Everyone Can Get Involved!
Compost Bench Building can be as easy as child's play! This young gardener is sharpening his skills at the workshop organized by GreenThumb at the New Visions Garden in Brooklyn. Below are all the supplies you will need for the project and our insider tips and tricks to help you, followed by the details you will need to build your own bench.

The Finished Bench.
The finished bench should look like this. The top is completely removable, so you can place all your compost inside, or add a few hinges and a lock and use the bench as extra storage for your garden supplies!

The bench is designed to be cemented into the earth with no bottom to aid in the decomposition of plant materials. But if you think you may want to move it around the garden, just sink the pointed feet into the earth for easy repositioning later.
# Tools and Materials

## Tools

- 1 square rule
- 1 power drill
- 1 box of 1/4" exterior screws (approx. 100)
- 1 counter sink to pre-drill the hard outdoor wood

## Materials

**Two Long Sides** that are identical.

For one long side you will need:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 @ 1&quot;x4&quot;</td>
<td>46&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 @ 1&quot;x4&quot;</td>
<td>28 3/4&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 @ 1&quot;x4&quot;</td>
<td>17&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(cut one end into a point @ 45 degrees)

**Two Short Sides** that are identical.

For one short side you will need:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 @ 1&quot;x4&quot;</td>
<td>23 7/8&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 @ 1&quot;x4&quot;</td>
<td>17&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Top.**

For the top you will need:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 @ 1&quot;x4&quot;</td>
<td>47 3/4&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 @ 1&quot;x4&quot;</td>
<td>26 1/8&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 @ 1&quot;x4&quot;</td>
<td>23 7/8&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**10 Mini-Blocks**

Cut from 1"x4" wood, 1" long
**Tips and Tricks**

1. Choose a hard wood that will last in the harsh weather outdoors. There are many choices at your local lumber yard.

2. If you can, it is worth the time to set up your work area with a square corner on the bottom right (or left if you are left-handed). Use two pieces of wood to make a 90-degree corner. Then, as long as you are sure it is square, push the sides up against your corner as you work, to avoid having to check and recheck that everything is 90 degrees.

3. How did we get such perfect spaces between the panels on each of the sides? Well you can spend a lot of time measuring 1" spaces, or you can cut about 10 small 1x4" pieces (your mini-blocks) and position 2 of them between each piece of wood making up a panel as you drill the panel together (see photos in Steps 1 and 2). After drilling just knock out the spare pieces and give them to the young up and coming gardeners /carpenters in your community.

4. Use TWO of the small cut 1x4" mini-blocks to measure the distance you will need to attach the short side panels for final assembly. See Steps 5 and 6. Basically you need to make space for two times the width of the wood in order to fit the bench together neatly.

5. Hard wood is not as easy to drill into, and has a tendency to split if you are not careful. Use the counter sink to pre-drill the hard wood to avoid splitting. Also use the alternating side technique (see Step 4), to avoid putting too much pressure on one line and alleviate the chance of the wood splitting.

6. After you find you midpoint and draw a square line, one cool tip is to mark an "x" on the side where the wood is to be attached, to avoid drilling on the wrong side of the line!

7. The trick for easy assembly is simple. Get some extra hands and work with the bench inverted on your worktable.

8. Be careful as you drill the four sides of the bench together. You want the screws to go into the feet for extra stability.

9. The very last pieces to go on are the two 23 7/8" pieces wedge the top in place. Attach these with the table top off. The top should fit perfectly if all your measurements are accurate.
Getting Ready…

1. Set up a safe work area, with all the cut pieces, tools and materials listed to the right close at hand. Here is Gary Baum, the designer of the bench, getting ready to build at the workshop.

The Plan.

2. You will be building four sides, two long (see above) and two short. Then the top cover. After all five parts are built, we will show you the best way to assemble the bench.

Start Your Drill Guns.

3. Start with the long sides. Set up four of the 46" pieces on your worktable. Square them up with one of the pointed 28 3/4" pieces, flush to the end. Remember to leave 1" spaces in between each 46" piece.

Attach one 28 3/4" piece by drilling into the top and bottom for stability. You will need to drill twice into each 46" piece, but alternate the sides of drilling as shown in Step 4. This prevents the hardwood from splitting.

Finish pre-drilling and screwing the first 28 3/4" piece to one side by drilling two screws into each 46" piece as shown below. Repeat on the other side, again keeping the wood flush to the end and square.

Finally, find the midpoint and attach the 17" piece to each 46" piece.
Drilling Technique.

4. The completed side should look like the photo in Step 2 above. Remember you need two long sides, so repeat Step 3.

For the two short sides start with the four pieces of the 23 7/8” wood. Use the mini-blocks (the small 1x4” pieces) to space the four pieces on your workbench. Then use TWO of the mini-blocks to measure the width of the wood used on the long sides. You will need to make room for 2 widths of the wood in order for the bench to fit together neatly. (See photos in Steps 5 and 6.) Make sure everything is square and attach your 17” piece, drilling into the first 23 7/8” piece and then the last for stability, and again using the alternating side technique shown in the photo. Finish drilling two screws into all four pieces then repeat on the other side.

You will need to make two short sides.

Neat Corners.

5. Look carefully at how the four sides fit together.

The Trick Is,
Measure Twice
the Width of the Wood!

6. Note here that the 17” piece on the short panel is positioned to allow for twice the width of the wood, so use your mini-blocks to help you measure.

Once the four pieces are made you are ready to assemble! But wait - let’s make the top first. Take one more look at the finished bench on the first page. The top is made using the same methods we are now very familiar with. Lay out the six 47 3/4” pieces on your workbench and attach the first 26 1/8” piece flush and square to one side then the other. Find your midpoint, then attach the third piece.
7. Now we are ready to assemble our bench! The trick here is simple: get some extra hands and work with the bench upside-down.

As you attach the four sides together, you will need to drill all the screws in a straight line. This is because you need to drill into the legs of the bench for extra stability. Be extra careful not to split the wood. Go slowly, and pre-drill!

The Tabletop is Wedged In Between.

8. Now flip the bench over and attach the last two pieces of wood for the top.
Drill Smart!

9. To attach the last pieces, drill into the bench away from the screw underneath, which is close to the edge of the wood. Attach these pieces with the table top off. The top should fit perfectly if all your measurements are accurate. The top is designed with a big extra lip for easy lifting.

Let's Make a Bench!

This tutorial is all you need to build a strong, safe, environmentally sound compost bench for your garden. Let us know how you like the bench and any suggestions you may have for improvements.