

Max and Emily's Corner:

Garden Shed

Please excuse our mess, it's still a work in progress!



Below you will find the sketches that I drew up for building our 10'x12' garden shed project. I won't be providing actual measurements, as your design will vary based on window/door size, climate, location, intended use and many other factors. Carefully consider your objectives. Are you primarily building a shed to house yard tools, lawn mowers, Christmas décor etc? Are you intending to use this as a workshop for wood working, or are you looking for a place to pot your plants, and maybe store them during the winter months? All of this information is critical because it will ultimately determine the way you will build your new garden hideaway.

There are thousands of resources online to familiarize yourself with proper foundation, and roof building, which are much more explanatory than I could be in this short PDF. That said, if your Google-Fu isn't strong, you had better get to work! These aren't the only questions you'll run in to!

This "guide" is not intended to be a one-stop shop for all things shed. It's not intended to give you exact measurements to build a shed like ours above. What it *is* intended to do is give you some rough guidelines on making your garden shed, and share with you the tips, tricks, and lessons learned during our shed building excursion!

Now.. Down to business!

Note:

We were lucky enough to pick up an 8'x17" crank out window for one of the sides from the Habitat for Humanity ReStore®. There are great deals to be had there, and they support an excellent cause, so have a look! Reclaimed lumber, and building materials can add a very nice touch to your shed and garden, and can take some of the punch out of the smack to your pocket book!

The Shed's Floor: Again, here's a situation where I won't be providing any plans for many reasons. Everybody's situation is different, your ground type, weather conditions or, like in our case, the gigantic slope you're building on top of. I will however provide a few suggestions and lessons learned. The floor of the shed is arguable the most important part. A weak floor will make a weak shed. A squishy floor will make it unpleasant to stand inside. Since your structure is built atop the floor, take your time and get this foundation done right!

1. We used 10' pressure treated 2x6s for our floor joists, on 16" centers. This is probably a bit on the small side for a 10' span. You may want to consider 2x8 floor joists instead.
2. We used 5/8" plywood for the floor, which over time is proving to be just a wee bit too squishy. I would suggest nothing less than 3/4" thick.
3. Not shown in the pictures, but we added a lot of cross bracing, ensuring that the cross braces would also line up with the ends of the plywood sheets so there was something to screw to.
4. I would suggest using deck screws as opposed to nails for every ounce of the flooring, both for structure, and to avoid floor squeaks.
5. Lastly, as you are building ensure the structure is level and square. If you mess up, and realize you are out of level or out of square at some point. STOP. Fix it before moving on. A small inconsistency here will add up dramatically later.



The above picture is our floor framing prior to installation of cross-bracing. There are about 8 piers cemented ~4' into the ground.

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The Shed's Walls: The walls of the shed need to be carefully thought and planned out. At the end of this document you will find the drawings without the measurements. Prior to printing out the drawings, and writing in your measurements, ensure you know the measurements for the rough openings for your windows and doors. Adjust the drawings as necessary to fit your situation.

1. **We planned the height of the walls so that one sheet of 4'x8' of siding would reach from the bottom of the floor joists to the top of the walls.** Be careful to account for both the height of the floor joists, and the thickness of the plywood subfloor.
2. We found it easier to install the siding on the frames in order to keep it square before standing the frame up. This also prevented us from having to **try to hold up 4'x8' sheets of siding** while nailing it in place.
3. Arguably an oversight on my part; the windows are supposed to go in before the siding goes on, so that the siding covers the nailing flange for the windows. I was able to seal mine up just fine, but you may want to do it the **"right way."** **The trim covers the nailing flanges on ours.**
4. Make sure, when adding in the measurements for your plans **that you keep your 16" centers, while maintaining a stud every 48" for the lap joints to nail to.**
5. Install a full length 2x4 across the top of the walls. This is called a double wall plate. This not only solidifies the joints between two walls, but also adds the needed height for the rafter to sit on without interfering with the siding.
6. **Lastly, if you are building a 10'x12' shed, when you are planning your 10' walls, plan for the siding to start front to back on one side, and back to front on the other.** This way, when you cut the overlapping half of **the siding for the last 2' on one wall, you can use the underlapping half for the first 2' on the other wall.** This will save you a sheet of siding, and a lot of scrap material.



