



# Birdhouse Plan Combo Pack



Two Quick and Creative  
Projects for Your Yard

# Old Plane Birdhouse

BY CHRISTOPHER SCHWARZ

**Every woodworker should spruce up the yard (or the shop) with this simple birdhouse.**

I've never been a fan of birdhouses. Why welcome something to your yard that really wants to poo on your head?

Yet, inspiration works in weird ways. While visiting Maine in February I saw an enormous birdhouse that looked like a jointer plane hanging outside Liberty Tool, an ironmonger. I just had to have one to hang above my shop door.

## **Simple, Quick & Fun**

This birdhouse is based on a Marples 14" razez jack plane I own. I scaled it up to 35" long so it would look good above a standard door. If you'd like to make yours bigger, you can scale our model by downloading the free SketchUp file through our web site.

You'll need about 10 to 12 board feet of a weather-resistant wood. I used cypress. And don't forget the waterproof glue and stainless (or galvanized) fasteners.

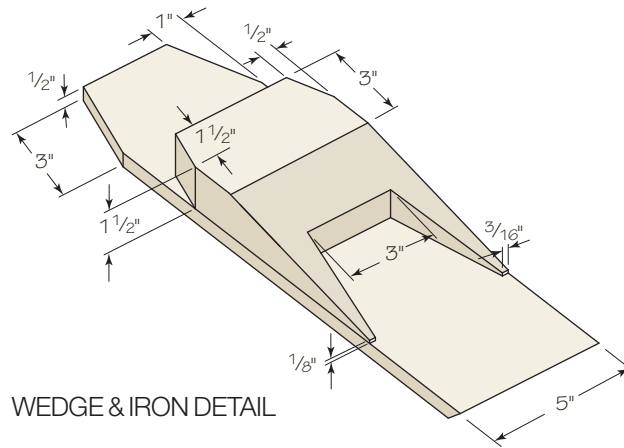
The whole project takes about three hours, so it also was great therapy for me after coming off of an intense three-month-long project.

Begin by gluing up the wood for the thick wedge and the tote. These pieces are made by gluing two pieces of stock face-to-face. Clamp them up and set them aside for the glue to dry.

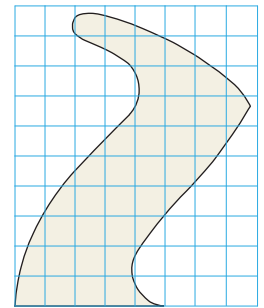


## Schedule of Materials: Old Plane Birdhouse

NO.	ITEM	DIMENSIONS (INCHES)		
		T	W	L
2	Sidewalls	3/4	6 1/2	35
1	Toe	3/4	5	6 1/2
1	Top	3/4	5	8
1	Front of mouth	3/4	5	5
1	Frog	3/4	5	3 1/2
1	Plate for tote	3/4	5	17 1/2
1	Divider	3/4	5	3 1/4
1	Heel	3/4	5	4 3/4
1	Sole	3/4	5	33 1/2
1	Tote	1 1/2	7 1/2	10
1	Wedge	1 1/2	5	9 1/4
1	Iron	1/2	5	18

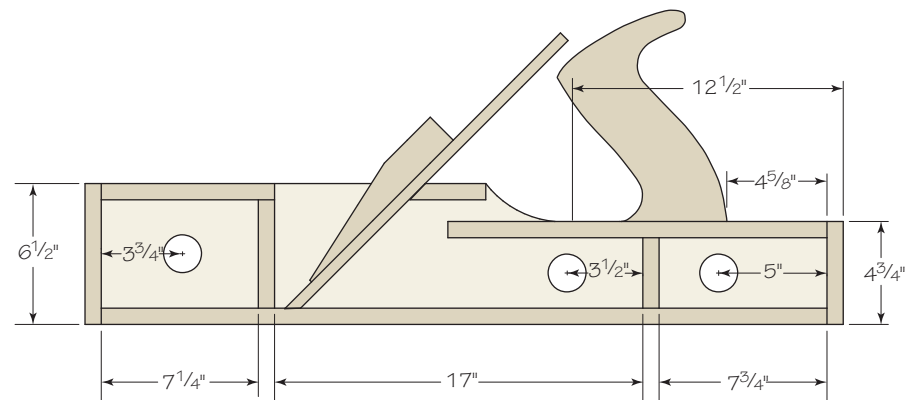


WEDGE & IRON DETAIL



1 grid square = 1"

