Home Journal

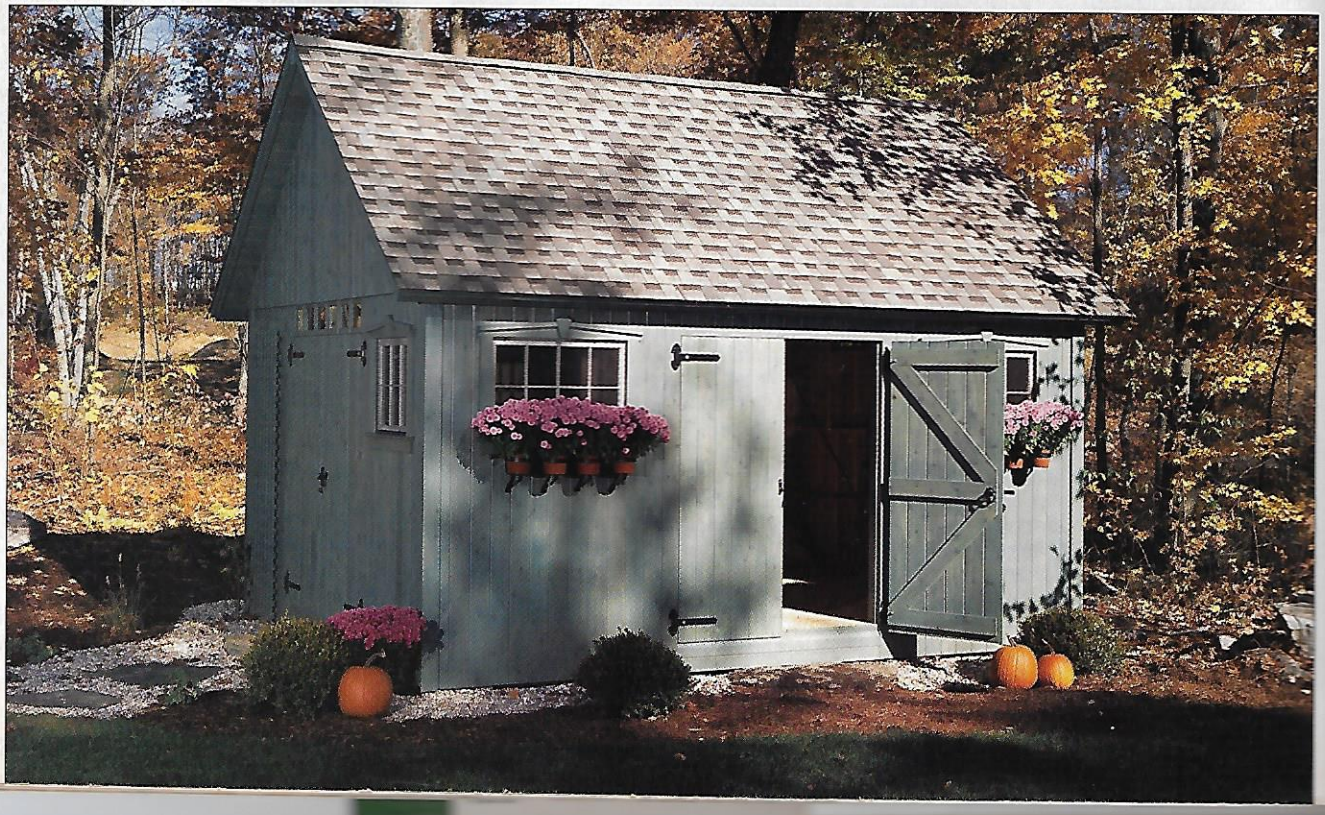
PROJECT

Shed Reckoning

Build this stylish, multipurpose outbuilding for your backyard.

BY JOSEPH TRUINI, Photos by Geoffrey Gross

Contrary to what you may see around the neighborhood, a backyard shed can be functional and beautiful. It can provide storage space and possess the architectural accents, decorative trim and splendor of a quality-built home. This handsome Colonial-style garden shed is proof that form and function can coexist in a backyard building. It isn't just practical, spacious and sturdy. It's also beautifully designed to be an asset—not an eyesore—to any property.



