



GAMBREL STORAGE BARN

Traditional barn architecture and modern building methods come together in this spacious 12-ft. by 20-ft. storage barn, which features a gambrel-style roof, grooved plywood siding, aluminum windows, and a pair of sliding doors. At 240 sq. ft., the building is supported by a pole-barn foundation consisting of six 4x4 treated posts set on concrete footings. Note that the entire structure is suspended from the posts; there's no wooden floor.

The ground inside the barn is covered with processed stone, creating a floor that's just about even with the ground outside. That makes it easy to store lawn tractors, farm machinery, and trailers. Another benefit is that the gambrel roof creates a spacious storage loft above the ceiling joists. Need one more reason to build this barn? Consider this: It'll make the neighbors really jealous. (To order plans for the Gambrel Storage Barn, see Resources on p. 214.) ▶▶▶



Site Prep
and Footings
p. 188



Wall
Framing
p. 192



Roof
Framing
p. 199



Roofing
p. 206



Windows
and Exterior
Trim
p. 207



Door
Installation
p. 209

PRO TIP

Before stripping the sod from the site, check the weather forecast to make sure it's not going to rain. Otherwise, the site will become a muddy quagmire.

TRADE SECRET

Gas-powered sod cutters are typically rented by the day, even if you use it for only an hour. That's not very cost-effective, but here's one possible solution: Reserve the machine two weeks in advance and ask the rental dealer for an hourly or half-day rate. If the dealer can rent out the machine for the other portion of the same day, he'll be more likely to give you a better rate.

Site Prep and Footings

The local building code required a permanent, frost-proof foundation for this storage barn because it's more than 200 sq. ft. Codes differ from region to region, but chances are that you, too, will need to build a frost-proof foundation. If you're planning to use the barn as a woodshop or carriage house, consider pouring a monolithic concrete-slab foundation. For general storage, the pole-barn foundation used on this barn works fine—and it's a whole lot easier to build.

Remove the sod

Before you can start laying out the foundation, you must remove the sod from the building site. That not only creates a more stable surface for the processed-stone floor, but it also gives you the opportunity to rake the ground flat and somewhat level. Note that it's necessary to remove the sod from an area slightly larger than the footprint of the building; in this case, you must clear a 14-ft. by 22-ft. area. That will create a well-draining, grass-free buffer zone around the perimeter of the barn.

There are two basic ways to remove sod: by hand with a flat-blade shovel or with a gas-powered sod cutter. The choice is easy, considering that you must clear an area that's more than 300 sq. ft.: Go out and rent a sod cutter.

1. Mark out the 14-ft. by 22-ft. area using spray paint or white flour sprinkled from a can.
2. Run the sod cutter back and forth from one end of the building site to the other. Have a helper roll up and remove the sod strips, as shown in **A**.



Set up the batter boards

Once the sod is removed, the next step is to determine exactly where to dig the six footing holes. One of the easiest and most accurate methods for laying out footing holes is to use strings and batter boards. These pairs of vertical stakes are placed a few feet beyond each corner of the foundation, then strings are stretched tightly between them to represent the rectangular outline of the foundation. Key dimensions are then taken off the strings with a tape measure and plumb bob.

1. Using the drawing on p. 191 as a guide, install the first batter board near one corner of the foundation. Drive in the two vertical stakes, spacing them about 3 ft. apart, then screw a crosspiece to the stakes, making sure it's level, as shown in **B** on p. 190.

Tack a small nail in the top edge of the crosspiece centered between the stakes; leave about 1 in. of the nail protruding. Install the opposite batter board in a similar manner, but don't attach the crosspiece just yet. Tie a string to the nail on the first batter board and pull it across to the second one.

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