TOTE PATTERN



ELEVATION

### Next Up: The Sidewalls

After ripping all your parts to width, begin by shaping the two sidewalls. Lay out the raze shape on one sidewall using the drawing as a guide. Cut the shape on the band saw and clean it up with a spindle sander. Then use the first sidewall to lay out the pattern for the second.

Cut that one close, then tape the two sidewalls together and shape them simultaneously so they are identical. I used the spindle sander here as well.

### Assembly. What, Already?

Cut the interior parts to size: the toe, heel, top, front of the mouth, frog, divider and sole. Sand or plane them smooth, then get your nails out.

Glue and nail these seven pieces to the sidewall that will eventually have the entrances for the birds (you'll bore those holes later).

Now shape the tote. Remove the thick piece that you glued up earlier from the clamps and cut it to size using the patterns and drawings provided above. Dress it smooth and then screw the tote to the plate for the tote. Glue and nail the finished assembly to the sidewall.

Shape the iron and the wedge using the drawings to guide you. Glue and nail them in place to the sidewall and the frog.

### Be Bird-friendly

Drill some ventilation and drainage holes in the sole and in the top of the plane using a 1/4" bit. Then decide what sort of birds you want to attract and drill entrance holes that are based on the species (a quick search on the Internet will call up the hole sizes for a variety of birds). I want to attract Purple Martins, so I drilled my holes at 1 7/8" in diameter.

So that the birdhouse is easy to clean, attach the second sidewall to your birdhouse using No. 8 x 1 1/4" stainless screws.

To hang the birdhouse, I made a French cleat. One half gets screwed to the sidewall. Its mate gets screwed to the house, right above my shop door.

And what about having the birdhouse hanging over my shop door? That seems stupid. Maybe. But perhaps the threat of some loose-boweled birds will prevent my neighbors from pestering me when I'm working in the shop.



**THIS PLANE IS HOLLOW.** Glue and nail all the interior pieces as shown before you screw the second sidewall in place.

# Purple Martin Condo

BY A. J. HAMLER

**This home for purple martins is one of the easiest and fastest projects in this book. And, because of its modular nature, it's also one of the most unique.**

Purple martins are social nesters, and while individual birds prefer to have their “own room,” so to speak, they enjoy living in colonies with other purple martins. Further, of all the cavity-nesting birds discussed throughout this book, purple martins rely the most on man-made housing; in fact, they prefer it to natural cavities, which often do not lend themselves to large colonies. With this house's design, you can not only make your purple martin colony as large as you'd like, your options for its final appearance are limitless based on how you arrange the finished modules.

Each module is based on the purple martin's preferred living space, a cube with minimum interior dimensions of 6" × 6" × 6", and is made entirely of ½" pine. Of course, you could substitute any other solid wood species, or even plywood.

Because you will likely make this house in multiple modules, it's best to cut multiples of each component at the same time to cut down on the number



of tool setups. That is, cut all the house backs with one setup, change your saw's setting and cut all the sides, change it again to cut all the fronts, etc. With the exception of the top/bottom components, all the house parts are very similar in size, so label your stacks as in Fig. 1 to keep everything straight.

