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Community DIY Book

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Book Houses

By Randy Bailey

ERNEST Toys, Tiny & Tree Houses

RE-claimed, Salvage & New

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“Bookhouses or lending library as some are called are a joy to create and can be super simple or intensely complicated. I am a carpenter and have been renovating home for over 40 years. For me, the freedom and creative license to do whatever I want is very fulfilling.

Materials List:

1. One salvaged kitchen wall cabinet

I use salvaged kitchen cabinets for the house frame. 12-24” wide by 30”-42” tall by 12” deep are good sizes. Plywood box construction is best, if available, as it is the lightest. These cabs usually have 2-3 shelves. Resource typically has assorted options. Condition or type of wood is not critical if you are re-siding the box exterior.

2. Plywood or OSB sheathing

used to cover back and sides with enough thickness your siding nails do not penetrate into cabinet interior.

3. One five foot wood 4x4

or something similar you can attach to bookhouse bottom and place into ground. 4x4 Cedar fence posts from blown over fences work well.

4. 1-2x12

same width as cabinet to solid connect bottom of cabinet to top of 4x4 post

5. Roofing material

light weight is suggested; corrugated metal roofing, sheet metal scraps, aluminum cans, etc. Tar-paper, or other roofing underlayment

6. Misc. 2x wood to cut/mill down and frame roof.

For exterior trim I like redwood and cedar because they are soft and easy to work with.

7. Glass or plexiglass for cabinet doors

If you get lucky with a cabinet that has glass, great. If you are adding window to cabinet door, I suggest plexiglass for less chance of breaking.

Tool List:

We might have what you're looking for in the Tool Library!
Tools.ResourceCentral.org



1. Table saw

or at a minimum a circular saw. I typically am cutting down larger 2x stock to create smaller siding and trim materials.

2. Chop box/miter saw

Power version suggested

3. Air compressor with trim nailers and small 1/4" crown stapler.

As so many parts are small, nailing or screwing by hand is challenging. A micro-pinner is big plus for very small detail areas.

4. Cordless impact driver and drill with bits

5. Work table or saw horses to build your house on

6. Tape, pencil, square, safety glasses, hearing protection, etc.



Directions

1. Pick your theme. A plain painted box can be just as special as an intricate gingerbread trimmed house.
2. Design roof so rain does not drain across front of house door. I have mostly been creating a 45 degree gable pitch roof as it makes all the cuts simple, either 90 degrees or 45 degrees and gives nice gable ends for special trim details.
3. Frame the roof on top of your box and firmly attach roof rafters to cabinet box (over time you will be carrying and picking up the entire house by the roof so it must be strong)
4. Attach roof sheathing solidly to framing. Ample overhangs protect the siding front and rear siding of house. A zero-overhang house will have moisture issues sooner than one with overhangs. -porches, cars busting out, etc.



Directions



5. Install your roof sheathing- select the thickness of this that will work with your roofing material and fasteners. You can install roofing now or later.
6. Design and install the roof gable trim, small wood, small shingles, metal, etc. Be creative!
7. Cut 2x12 base to snugly fit into recess at bottom of cabinet or directly to cabinet bottom. Attach this 2x to 4x4 post centered with long wood screws and add knee braces or 45 degree for stability. Keep this base plate and post separate from house.
8. Install siding on two sides and back extending about ½” below bottom of cabinet box or base plate for water drainage. Keep in mind how your siding relates to cabinet door swinging and opening.
9. Replace original wood panel in cabinet door with plexiglass (unless you plan on keeping the original glass to your cabinet).
10. Paint or stain your book house whatever you want.
11. Add some form of latch to keep door closed in times of wind for site install.

Directions

12. Attach base plate/post to bottom of house with multiple wood screws.
13. Dig an 8" +/- round hole in ground 24"-28" +/- deep.
14. Set post, with house attached, into hole and determine what height bottom of cabinet wants to be above grade. 30" is suggested for kid access to bottom shelf. Cut bottom of 4x4 post or dig deeper as needed to achieve wanted height.
15. Backfill 4x4 post with mixture of gravel and site dirt. Compact all sides as you go. No need for concrete. Level or tilt house as you want as you backfill the hole around post.
16. Fill with your favorite books you're willing to share!



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Fun Tips & Tricks

Get creative with your decorating!

Create windows and doors on sides of cabinet boxes as you install siding. Side porches, cars busting out, etc.

Copper piping can be hammered straight and flat and used for added trim.

Copper grounding wire (#8 or #6 gage) can be hammered with ball-peen hammer to look like wrought iron and used as window dividers.

Solar yard lights can be modified to have panel on roof and light over door or inside cabinet.

Happy creating! Thanks for sharing your project with us, Randy!



We're still building this book,
share your project with us!
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