

Victorian Birdfeeder

Add a Touch of Elegance to Your Yard with This Spectacular 30"-high Feeder

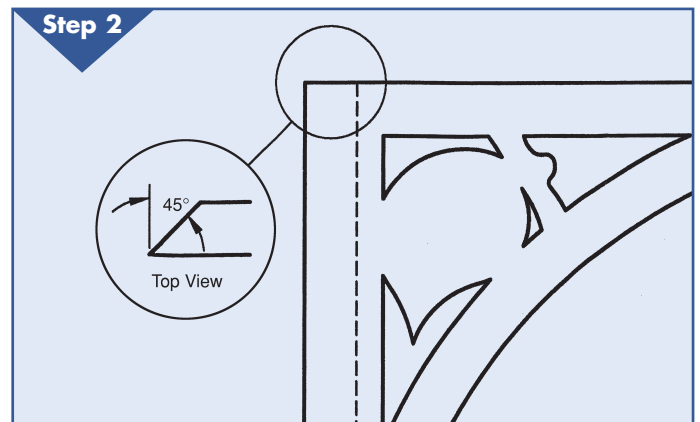


Elegant, inexpensive and easy to make. Could there be features more appealing in a scrolled project? The ivy leaf scrollwork and the all-white painted finish are reminiscent of a 19th-century Victorian home. Yet it's made from 1/2"-thick exterior plywood so the project is inexpensive to make.

For simplicity of construction, the roof pieces do not require bevels. When the roof pieces are assembled, the gaps where the roof boards meet are covered with wood dowels. The last component to add to the feeder is the tray. It's important to note that the tray diameter cannot be larger than the 10 1/2"-diameter access hole in the sidepieces.

Be the envy of your neighborhood when you hang this beauty for all to see.

Step 1: Gather the materials. Except for the 3"-diameter wood ball finial at the top of the project, all parts are cut from 1/2" exterior plywood. Purchase a 4' x 8' sheet. Finding a sheet that is not "curled" is sometimes difficult. MDO (Medium Density Overlay) works quite well. This plywood has resin-impregnated paper on one or both sides, which makes it extremely smooth. See TIP box for sources of MDO.



Step 2: Cutting the plywood. Use a table saw to cut the 4' x 8' sheet into manageable pieces. Begin by ripping a 12" x 8' long strip to make the four Side and the four Bottom Trim pieces. Note that 45-degree miters are cut on the opposite sides of each of these pieces. I prefer to cut the miters after I rip the 12"-wide piece of plywood. The reason is that the 4' x 8' plywood sheet is cumbersome to handle even if you have a helper. Although you could set your saw blade to 45-degrees and then cut the 12"-wide strip, I feel this would make it even more challenging to saw it.

Step 3: Bevel the edges and cross cut. After you cut the 12"-wide strip, tilt the table saw blade to 45-degrees and cut the bevel along one side of the plywood strip, then turn the strip end-for-end and cut the bevel on the other side.

Once you've completed the bevels cuts on each edge of the 12"-wide strip of plywood, "cross-cut" the four 14" Sidepieces and the four 3 3/4" Bottom Trim pieces.

Step 4: Scroll saw the ivy leaves.

With these pieces now of a suitable size to be scroll sawn, transfer the ivy leaf patterns and the circle in each of the sidepieces. Cut to the finished shape on your scroll saw. You can either make photocopies of the pattern and spray them with temporary bond spray adhesive, or simply use transfer paper to get the patterns onto the wood.

Continue to cut out the remaining pieces as listed in the Materials & Tools list. Again, it is easiest to cut some pieces on a table saw.

Step 5: Prepare for assembly. Drill the 1/4"-diameter drain holes on the Top and Bottom pieces. Cut four 11 1/2" lengths from 1/2"-diameter dowel rod. Finally, sand a flat spot on one side of the 3"-diameter wood ball.

Step 6: Assembling the main box shape. Use water-resistant glue for the principle attachment method. Wire brads can also be used on corners and other accessible areas, if desired, to help hold them while the glue dries.

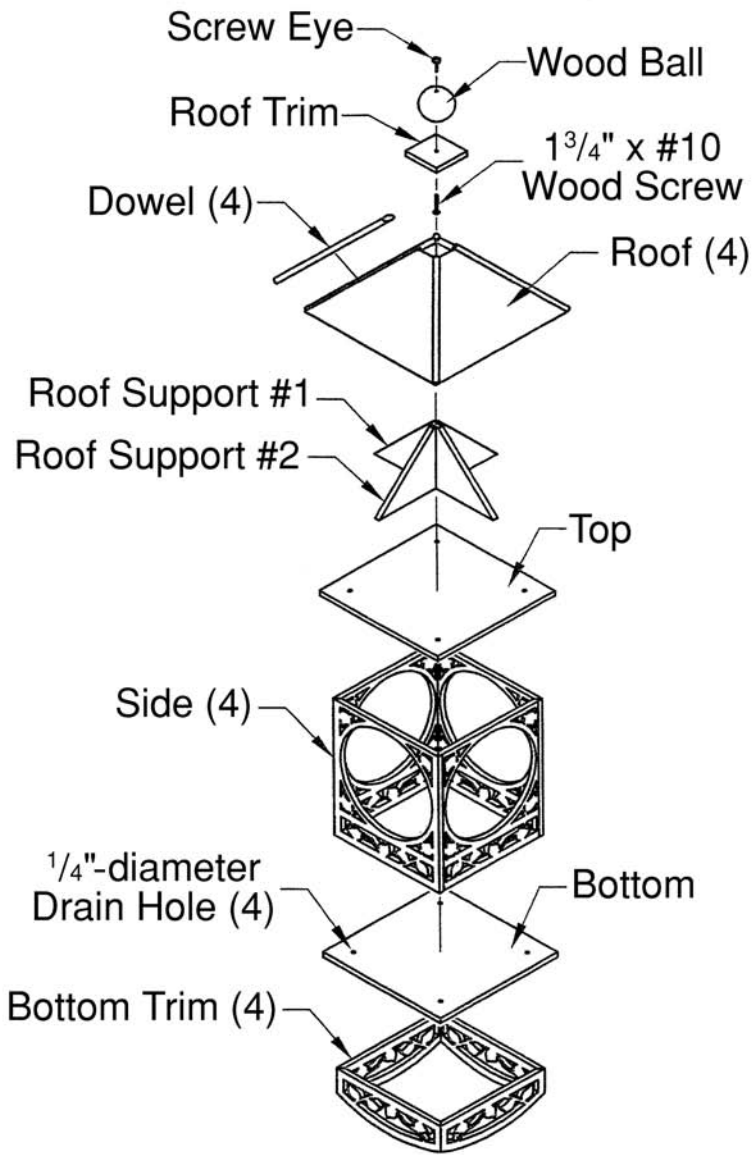
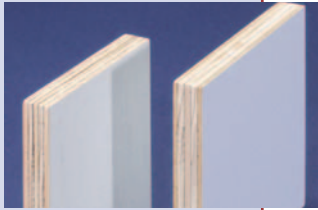
Start with the Sidepieces. Coat the edges with a generous amount of glue and clamp the four Sidepieces with strap clamps. Masking tape can also be used to help hold the corners together. Check the assembly to be sure it is square.