With waterproof glue and nails, begin the assembly by attaching the house sides to the house back. To this assembly, attach the top and bottom pieces. (Fig. 2.) Drill a 2" entrance hole 2" on-center from the bottom of the house front/door, then center the door in the front opening of the house and drive galvanized hinge nails on each side about an inch from the top. Notice that I've sized

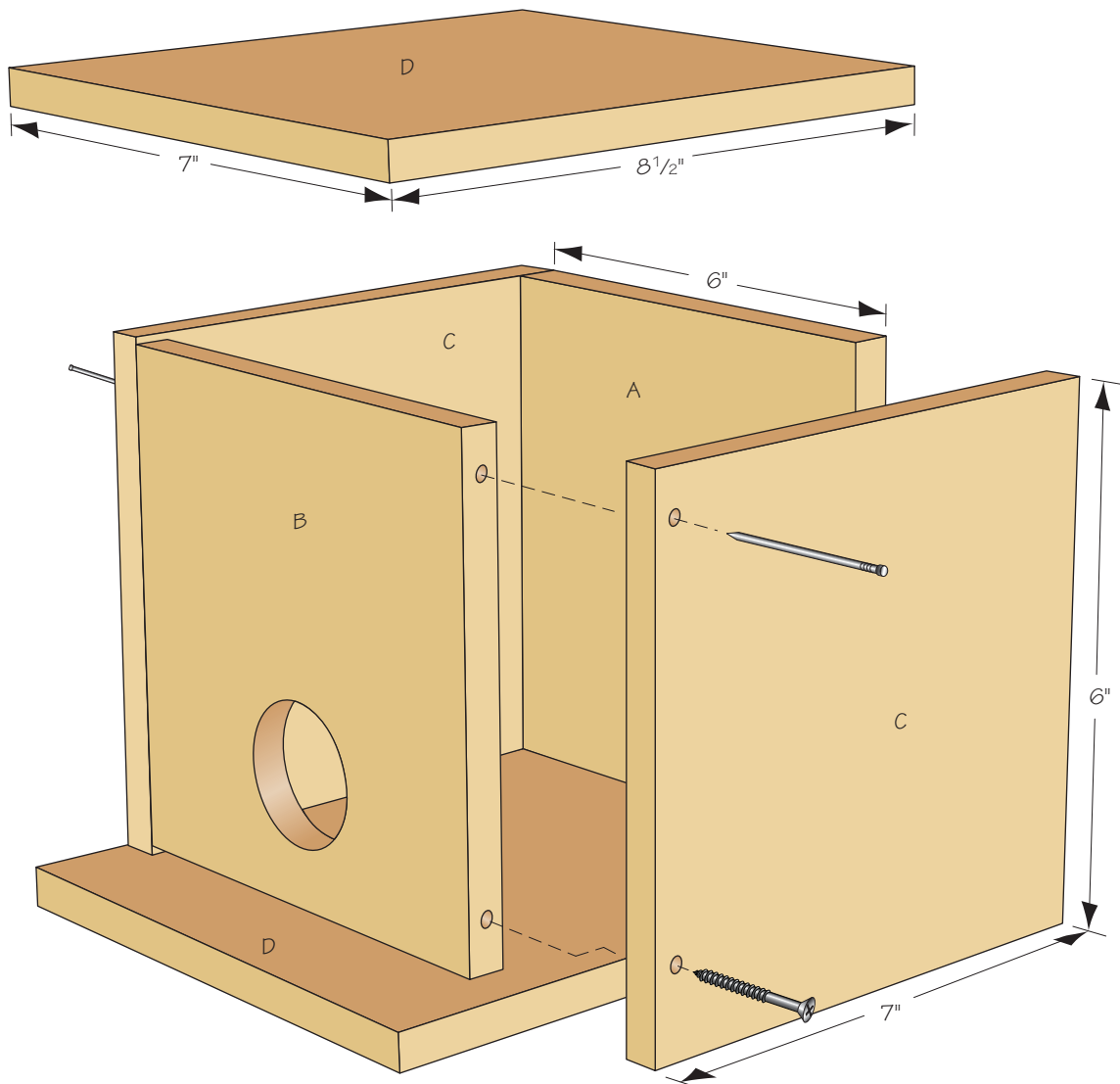
## Schedule of Materials: Purple Martin Condo

