

table for 8

It only takes a day to build a classic outdoor picnic table

EDITED BY FRANK GARDNER

There are good reasons for this being the classic picnic table. It's sturdy, weather resistant and cheap to build. It easily fits six to eight adults around it. To seat a smaller party of four, cut down the overhang equally at both ends or reduce the length to 1200mm (see Diagram 1).

CHOOSING THE TIMBER

The materials you choose depend on a couple of factors. If the table

will be staying outside in all kinds of weather it's best to use seasoned hardwood or western red cedar. With hardwood you need to drill pilot and clearance holes before screwing the pieces together.

If the table is to be painted or kept undercover, it can be made from pine.

Choose the timber carefully for this project and find pieces free from splits and splinters, twists and bows. Most timber yards will cut it to size for you for an extra cost. ▶

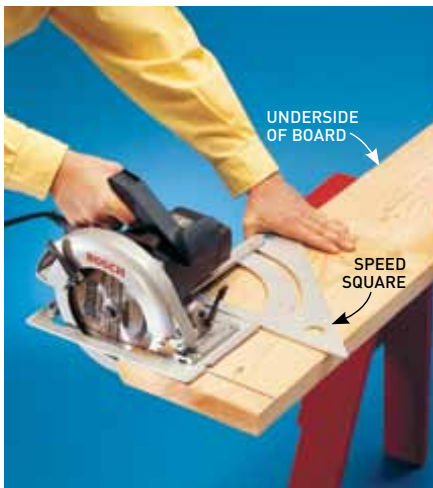
The complete picnic package has a sturdy table with benches to seat eight adults.



COST

DO IT YOURSELF
1 day \$205
HAVE IT DONE
Half a day \$405

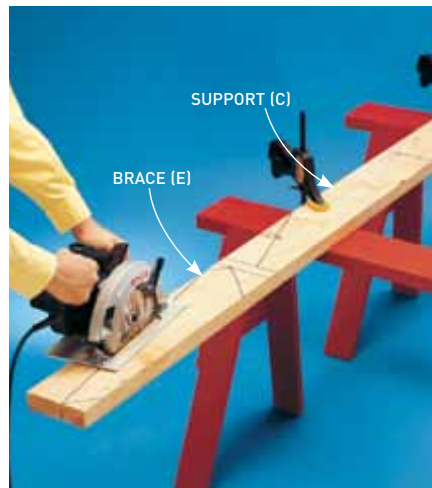
build a picnic table



1 Cut the top boards

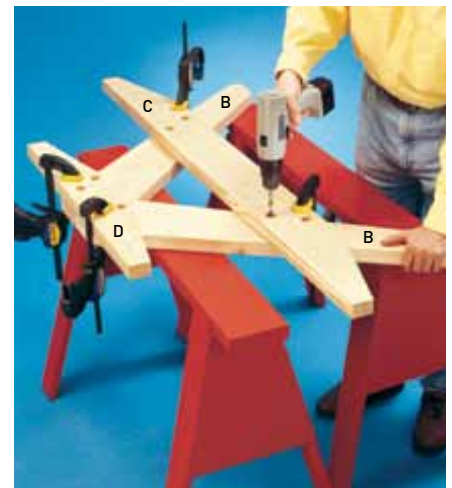
Using a circular saw, cut the seat and top boards to length, cutting away cracks or splits that may be on the ends of the boards. Use a saw guide to cut the ends.

TIP When using a circular saw, cut with the underside of the board facing up to avoid rough edges on the finished surface.



2 Cut the leg pieces

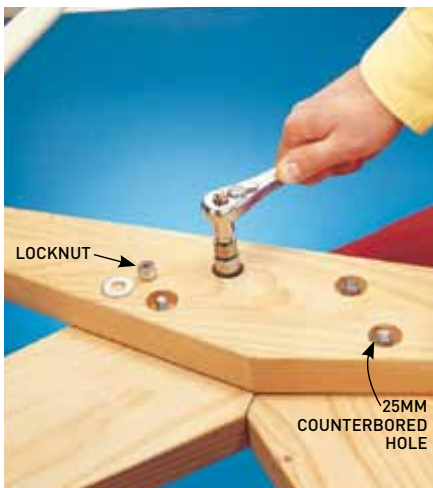
Cut templates for the leg braces (E) and legs (B) then cut to shape. Cut tapered angles on cross pieces (C and D) and cut to length (see Diagram 2). Use a belt sander and 80-grit sanding belt to smooth. Sand edges by clamping boards upright between the sawhorses and use a belt sander, or sand by hand.



