

## In the Workshop

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*Even if you feel your key tools up until now have only been gaffer tape and WD40, it can be amazing how much more can be achieved with a saw, glue and some screws. Be prepared to broaden your horizons this year.*

Hi Everybody. I'm just an ordinary beekeeper that is conscious of the cost of beekeeping. I have built over 300 hives in my time and could only do this through repurposing, up-cycling and improvisation. This series will take you through how to build a hive from the ground up using freely available materials where possible.

### Is a workshop needed?

Not really, unless you really want to really get into hive building. The minimum requirements are a flat surface (60cm square or larger), a saw, a tape measure/rule, a claw hammer (for nail removal) and a screwdriver. If you have power tools available, that helps when you want to make batches of items. Glue is useful, either waterproof PVA glue or, if you want to go somewhat up-market, some Gorilla glue. The trick here generally is to just be a little organised. Have your tools available and kept in good order. A quality tool in good condition will save you much frustration and contributions to the swear box.



## Where to get the wood from?

Many places have some waste wood available. If you look for it, you will find it. Always ask permission to take the wood. If you explain why you want it, you almost always end up with an open invitation to come back as often as you want to take all you want. Remember, most places have to pay to have waste wood removed; you are doing them a favour. If you can find pallets, look for the ones that have the slats running the longer length as a preference. This covers almost all cutting eventualities and reduces the number of nails you have to deal with. Pallets should have a mark burnt onto them. HT denotes Heat Treated (i.e. chemical free; MB treatment was banned in UK in 2010).



If you think getting some nails out of a piece of pallet wood is frustrating, just go to a local timber yard and see how much it costs to buy the equivalent piece of wood. Bear in mind that the pallet wood is almost free of any warping or twists. By default, it has been properly seasoned just by being previously used.





## Hive stand construction

OK, so let's start from the ground up with the hive stand design. Pallets are normally 1m x 1.2m so your stand can be made to different widths depending upon your requirements. A 60cm wide stand will have space for a hive and to store a frame or two. A 120cm wide stand will hold a couple of hives with space to spare.



The cross-pieces of wood have a useful length dimension of around 360 to 370mm. This will allow a brood/super/dummy board frame to sit nicely in place off the ground whilst dabbling inside the hive.

Notice that the cross piece is at an angle. It's about 10 degrees but it's nothing critical, you can even have the pieces attached vertically if you wish. Each cross piece is screwed in place with four screws, two on each side. A 60mm long screw is a sensible minimum length. 75mm decking screws are absolutely fine. Add some glue to the end of the cross piece to make a more permanent and robust joint.

The leg is a slightly strange design. It can just be a straight cut of wood if you wish; just glue the mating faces and screw in place with three or more screws, each about 40mm long. This specific design of leg allows the legs to sit in a slightly splayed fashion. More aesthetically pleasing and, perhaps, slightly more stable than a straight vertical leg.



The rounded bases of the leg are partly just for looks.

## Download

To download some free of charge sketches, parts list and dimensions for the hive stand, please visit [www.beesinourcommunity.org.uk/resources](http://www.beesinourcommunity.org.uk/resources)

## Why make your own hive stand(s)?

Benefits of making stuff yourself include, but are not limited to;

- Cost saving – a hive stand for under £1 is an attractive proposition,
- You get the stand you want – How tall do you want it? You decide on the leg length,
- You can repair your stand – make a few replacement parts if you wish or just more stands,
- Less work keeping the grass and weeds under control,
- Working height for the hive is easier on the back,
- Allows for better hive ventilation,
- Stops your hive wicking dampness up from the ground.

## More Details

On this design of stand, the legs stick out at a compound angle. One angle is formed by screwing the cross-piece in at an angle. The picture (right) shows the angle to be around 15 degrees. It's not crucial, the non-technical term for choosing the angle is "eyeballing it". Apply glue and two screws on each side to hold it things in place.

You can, of course, choose to make a simple vertical leg setup. It's very easy to do.

Think about what height you want the top of the brood box to be at and that may help you choose the length of the legs.



The legs are screwed and glued in place. Notice how the notch in the leg is resting on the cross-piece of wood. This helps to take some of the pressure off the three screws a bit.

The legs are black – they were dipped in some old engine oil from our local car repairs place. Helps to stop the damp penetrating the wood.

Suggested barter – a jar of honey for a gallon of used engine oil.

The next page shows the leg with a rule next to it. A separate file contains a full scale copy of the stand leg so that you can cut around it to form a template.