Assemble the Bottom Trim pieces in the same manner to make the Bottom Trim assembly. Glue the Bottom piece to the Bottom Trim assembly and the Side assembly.

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Sources of Medium Density Overlay (MDO)

If your lumberyard doesn't carry it, ask them if they will special order it for you. If they can't, look under "Sign Painters" in your yellow pages. Sign painters typically use MDO plywood and will likely order it for you or tell you where you can purchase it. Photo courtesy of Harbor Quality Products (www.harborquality.com).



Assembly Drawing

Step 7: Assemble the roof. Interlock the Roof Support #1 and Roof Support #2 pieces and attach them to the Top piece. Attach the Top/Roof Support assembly to the top of the Side assembly.

Pre-drill screw holes and attach the wood ball to the Roof Trim piece with a wood screw. Attach the Roof Trim piece to the top of the Roof Support pieces. Attach the Roof pieces to the Roof Support pieces. Bevel the ends of the dowels so they fit up against the bottom of the Roof Trim piece. Glue the dowels in the creases formed by the Roof pieces. Paintable exterior caulk works well to hold the dowels in place as it will fill any gaps and will also serve as an adhesive.

Step 8: Prime and paint the assembly. Begin by painting a coat of white acrylic latex primer over the entire project. This primer is available in most hardware stores and is intended for priming wood on the exterior of houses.

Sand the primer with 220-grit sandpaper for a smooth finish. Now paint the topcoat with exterior acrylic latex paint in the color of your choice. This paint is sometimes sold in hardware stores as “Trim and Shutter Paint.”

Step 9: The finishing touches. Your feeder is now ready to place outside. You can drill a pilot hole in the top of the wood ball and insert a screw eye to hang the project or you can mount the project by attaching the bottom piece to the top of a 4 x 4 wood post.

A 10"-diameter plastic or clay pottery tray is set inside the project to hold the bird food. Use the type of tray commonly sold for drip trays under large plastic or clay flowerpots. They are available at lawn and garden centers and greenhouses.

Place the birdfeeder saucer inside the project and add birdseed. Stand back and enjoy as your feathered friends fly in for their treats.



About the Author

As the owner of Meisel Hardware Specialties, Paul Meisel is quite busy, yet he still finds time to write for *Scroll Saw Workshop*. His last article, “Jack-O-Lantern Light” appeared in Fall 2003 (Issue #12.) In Summer 2003 (Issue #11), he wrote “Keepsake Trinket Boxes.”

SPECIAL SOURCES

Meisel Hardware Specialties

Contact them at 800-441-9870 or visit their website at www.meiselwoodhobby.com.

MATERIALS & TOOLS

Materials:

- ½" exterior plywood (4' x 8'), cut as follows:
 - 1 each, ½" x 3½" x 3½" (Roof Trim)
 - 4 each, ½" x 3½" x 12" (Bottom Trim)
 - 1 each, ½" x 6¼" x 13½" (Roof Support #1)
 - 1 each, ½" x 6¼" x 13½" (Roof Support #2)
 - 4 each, ½" x 9¼" x 14¼" (Roof)
 - 4 each, ½" x 12" x 14" (Side)
 - 2 each, ½" x 13½" x 13½" (Top/Bottom)
- 4 each, ½"-diameter x 11¼"-long wood dowel
- 1 each, 1⅞" Screw Eye (Meisel Specialty Hardware #3290 or equal)
- 1 each, 3"-diameter Wood Ball Finial (Meisel Specialty Hardware #1350 or equal)
- Sandpaper, 220 grit
- Masking tape
- White exterior acrylic latex primer
- White exterior acrylic latex paint
- 10"-diameter saucer
- Water-resistant glue

Tools:

- Table saw
- Drill press
- 2 each, Strap Clamp (Meisel Specialty Hardware #4221 or equal)
- Olson #446-R (12 teeth per inch) reverse tooth blade (Meisel Specialty Hardware #446R or equal)

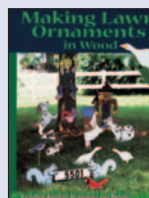
FURTHER READING



By Paul Meisel

How-to Book of Birdhouses & Feeders

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