The above picture is of our walls, framed and sided. Emily is already at it working on the garden, and pointing out my mistakes! Quality Assurance is a good thing!

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The Shed's Roof: The roof is yet another area which I won't be providing plans for. WHAT? What good are you, Max? Well, I'm pretty to look at, and I'm giving you some pointers and drawings for free, so suck it up! Anyways, back on topic... The reason I won't give measurements, or plans for the roof, are similar to the floor predicament. Your roof's slope will vary depending on your climate. If you have massive amounts of rain or snow, you will need a steeper pitch. If you don't get that kind of weather, you could go with a near flat roof. There are also multiple designs for roof styles such as the gable (like ours), a hip roof, a saltbox or hey, maybe you want to use acrylic for some greenhouse action! I don't know, so I'll leave the roof up to you!

That said, what I did was to measure across the 10' walls, and mark the center of each. I then cut two 2x4s to 25" and mounted them on the centers. I then took a 12' 2x6 to span the width of the building, and mounted it on top of the 2x4s (this is called the ridge). I then took a 2x4 to use as a rafter, held it to the outside of the front wall and just outside the ridge, and penciled my cuts. The cut you make on the wall side (called a bird's mouth) should be an L-shaped cut so that the rafter sits flush on top of the double wall plate. The degree/angle that gets cut off the side where the rafter meets the ridge is the same degree cut you should make on the front end for the fascia board to mount. I left my rafters ~8 1/4" long for eaves. After cutting one, I used it as a template for the others.

1. We built the rafters on 24" centers, however if you are in an area where the climate brings lots of snow, or if you will be on the roof frequently for whatever reason, I would consider bumping that down to 16" on center.
2. When sheathing the roof, the sheets do not have to butt up against each other at the ridge. In fact there should be a very small "expansion gap" between each sheet. At any point where two sheets meet (not including on top of the rafter) use little H-shaped clips for your thickness of sheathing.
3. At this point, if you are doing a gable style roof, you will want to use put some vertical studs inside the gable ends for your gable siding to nail to. Guess what?! If you used 2x4s that were longer than you needed for your rafters, the scrap will already have the proper angle cut into them from cutting off the excess on the eave side of the rafter!
4. The bird's mouth that you cut out of the rafter at the wall end can be difficult to nail. I nailed scrap 2x4 pieces to the double wall plate for the rafter to butt up against, and nailed the rafter in from the side.
5. Now you'll want to install your gable siding and paint it beneath where the fascia will go to avoid having to do trim painting around the fascia later, followed by painting and installing fascia board all the way around. Only after this is complete, can you install the drip edge/gutter apron flashing.
6. Now is a good time to put down the tar paper. This will keep the rain off of your sheathing for the time being, until you can get your shingles installed. Start from left to right, bottom to top, overhanging the edges by ~2", and overlapping the row below by ~3-4". Do the same thing on the other side. Finish off with one strip over the ridge overlapping both sides. Some use staples, I followed the staples with the nails that have the orange plastic washers every 2' or so for extra holding power.
7. When cutting the shingles, cut from the back side of the shingle, not the gritty side... Ask me how I know... *sigh* lesson learned.



