



Blue Fox Farm

Free Potting Bench Plans

Building a rustic potting bench using barnboard combined with locally available twigs is a great project for gardeners. You'll find that you use this potting bench a lot, not only for repotting, but for displaying found items, plants and different ways to grow them – in a collection of hypertufa pinch pots, for instance.

Skill level:

This is not a project that requires a degree in engineering, but it does help to have some carpentry skills, mostly in the measuring and cutting departments.

Many rustic artisans including myself, prefer to use hand tools such as a bush saw or hand saw to cut the limbs and barnboard to length, and a hammer for nailing your pieces together, and for finishing the ends of the boards or twigs, a rasp or other hand tool.

It's entirely possible to use power tools to make your project, the usual safety precautions apply; dust control, eye protection and hearing protection.

Tools you will require:

Hand saw, bush saw for cutting larger sized branches and barnboards; pruners or loppers for smaller diameter twigs

Small hammer (finishing hammer) and construction hammer

Rechargeable drill with several drill bits (choose those a tiny bit smaller than the Ardox twist nails listed below). These will be used to drill pilot holes when you nail two pieces together to prevent splitting.

Surflan rasp or wood rasp to cleanly finish the cut ends of twigs and branches

Level area to work, either a concrete or paved area, or a large piece of plywood flat on the ground.

Material list:

Barnboards or old fence boards for the top counter, and bottom shelf.

Twigs or branches ranging in size from about 2-3cm thick, to 7cm thick. These will form the

Copyright www.bluefoxfarm.com – all rights reserved – links to the website must be preserved in this document

legs and other parts of the structure.

Ardox twist nails in several sizes – 2”, 3”, 4”

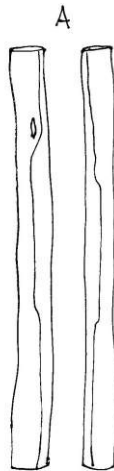
Planning your Rustic Potting Bench:

Measure the width of your barnboards, and use the combined measurement of two or three to get the finished width of the potting bench. You don't want to be 'ripping' any barnboards if you can help it. (Ripping means cutting the whole length of the board)

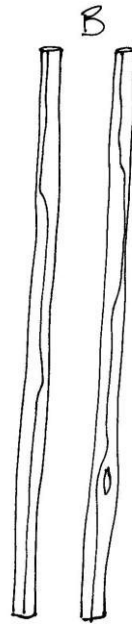
Measure the height of a comfortable counter top or table that fits your height. Use this measurement for the length of the front legs. The back legs can be any height, as long as they are both equal.

Decide how wide your potting bench should be – sometimes this depends on whether you already have some pre-cut barnboards, as preserving the patina on the ends is nicer than a brand new cut edge. If you have to cut them, trim some off each end, to make them match.

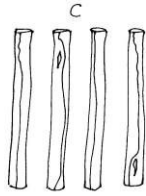
Cut your pieces using the diagram below:



*Illustration 1:
Cut 2 front
legs*



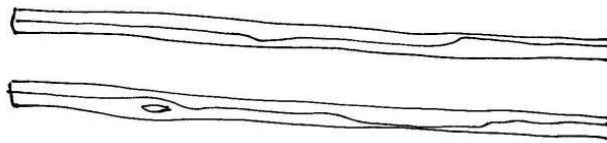
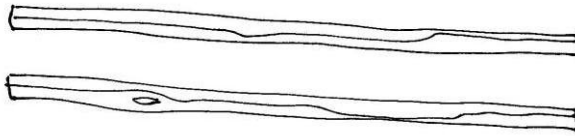
*Illustration 2:
Cut 2 back
legs*



*Illustration 3:
Cut 4 cross
pieces for
sides*



*Illustration 4:
Diagonal
Braces - cut to
required
amount - 10-
12*



*Illustration 5: E Cut 4 front and back cross
pieces using same measurement as for B*

