

HOW TO BUILD A FERAL CAT WINTER SHELTER

Materials

- hard Styrofoam sheet, 2 ft. wide, 8 ft. long, 2 inches thick
- one tube (that fits caulk gun) of clear silicone sealant (such as GE Window & Door Sealant) OR two smaller hand-squeezable tubes of clear silicone sealant
- vinyl remnant (18" x 20") OR three one-foot square pieces of thin linoleum tile with adhesive backing
- latex deck paint (approx. 1 quart)
(optional) contact paper - 4 feet of 20-inch wide

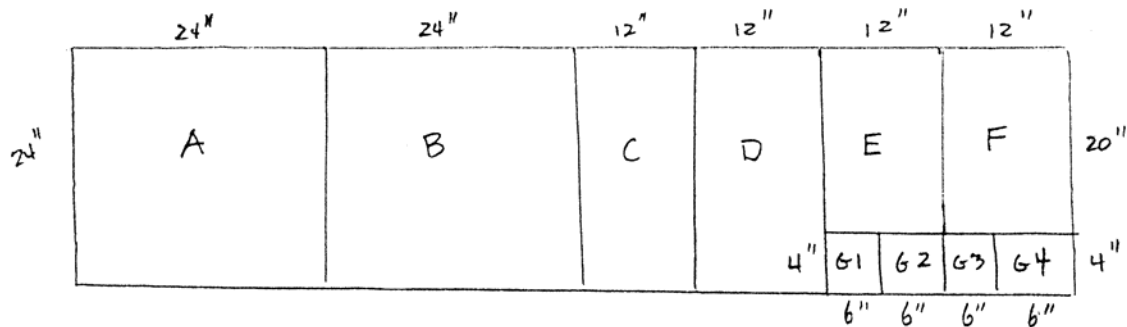
Tools

- **table saw**
- **utility knife (with extendable blade) or jig saw**
- **caulk gun**
- **painting equipment: brush/roller, paint tray, ground cloth**
- **felt tip marker**
- **yardstick**