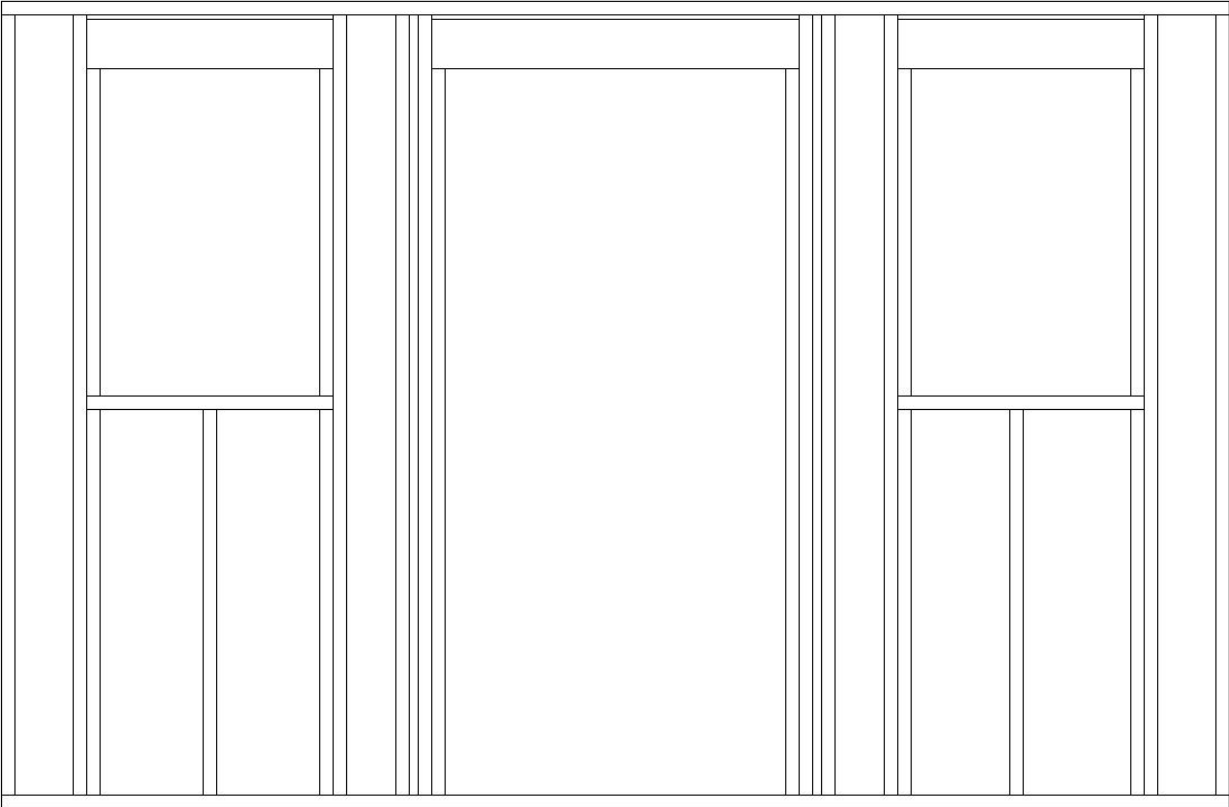
The above picture is after installing the ridge board, the rafters, and beginning the sheathing of the roof.

Final Thoughts: Don't worry too much about small imperfections. Most everything will be covered up by trim. The final touches should be done slowly, as these details are what will make or break the appearance of your shed.

1. Trim all four corners of the shed (we used cedar 1x3s painted white) to cover the joints where the siding meets. I decided to seal mine with paintable caulking and throw a quick coat of paint over top. This helped hide the joints and nails and really made the walls "pop."
2. Seal all the windows, and around the door really well. If water or bugs can get in, they will.
3. If you didn't install some sort of venting in the roof, the gables are a good place to install small louvered vents. I bought a set from a hardware store which has mounting holes that fit perfectly over the 16" centers. They're also screened on the inside so bugs can't fly in through the vents.
4. If you are having a hard time, take a break. If there's anything I've learned in my short life, it's that when you're frustrated, you will mess up, only to become more frustrated. Don't forget about your best resources: YouTube how-to videos, Google searches, friends, neighbors, family, or even your significant other. I can't tell you the number of times I'd be lost about how to conquer a certain task, and then Emily will say "Well, why don't you just put that 2x4 right there?" Despite my sore ego, her suggestions prove to be VERY helpful. Put your ego away, men, women are handy too!
5. Certain tasks, such as standing up a wall after you've framed it are too difficult to conquer yourself. Enlist some help for those tasks. Dinner and beverages are often sufficient payment to friends, family, and neighbors. I can't thank my neighbor Jack enough for the HOURS of dedicated help he provided. Now that he is building his shed, I get to return the favor.
6. Fasteners: Don't skimp. Use galvanized nails outside so that they don't rust. Use proper length screws for the specific role when building the floor. I even used metal floor joist hangers for added support.
7. Use the right tool for the job! I borrowed Emily's Dad's miter saw which was an absolute godsend for doing the angles for the trim and rafters.
8. Take your time. Think two steps ahead before you cut or nail anything. I avoided a TON of headache by planning out every step so that they were done in the proper order. For example, imagine installing the shingles before the drip edge, then trying to cut and bend the drip edge, slide it in underneath the shingles, and nail it down. Imagine siding the frame, but not cutting out the door before you stand the wall up, so now you can't get inside. Make a to-do list, and put it in order.
9. There is more than one way to skin a cat. These drawings, and guidelines won't be applicable to everyone, you'll have to determine what fits your needs/wants. Most everything I've done can be done successfully in a different manner. This is why I didn't go into detail on soffit, the loft, the potting bench inside, measurements, etc... Find what fits your style, desires, and needs, and make it a reality!
10. **Nothing I've said in here shall preempt local codes/laws. Make** sure you get any required permits, and adhere to all local building codes for your area!

