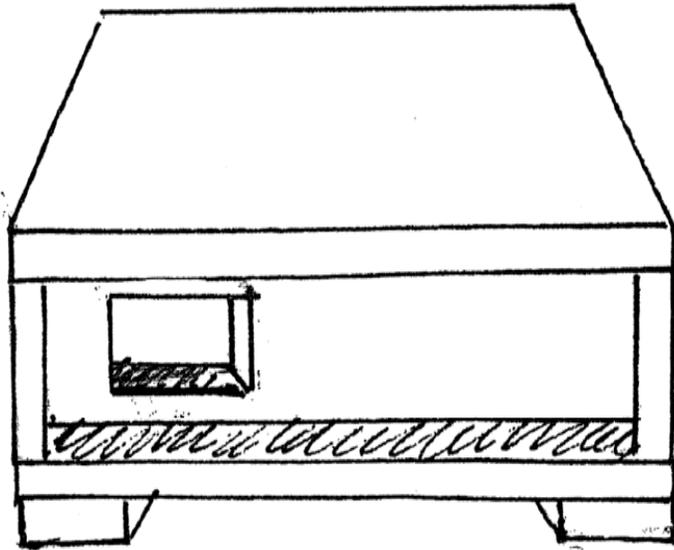


10. Seal all seams and cracks of the shelter with silicone.

11. After the silicone glue has completely dried (usually 24 hours), paint the shelter with one or two coats of latex deck paint, matching the color to the surroundings where the shelter will be placed. (NOTE: the paint will not adhere to areas covered with the sealant. You may choose to paint all the pieces of the shelter BEFORE gluing them together to avoid this.)

12. Once the paint has dried, the shelter should be filled approximately 2/3 with straw.

[Optional]: You may eventually want to add a covering to the front door that the cats can easily push through, such as a thin piece of clear vinyl. You can glue or tape it on above the front door. It's recommended you wait until the cats are familiar with going in and out of the shelter before adding this.



COMPLETED SHELTER

SOME OUTDOOR TIPS:

- For winter protection, it's just as important the shelter be dry as it is warm.
- The shelter should sit firmly on all 4 feet so it does not wobble when a cat steps into it.
- The shelters are very light, so it is necessary to weigh them down with at least one brick on the roof, or wooden board, etc. The roof is strong enough to hold a reasonable amount of weight.
- One way to break the wind and create more protection from rain is to place two shelters facing each other, and then place a board on top, spanning the two roofs.
- The best insulation for inside the shelter is straw, which the cats can burrow into. Avoid using hay or anything that's moist and will cause bacteria to form. Towels and blankets can actually draw away body heat and should not be used.
- Draw the cats inside the shelter with catnip at the entranceway.