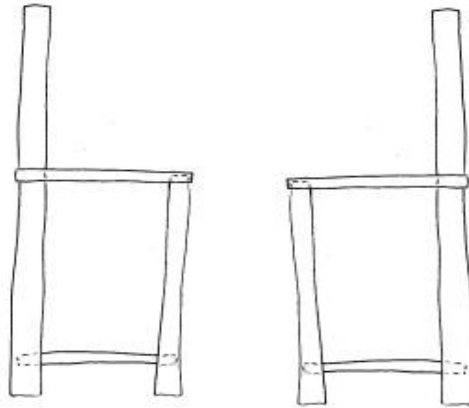
Cutting plan:

A cut 2 front legs of largest sized branches

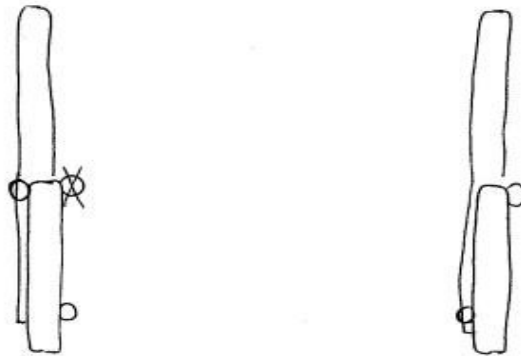
Copyright www.bluefoxfarm.com – all rights reserved – links to the website
must be preserved in this document

- B cut 2 back legs of largest sized branches
- C cut 4 side pieces smaller diameter branches
- D cut approximately 8 diagonal braces any diameter (smaller is fine)
- E cut 4 front and back pieces smaller diameter branches

*Illustration 6:
Assemble two*



*identical but
mirrored sides*



*Illustration 7: Front view of two sides
assembled – note the placement of cross
pieces, outside for the top one, inside for
the bottom one.*

Note "X" – do not assemble them with the cross piece on the inside – you'll find out when you go to put the top counter on – However, the bottom cross piece does go on the inside to eliminate cutting the barnboards that you will use for the bottom shelf.

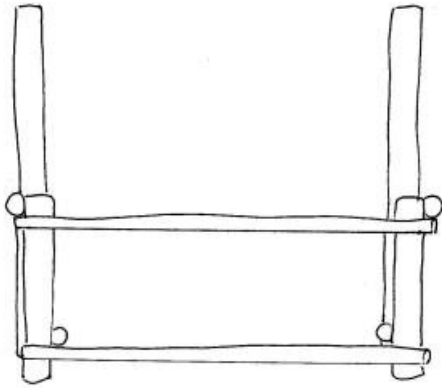


Illustration 8: Front View with top and bottom cross pieces attached

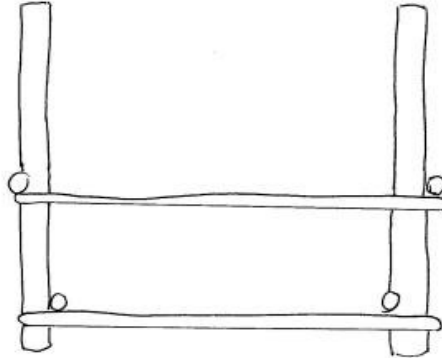


Illustration 9: Back View with cross pieces attached – the height of attachment for front and back cross pieces is the same.