3 Put the frames together

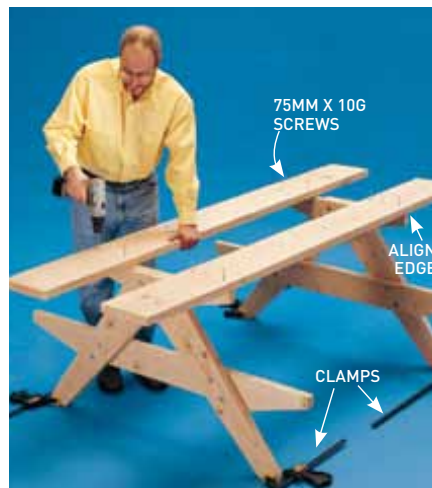
Assemble the A-frames, clamping the top support (D) and seat support (C) in place (see Diagram 1). Drill clearance holes for the cuphead bolts and counterbore for nuts and washers on the inside (see Diagram 3).

TIP Drill holes just large enough to fit the bolts snugly for a rigid frame.



4 Assemble the frame bolts

Hammer the cuphead bolts into the holes. Insert them all the way to seat the square part of the bolt shafts securely in the timber (see Diagram 1). Tighten the nuts with a ratchet and socket. Use nylon-insert locknuts to hold the joint tight and prevent it from loosening in the future.



5 Assemble table top

Clamp the feet to position the A-frame vertically. Set the tabletop boards in place so the outer ones are flush with the ends of the supports (D). When the ends are flush and the gaps are uniform, screw the boards down. Ensure the tabletop is square by checking all diagonals are equal.



6 Attach the leg braces

From underneath, align and mark the spot where the leg braces (E) land on the centre top board. Pre-drill and screw-fix in place. Position centre brace (D) and screw-fix in place. To finish, position the seat boards flush with the outside edge of the support and screw-fix. Apply chosen finish.

DIAGRAM 1 TABLE SET-UP
(all measurements in mm)