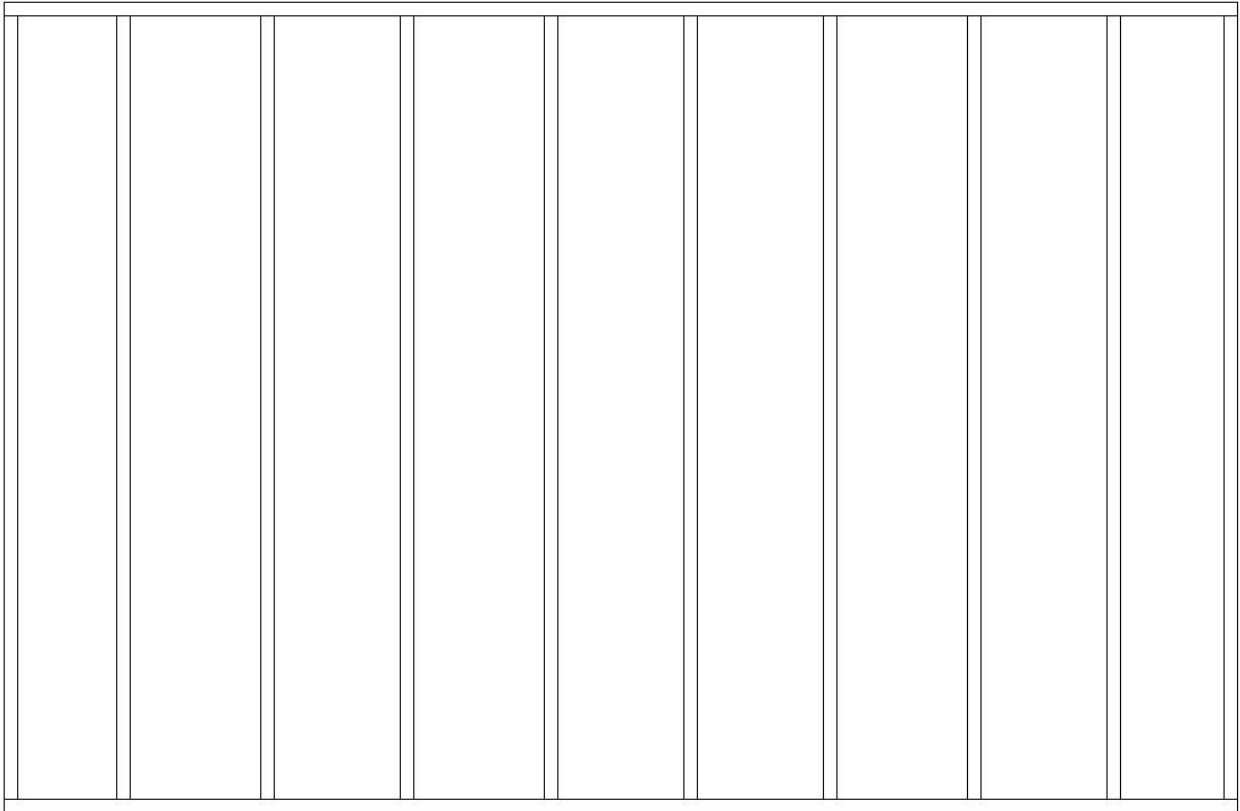
Shed Drawings: Below you will find the drawings I've drafted for building our 10'x12' garden shed. Adapt them as necessary to fit your situation!