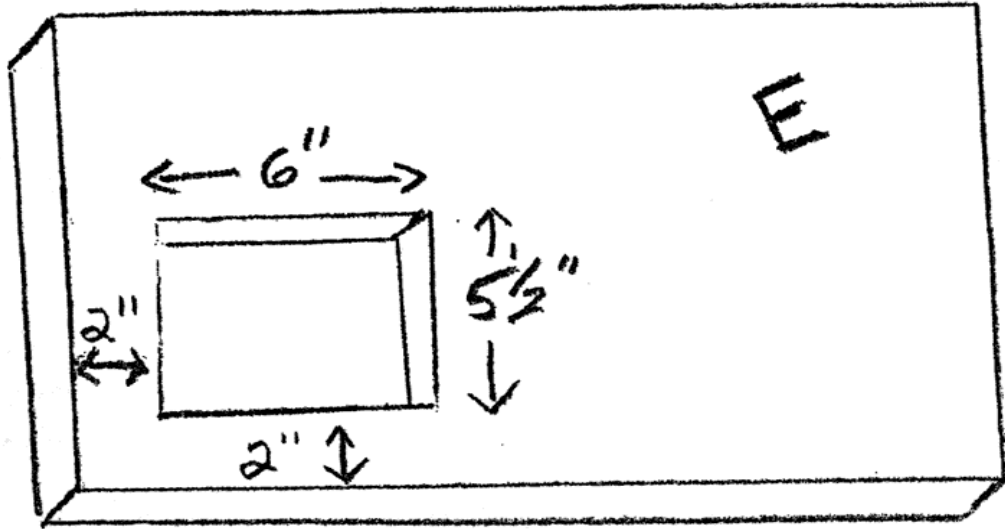
Instructions

1. Using table saw, cut the Styrofoam sheet into the following pieces:

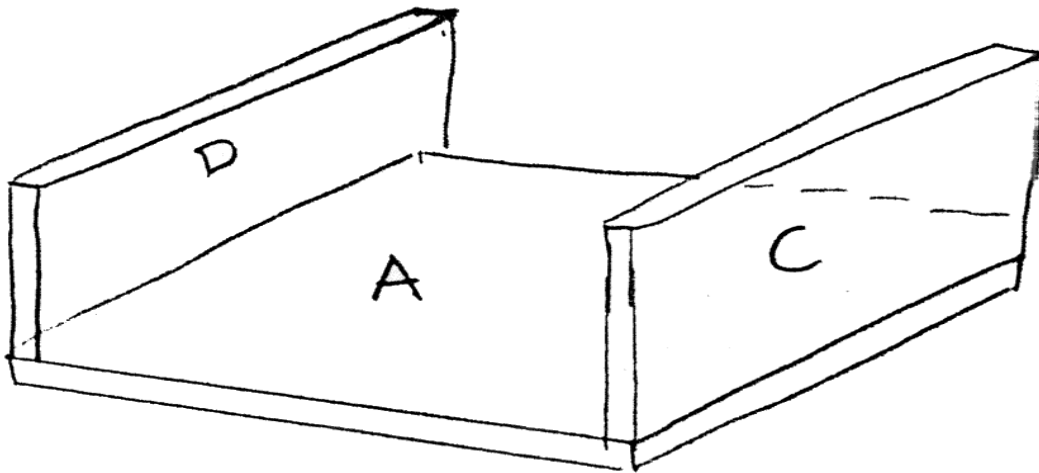
- two pieces of 24" x 24" (pieces A & B)
- two pieces of 12"x 24" (pieces C & D)
- two pieces of 12" x 20" (pieces E & F)
- four pieces of 4" x 6" (pieces G1, G2, G3 & G4)



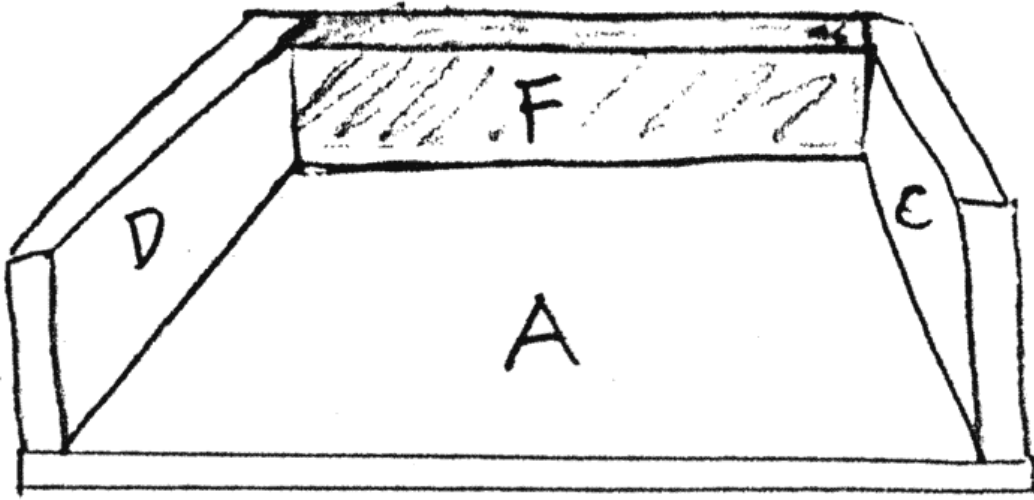
2. The first step is to cut out what will become the front door of the shelter. Take piece E (12" x 20"). Using the yardstick and felt pen, draw a rectangle that measures 5 ½" high and 6" wide, and that is located 2" from the right or left edge of piece E and 2" from the bottom. Use the utility knife (or preferably a jig saw) to cut out the rectangle:



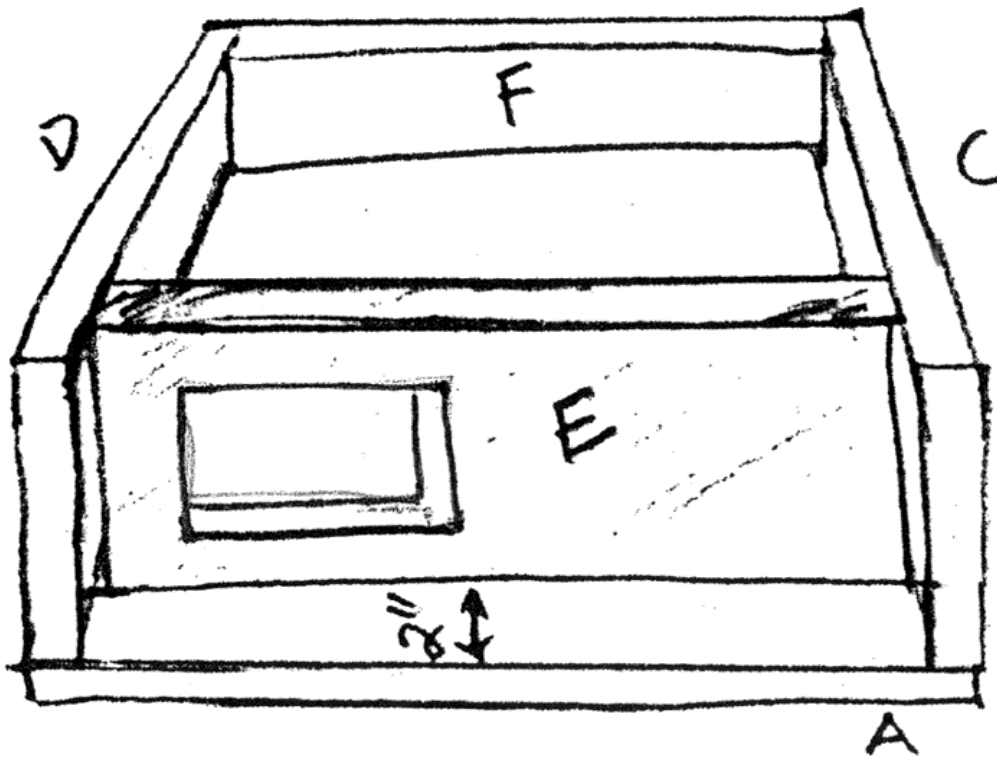
3. Next step is to line up the sides of the shelter onto the floor. First, place pieces C & D (the 12" x 24" pieces) onto the right and left outer edges of piece A (24" x 24").



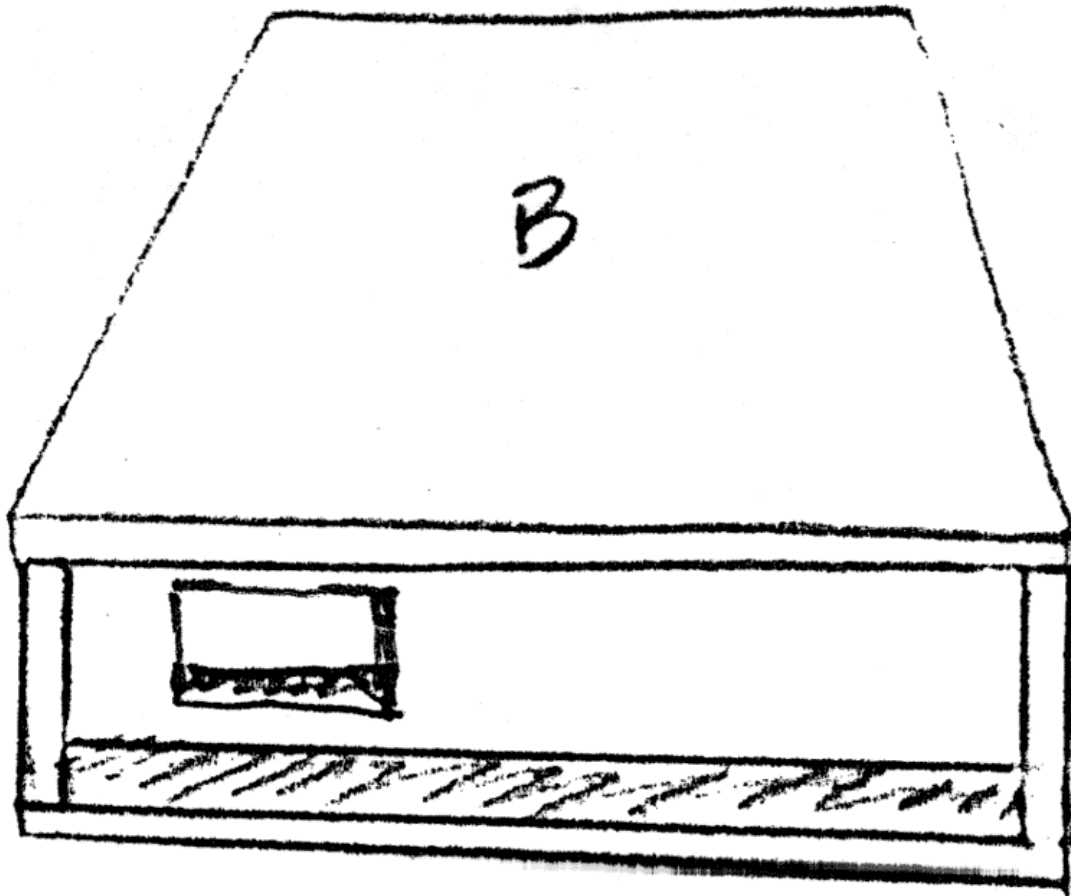
4. Next, place piece F (12" x 20") onto the back edge of piece A.