Scotts

GARDEN SHED

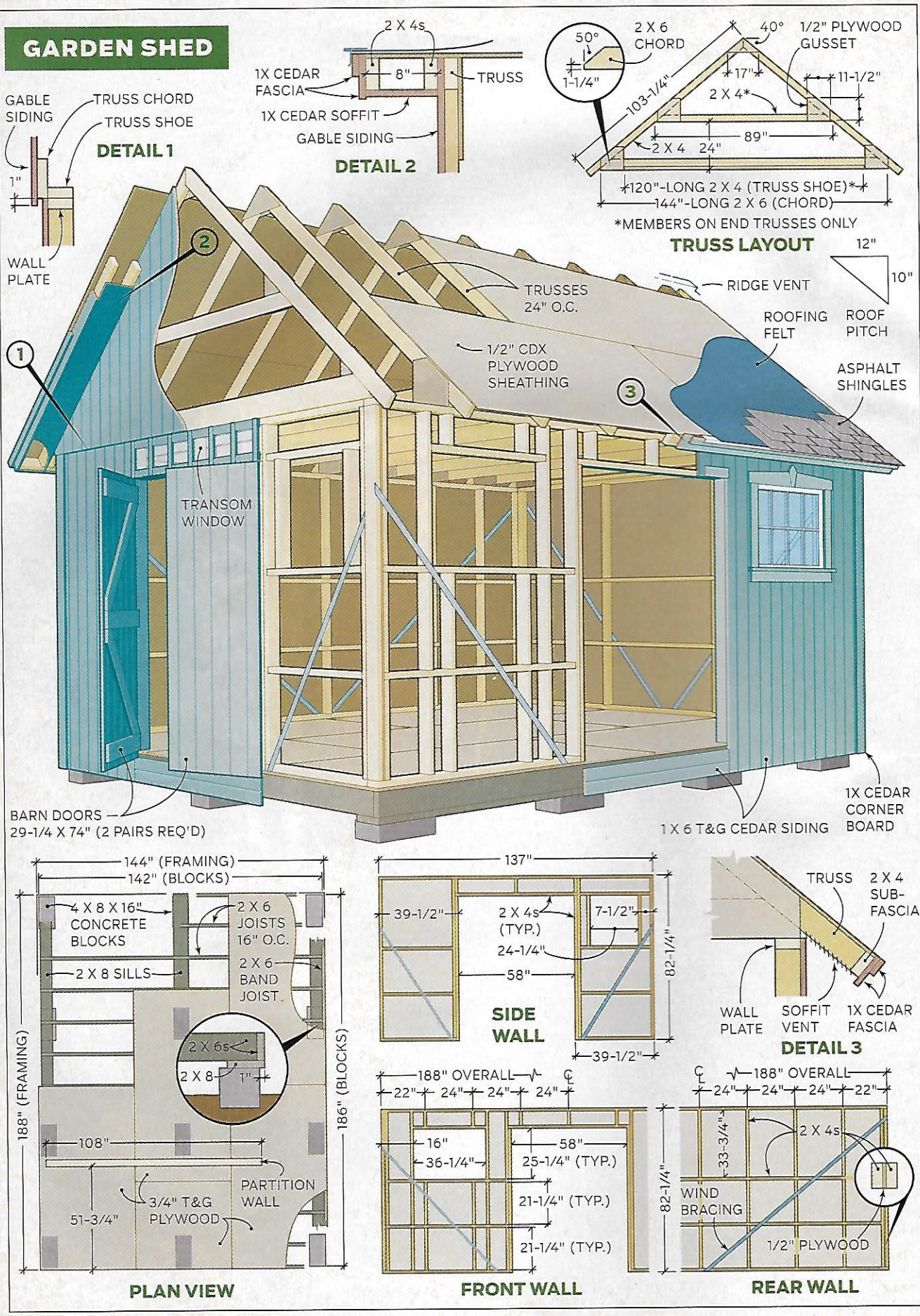


ILLUSTRATION BY EUGENE THOMPSON

The 12 x 16-ft. building has easy-to-install 1 x 6 vertical cedar siding. There are two pairs of double doors, three tilt-in barn-sash windows and a transom window over the gable-end doors. The roof is covered with architectural-style asphalt shingles, and outfitted with soffit vents and a continuous ridge vent.

The interior of the shed is divided into a 12 x 12-ft. space intended for general storage, and a 4 x 12-ft. potting area. Overhead, you can add a small loft for storing seasonal items.

With our drawing (facing page) in hand, construction is straightforward and requires only ordinary carpentry tools and commonly available building materials.

If you'd like more detailed plans, they're available for $29.95 from Better Barns, 126 Main St. S., Bethlehem, CT 06751; www.betterbarns.com. Better Barns also sells the traditional-style strap hinges and ring latches we used. We finished the building with a Cabot semitransparent Allagash stain (about $25 per gallon, Cabot Wood Care, 100 Hale St., Newburyport, MA 01950; www.cabotstain.com).