Front Wall:



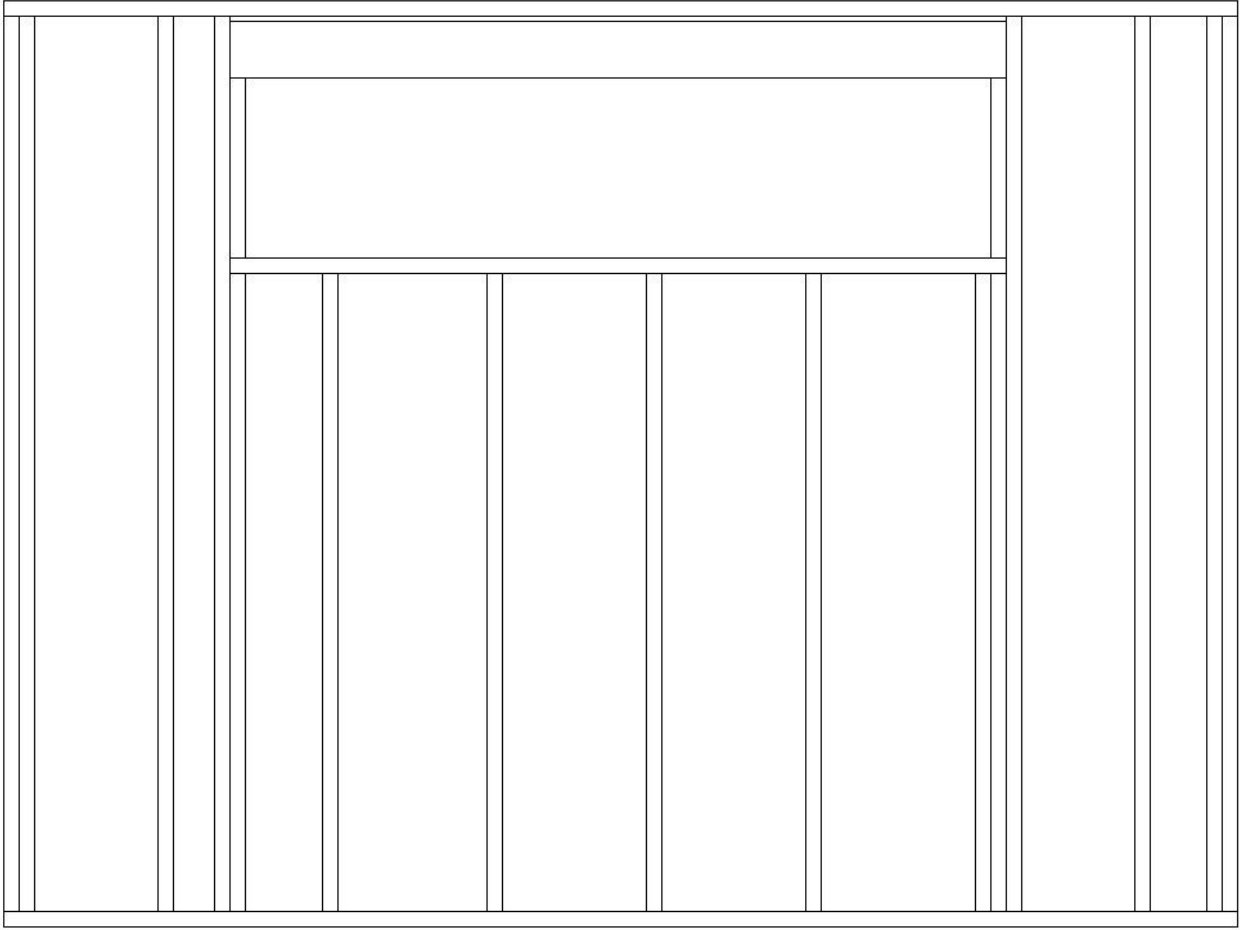
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Back Wall:



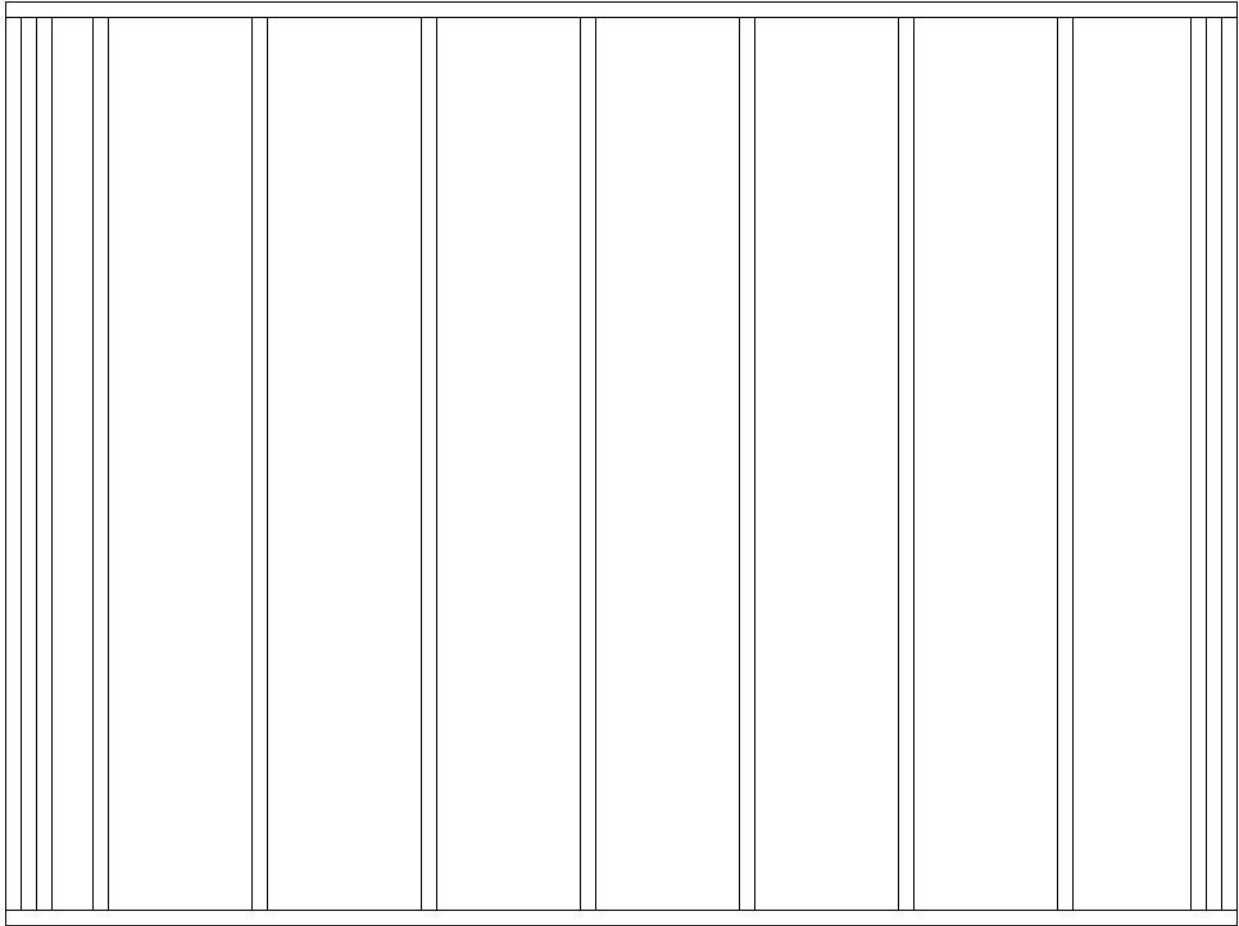
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Side Wall (with window):



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Side Wall:



All in all this shed cost us approximately \$1500.00. We had a more expensive floor since we were building on piers due to the slope in our yard, and we used expensive architectural shingles, two new windows, and a new steel door. Some savings could be had in a few places, and a few upgrades could be had as well.

Best wishes to you and yours, and best of luck building your new garden shed! I hope you find this guide **useful, and I hope you'll continue to support and visit my Mom and Sister's website at** <http://www.simplynotable.com/>.

Stop by and share your story with us. I won't frequent the site as often as Mom and Carli, but they'll sure holler if I need to come speak up!

Sincerely,
-Max & Emily.