



SALTBOX POTTING SHED

Looking more like an enchanted storybook cottage than a backyard storage building, this modestly sized 8-ft. by 12-ft. potting shed features bevel siding, a cross-buck Dutch door, and a traditional saltbox roof covered with red-cedar shingles. At the entrance is an easy-to-build, two-tier platform step. The shed is supported by an on-grade foundation made of eight 4-in.-thick concrete blocks. The walls are framed with 2×4s, then sided with red-cedar clapboards.

The interior is outfitted with an L-shaped plywood potting bench that runs along the rear and right-hand end wall. A large perforated hardboard panel is mounted on the wall opposite the bench.

Although it was built as a gardener's potting shed, this pleasing saltbox would also make a great writer's retreat, poolside storage building, or kid's clubhouse. (To order a set of building plans for the Saltbox Potting Shed, see Resources on p. 214.) >>>



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PRO TIP

To move solid-concrete foundation blocks to a building site, use a hand truck instead of a wheelbarrow. It's much less likely to tip over.

WHAT CAN GO WRONG

Buy two or three extra concrete blocks, just in case you accidentally crack a couple while building the on-grade foundation. To reduce the chance of busting a block, make sure you don't set it down on top of a stone or root.

Solid-Block Foundation

The on-grade foundation for this 8-ft. by 12-ft. shed is made of eight 4-in.-thick by 8-in.-wide by 16-in.-long solid-concrete blocks, which are laid in two rows of four blocks each. The blocks in each row are spaced 42 in. o.c. The two parallel rows are set 94 in. apart.

Set the foundation blocks

After you've determined the location for your shed, begin by setting the four blocks that represent the four corners of the foundation. Remembering to leave at least 3 ft. of air space around the back of the shed, position the first and last blocks in the back row. Space the two blocks 11 ft. 10 in. apart, as measured from the outside end of one block to the outside end of the other. At this point, don't worry about whether or not the blocks are level; just set them in the proper position. Repeat this step for the first and last blocks in the row along the front of the shed, positioning them 7 ft. 10 in. from the ones in the rear row, as measured from the outside edges.

1. Move each block out of the way and use a flat shovel to remove the grass underneath. Scrape the soil smooth, then pound it flat with a hand tamper, as shown in **A**. Set the blocks back into place on top of the compacted soil and use a tape measure to confirm that they're back in the correct positions.

2. Using a 2-ft. level, check each block for level in two directions, as shown in **B**. It may be necessary to move the blocks and scrape away some dirt from any high spots to get the blocks level.

Set a long, straight 2×4 on edge across the two corner blocks along the rear of the shed.



Place a 4-ft. level on top of the 2×4. Chances are good that one corner will be lower than the other; in that case, the low corner will need to be shimmed up. You can use additional 4-in.-thick or 2-in.-thick concrete blocks to do this, or if the corner needs to be raised only 1 in. or so, use a 12-in.- to 16-in.-long piece of pressure-treated 1×6 or strips of asphalt roof shingles. Repeat this procedure to level the corner blocks at the front of the shed.

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