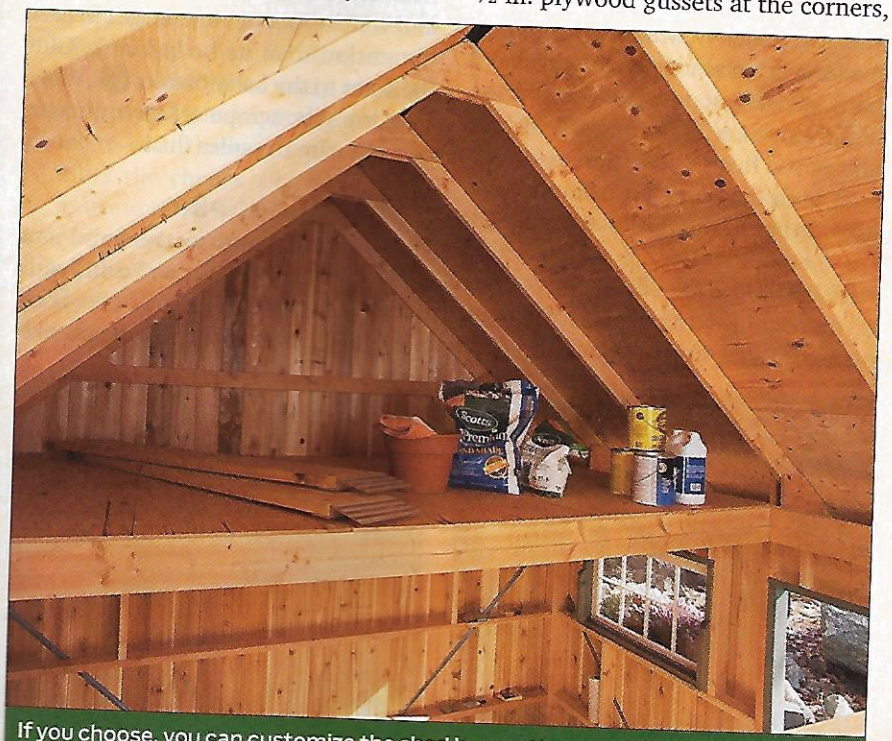
FLOOR FRAME DETAILS

The shed is supported on solid concrete blocks laid out in three rows and placed directly on the ground. If the building site isn't flat, level the earth or stack two or more blocks as required.

Build the floor frame using pressure-treated lumber. Place three 2 x 8 mudsills on top of the rows of blocks, and then lay 2 x 6 joists across the sills. Space the joists 16 in. on center and nail them to 2 x 6 perimeter band joists. Check the floor frame for level and, if necessary, slip asphalt-shingle shims underneath the band joists. For the shed floor, use ¾-in. tongue-and-groove ACX plywood, fastened to the joists with 8d galvanized nails.

BUILDING THE TRUSSES

The roof is framed with nine trusses that are assembled on the floor. Each roof truss is made up of two 2 x 4 rafters and a 2 x 6 bottom chord. Cut one end of each rafter to 40° so they'll form a 10-in. roof slope (10-in. rise to 12-in. run) when joined together at the peak. Fasten together the three boards that make up each truss using ½-in. plywood gussets at the corners, secured with construction adhesive and 1½-in. roofing nails.



If you choose, you can customize the shed by creating a small storage loft at one or both ends. Here, the 2 x 6 chords of central trusses are cut away after assembly and their cut ends are framed across. Then, a plywood deck is installed.

Barn-sash windows pivot at the sides to allow for ventilation. Siding, doors and trim are made of cedar.

ERECTING THE WALLS

Unlike a standard wall that has vertical 2 x 4 studs, these shed walls have horizontal purlins that provide nailing support for the siding.

Build the two long walls first. Frame the front wall to accommodate a 58-in.-wide door opening and two 24 x 36-in. windows. Nail the top and bottom wall plates to the end studs. Then, install the long purlins, followed by the vertical blocking.

With the walls flat on the floor, install the siding with 2½-in. ring-shanked siding nails. Tilt up the walls and fasten them with 3-in.-long deck screws. Temporarily hold each wall upright with a diagonal 2 x 4 brace.

Build the two gable-end walls, framing one with a 58-in.-wide door opening, a 24-in.-sq. window and a 10 x 59-in. transom window. Install the siding, and raise the gable-end walls between the front and rear walls.

ADDING THE ROOF

First install the two gable-end trusses. Then, place each standard truss directly over a line of vertical blocking. Drive a screw up through the underside of the top plate and into the bottom chord. Cover the trusses with ½-in. CDX plywood and install the shingles.

Finish up by building and hanging the batten doors, which are made from the same 1 x 6 cedar used for the siding. Then, nail on the window trim and install the barn-sash windows. **PM**

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