LTR.	NO.	ITEM	STOCK	INCHES T	(MM) T	INCHES W	(MM) W	INCHES L	(MM) L
A	1	back	pine	½	(13)	6	(152)	6	(152)
B	1	front/door	pine	½	(13)	6	(152)	5⅞	(149)
C	2	sides	pine	½	(13)	6	(152)	7	(178)
D	2	top/bottom	pine	½	(13)	7	(178)	8½	(216)

the front/door a bit smaller than the back, allowing for a narrow gap at both top and bottom when it's centered in the front opening. The bottom gap will allow for drainage, while both top and bottom gaps provide additional ventilation and allow the door to be easily lifted without rubbing at the top and bottom of the house. In Fig. 3 I'm using a nail

set to put the heads of the hinge nails slightly below the surface. Finally, drill a pilot hole through one side and into the door near the bottom of the house, and drive in a 1" exterior screw to keep the door shut. Countersink the screw so it is flush with the house side.

Taking the number of modules you've made into consideration, you





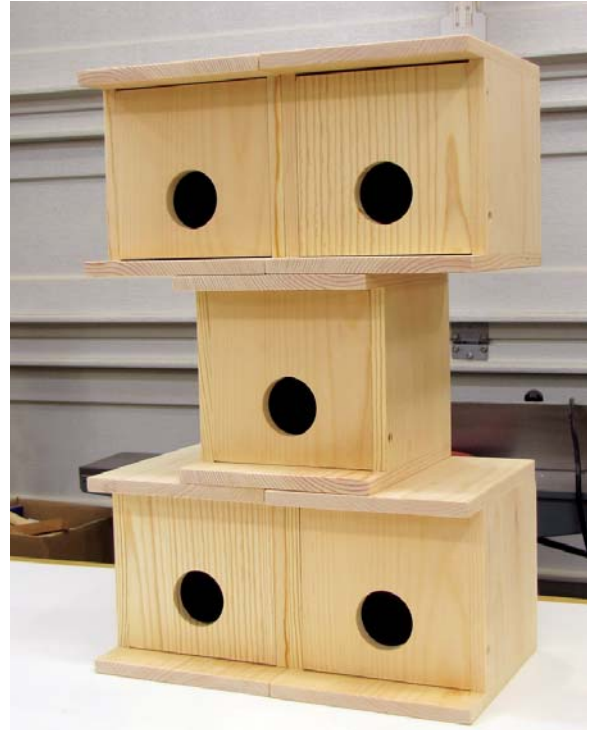
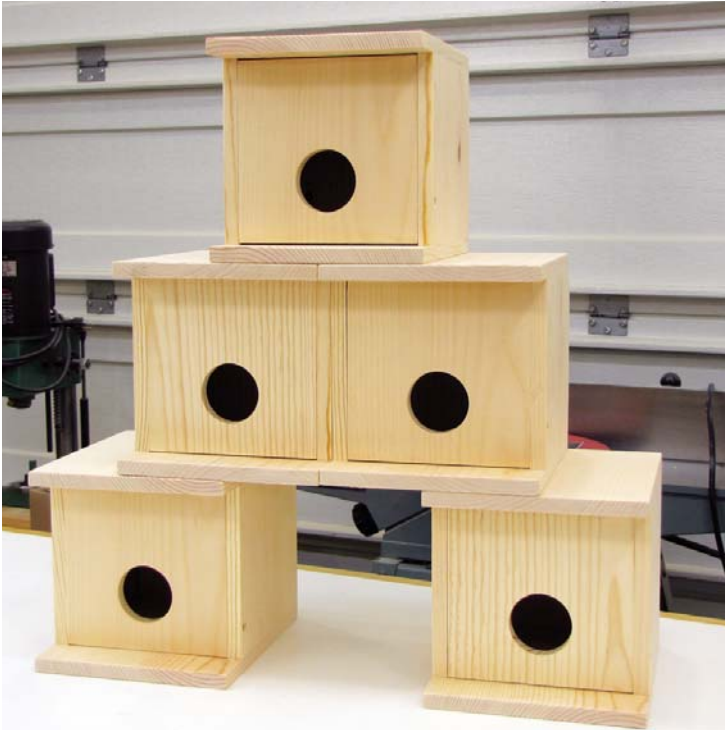
**FIGURE 1** With the exception of the top/bottom components, which are identical, all the house parts are very similar in size, so label your stacks to keep everything straight.