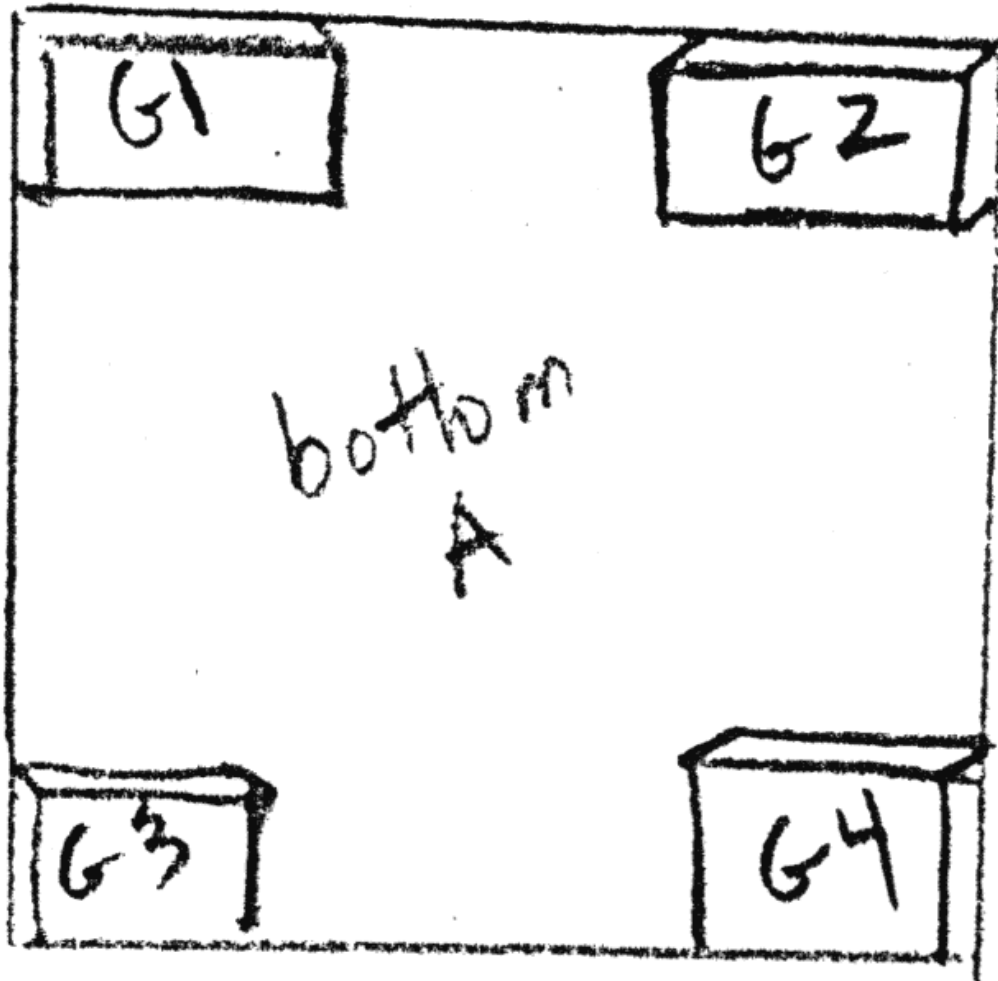
5. Finally, place piece E two inches back from the front edge of piece A, making sure the door is in the correct position:



6. Once you've made sure everything lines up, use the caulk gun to apply the silicone sealant onto the bottom of pieces C, D, E & F and glue them in place, one at a time. Let the glue dry for a few minutes.
7. [Optional] To prevent the cats from scratching the walls, place contact paper onto the interior walls. Do this by cutting (with the knife and yardstick) two 12" x 20" and two 12" x 18" pieces of contact paper and apply them to the interior walls of the shelter. Cut out the paper covering the front door.
8. Take the 18" x 20" piece of vinyl remnant and glue it to the floor of the shelter, OR take the three linoleum tiles and apply them to the floor, cutting the second and three pieces up to fit the floor space.
9. Next, attach the roof. Glue piece B onto the top of pieces C, D, E & F:



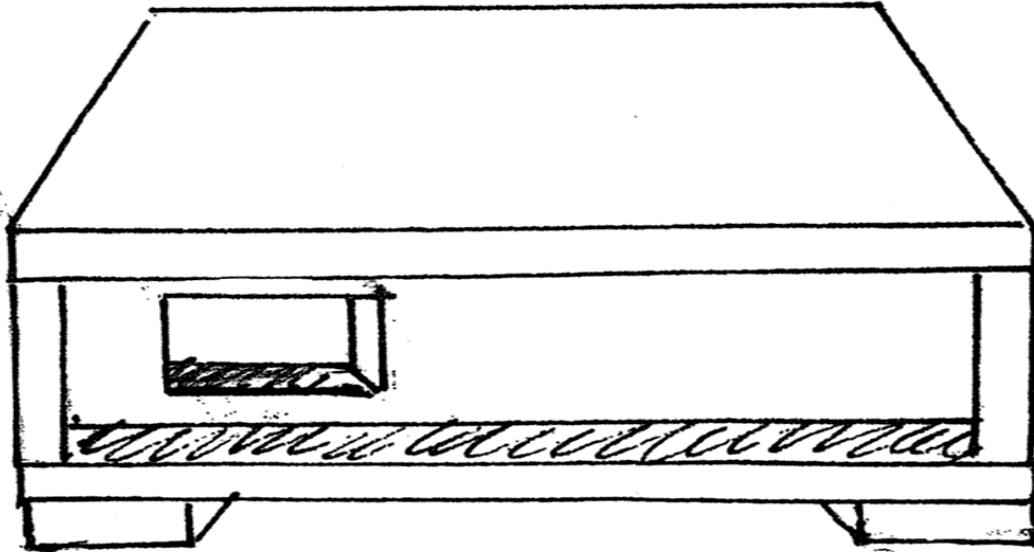
10. Then attach the legs. Glue pieces G1, G2, G3 & G4 onto the corners of the bottom of piece A.



11. Seal all seams and cracks of the shelter with silicone.

12. After the silicone glue has completely dried (usually 24 hours), paint the shelter with one or two coats of latex deck paint, matching the color to the surroundings where the shelter will be placed. (NOTE: the paint will not adhere to areas covered with the sealant. You may choose to paint all the pieces of the shelter BEFORE gluing them together to avoid this.)

13. [Optional]: You may eventually want to add a covering to the front door that the cats can easily pull open, such as a heavy cloth or thin piece of vinyl. You can glue or tape it on above the front door. It's recommended you wait until the cats are familiar with going in and out of the shelter before adding this.



COMPLETED SHELTER

SOME OUTDOOR TIPS:

The shelters are very light, so it may be necessary to weigh them down with a large rock on the roof, or wooden board, etc. The roof is strong enough to hold a reasonable amount of weight.

One way to break the wind and create more protection from rain is to place two shelters facing each other, and then place a board on top, spanning the two roofs.

We've used newspaper to cover the floors - it's cheap and easy to change. Towels and blankets can actually draw away body heat and should not be used. The best floor insulation, if you can get it, is straw or hay (assuming there are no allergies among the cats).

Small bowls of food can be placed inside the shelters, **BUT NEVER PUT WATER INSIDE!!!!** For winter protection, it's just as important the shelter be dry as it is warm.

Draw the cats inside the shelter with tasty food, catnip, etc.