

YOUR FREE READER'S COMPANION

The Backyard Build Pack

A companion to Outdoor Furniture Building Bible · by Caleb Sutton

Thanks for picking up the book. This companion is the part you actually carry out to the shop: the cut lists, the wood chart, the finishing schedule, and a one-page safety card. Print it, dog-ear it, get glue on it.

Keep this next to your saw. Everything here matches the methods in the book — it just puts the numbers where you can reach them mid-cut. — Caleb

Five Starter Projects — Cut Lists

Lumber sizes are nominal (a "2x4" is actually 1.5" x 3.5"). All cuts assume construction-grade cedar or treated pine unless noted. Always dry-fit before glue or screws.

1. Simple Garden Bench (4 ft)

Part	Qty	Material	Length
Legs	4	2x4	16 in
Seat slats	5	2x4	48 in
Front/back aprons	2	2x4	45 in
Side aprons	2	2x4	11 in
Cross supports	2	2x4	11 in

Fasteners: 2.5" exterior screws + waterproof glue. Pre-drill every leg joint.

2. Adirondack Chair (classic)

Part	Qty	Material	Length
Rear legs / stringers	2	1x6	36 in
Front legs	2	2x4	21 in
Seat slats	6	1x4	20 in
Back slats	7	1x3	36 in (taper top)
Arms	2	1x6	28 in

The seat stringer curve is the whole comfort secret — trace the template in Chapter 6 once and reuse it.

3. Picnic Table (6 ft, A-frame)

Part	Qty	Material	Length
Tabletop boards	5	2x6	72 in
Bench boards	4	2x6	72 in
Legs	4	2x6	34 in (cut 30° both ends)
Top cleats	2	2x4	28 in
Bench supports	2	2x6	60 in

4. Planter Box (raised, 3 ft)

Part	Qty	Material	Length
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Side boards	8	1x6	36 in
End boards	8	1x6	14 in
Corner posts	4	2x2	18 in
Bottom slats	5	1x4	14 in

Leave 1/8" gaps between bottom slats for drainage. Line with landscape fabric, not plastic.

5. Potting / Work Bench

Part	Qty	Material	Length
Legs	4	4x4	34 in
Top frame long	2	2x4	48 in
Top frame short	2	2x4	21 in
Top boards	6	1x6	48 in
Lower shelf	4	1x6	45 in

Wood Selection — by Climate & Budget

Wood	Best for	Outdoor life	Cost	Notes
Western Red Cedar	Most climates, fine work	15-20 yrs	\$\$\$	Light, stable, naturally rot-resistant
Redwood	Dry/hot West	20+ yrs	\$\$\$\$	Beautiful, pricey, getting scarce
Treated Pine	Wet/humid, ground contact	15-25 yrs	\$	Let it dry 2-4 wks before finishing
White Oak	Heirloom pieces	20+ yrs	\$\$\$\$	Heavy, hard on blades, gorgeous
Douglas Fir	Budget structural	8-12 yrs	\$\$	Must seal; not for ground contact
Cypress	Humid South	20+ yrs	\$\$\$	Excellent rot resistance, regional

Rules of thumb:

- Anything touching soil — treated pine rated for ground contact, full stop.
- Tabletops and arms (skin contact) — cedar or redwood, smoother and cooler in sun.
- Fasteners outdoors — stainless or hot-dipped galvanized only. Regular screws bleed rust stains within a season.

Finishing & Weatherproofing Schedule

Day of build

Sand to 120 grit (150 on arms/seats). Knock off every sharp edge with a sanding block — outdoor furniture lives against bare legs.

Before first finish

Wipe with a damp rag, let dry fully. Treated lumber: wait until it stops feeling cool/damp (2-4 weeks).

Finish options

Finish	Look	Reapply	Best for
Penetrating oil (teak/linseed)	Natural, matte	Yearly	Cedar, oak
Exterior spar varnish	Glossy, film	2-3 yrs	Arms, tabletops
Solid stain	Painted look	3-5 yrs	Treated pine, fir
Leave bare	Silver-gray patina	Never	Cedar, cypress (structural)

Yearly upkeep (15 minutes)

Hose off, let dry, scuff lightly with a maroon pad, wipe one fresh coat of oil. That's the whole secret to furniture that lasts a decade.

Shop Safety + Tool Card

The 6 tools that build everything here

1. Circular saw or miter saw (square crosscuts)
2. Drill/driver + countersink bit
3. Speed square + tape measure
4. 4-6 clamps (you always want more)
5. Random-orbit sander
6. Eye + ear protection (non-negotiable)

Before every cut

- Eyes and ears on. Every time, even the quick one.
- Check the offcut path — never trap the cutoff between blade and fence.
- Mark with an X on the waste side so you cut the right edge of the line.
- Support long stock; don't let it tip the saw.

Pre-drill rule

Hardwood and anything near an end-grain edge: pre-drill and countersink. Splitting a finished leg on the last screw is the most common heartbreak in the shop.

One habit that changes everything

End every session by sweeping, putting the tools back, and writing tomorrow's first cut on a scrap of tape stuck to the bench. You'll start fast and finish more projects. It's the small thing that the email series picks up on.

That's the pack. Build the bench first — it's forgiving, useful in a weekend, and it teaches every joint you'll reuse. When you've got something built, I'd love to hear about it (and the next email will tell you exactly how that helps the book reach the next builder).

Happy building,
Caleb Sutton