**FIGURE 2** With waterproof glue and nails, begin the assembly by attaching the house sides to the house back. To this assembly, attach the top and bottom pieces.



**FIGURE 3** Use a nail set to put the heads of the hinge nails slightly below the surface.



can arrange them any way you'd like. (If you know what arrangement you'll use beforehand, place the door screw on the side of the house that will be most accessible in your arrangement.) The modules can be attached directly to each other with nails or screws, or can be individually attached to a plywood platform for low arrangements, or to a backer board for tall ones.

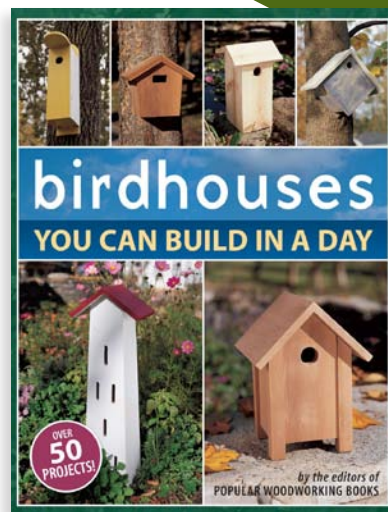
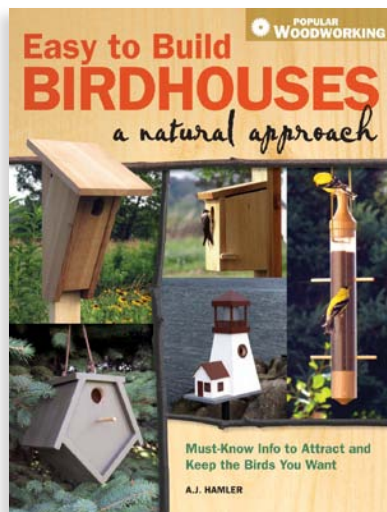
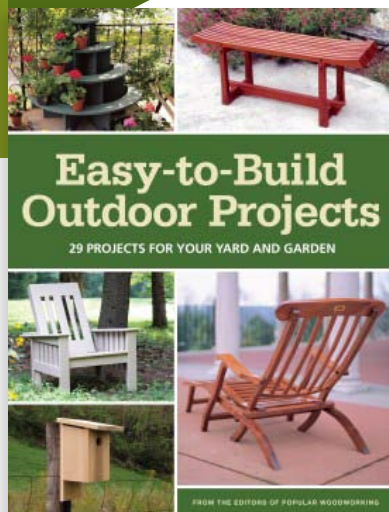
Your purple martin condo should be mounted on a pole 8' to 20' above

the ground, and at least 35' to 40' from your house. Ideally, your home will be adjacent to a large field where purple martins will swoop through the air over large open areas to catch insects. This is important—their entire diet is caught this way—so if your home is surrounded by a lot of trees, it's really not the best location for a purple martin house.

Purple martins are the largest species of swallow in North America, and are common throughout the eastern, cen-

tral, and portions of the Southwestern United States, as well as throughout Mexico and Central America. Deep black with a shimmering blue/purple sheen to the feathers, they're the only swallows without a light-colored underside. They feed entirely on insects, and so are migratory. Although they winter in South America, they will often return to the same northern nesting grounds they used the previous year.

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