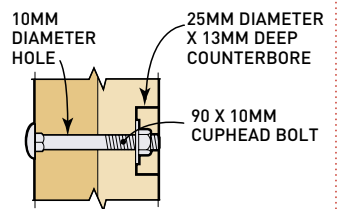
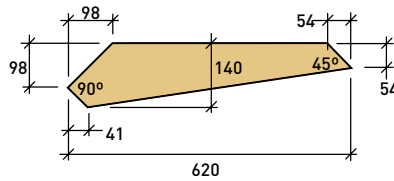
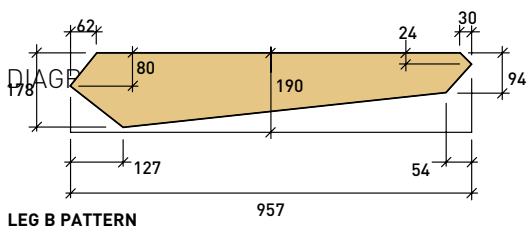
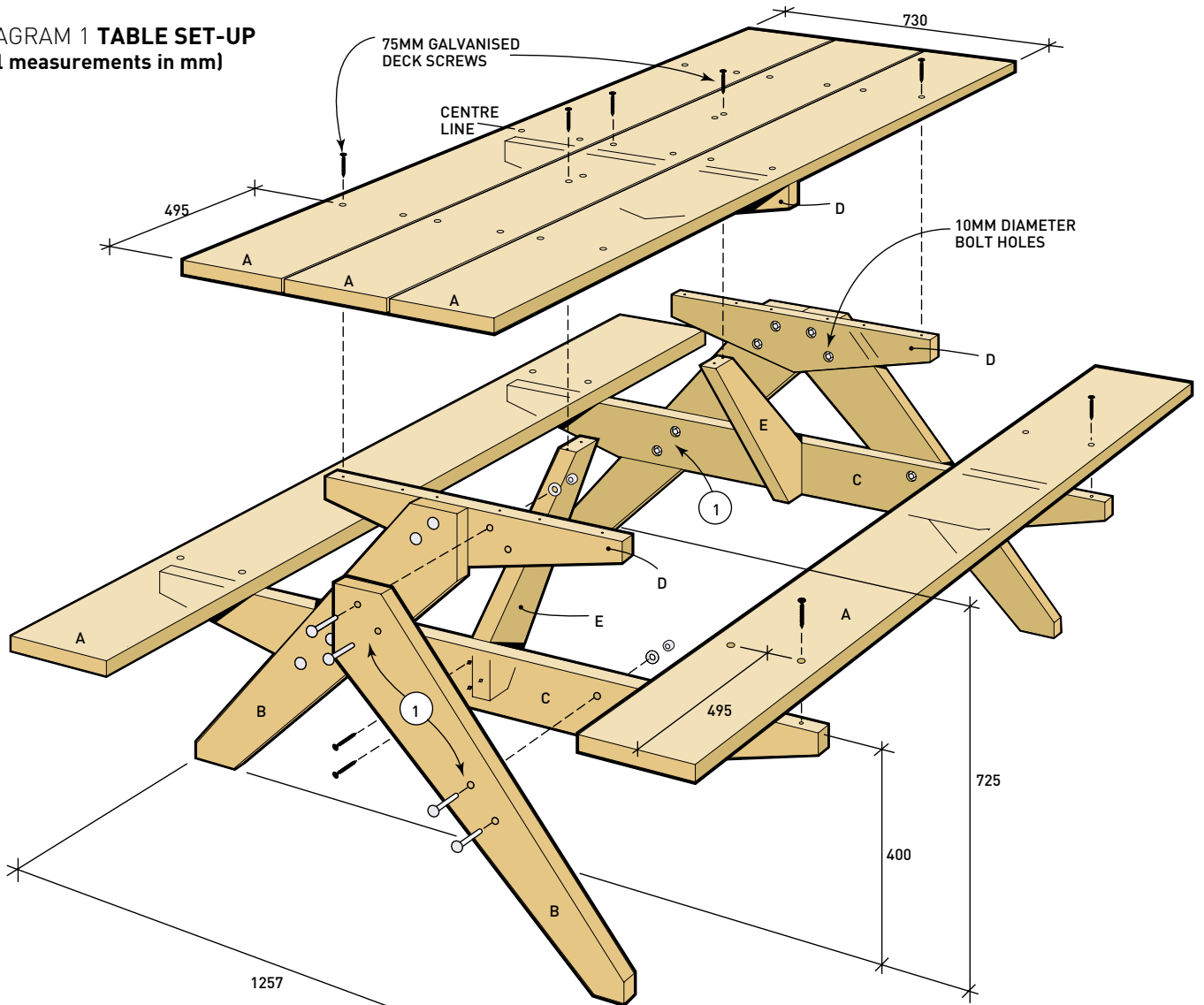
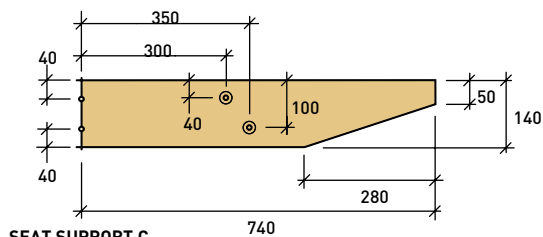
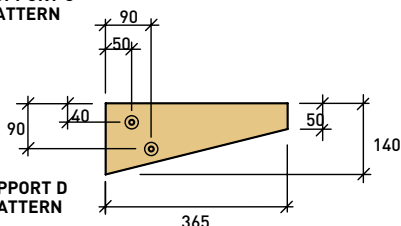


DIAGRAM 3 JOINING DETAIL ①



SEAT SUPPORT C
HALF PATTERN



TOP SUPPORT D
HALF PATTERN

CUTTING LIST

(all measurements in mm)

KEY NO.	ITEM	SIZE	
A	Seats and tabletop	2280 x 240 x 45	5
B	Legs	957 x 190 x 45	4
C	Seat supports	1480 x 140 x 45	2
D	Top supports	730 x 140 x 45	3
E	Diagonal braces	620 x 140 x 45	2

Visit www.handyman.net.au for tools, materials and costs.