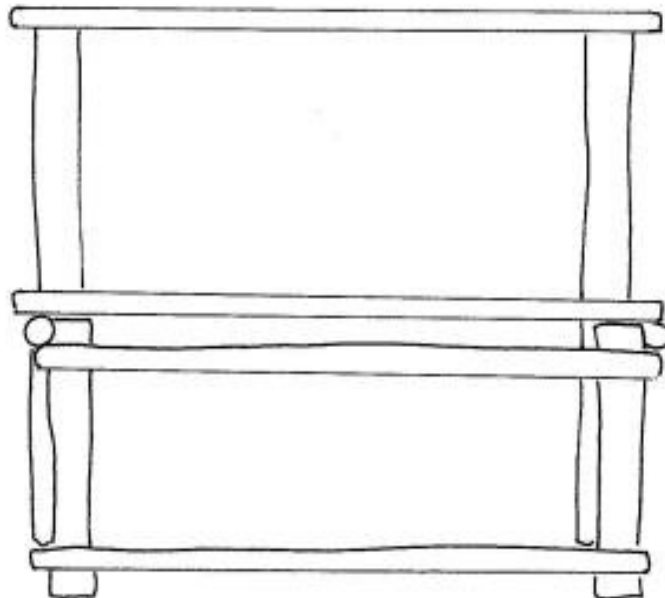


Illustration 10: Front View with barnboard top shelf and counter top attached

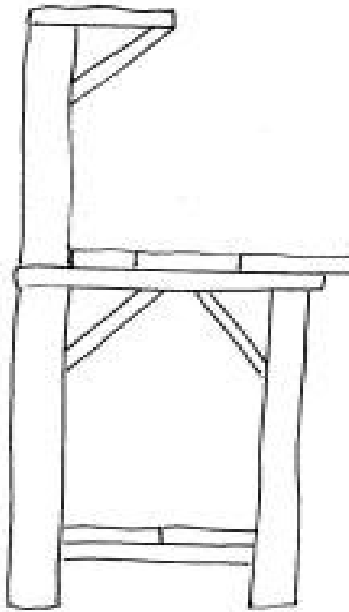


Illustration 11: Side View with diagonal braces attached – see bottom shelf placement.

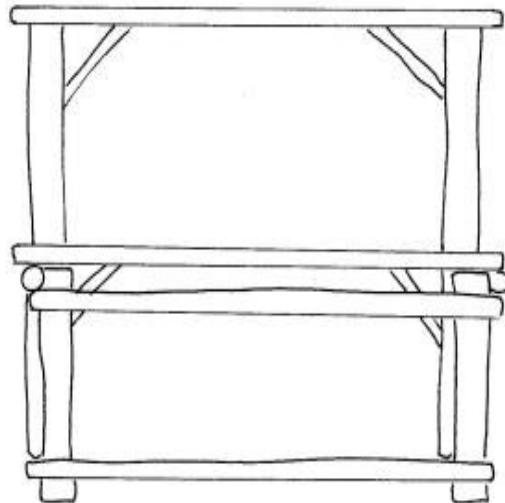


Illustration 12: Front View with diagonal braces attached – note; bottom shelf not shown.

Tips and hints for construction of your Rustic Potting Bench:

Drill pilot holes whenever you want to nail two branches or twigs together – this prevents it from splitting.

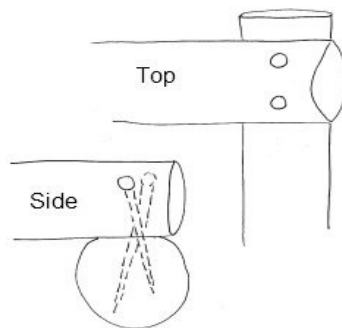
To drill a pilot hole, use a drill bit a tiny bit smaller than the diameter of the nail you will use, and only drill part way through the branch.

Two nails in an 'x' pattern will hold everything securely even after the branches dry completely. I usually put one nail in to attach the pieces together, then once the project is completed, go back and put the second nail in at an angle to the first. This will prevent the pieces from loosening under use.

To prevent splitting of barnboards, turn the nail upside down and hit it with the hammer once or twice. This makes the point dull, and it won't split the wood.

It helps to have an assistant to hold pieces while you attach them. You can also use clamps to hold pieces together, or a rag tied around to hold them. It's important not to 'bark' the branches or twigs, so use caution when you're clamping.

This diagram shows how the nails have to be placed;



Good luck with your project – I hope to see pictures when you're done. Post them here: [My Rustic Project](#)