Feral Cat Feeding Station

by Mark Yeaton

Alley Cat Allies
The National Feral Cat Resource

These instructions are for a feeding station with a base of 20 inches by 21-1/2 inches and a maximum height of 23 inches. The roof will be 24 inches by 24 inches. This size is large enough for a large food dish and a single water bottle dispenser. This project can be made using all hand tools but an electric drill will make things a lot easier.

The materials listed below should be available at almost any home supply center, hardware store or lumberyard. The dimensions and quantities were selected to minimize the cost of the project and to keep the construction as easy as possible.

Materials Needed:

- (1) 8-foot long 2 X 3
- (2) 8-foot long 1 X 3
- (2) 8-foot long 1 X 2
- (1) 2-foot X 2-foot (24 X 24 inches) plywood (1/2) inch thick
- Set of 2-inch utility hinges
- 1-1/4 inch finishing nails
- #8 X 1-1/2 inch deck screws
- Roofing shingles (optional)
- Outdoor paint of your color choice (latex recommended for easy cleanup)

Tools required:

- Saw
- Hammer
- Screwdriver (I recommend using Philips head screws and screwdriver)
- Hand or electric drill
- Measuring tape or yardstick
- Square (to make sure your corners are 90 degrees)

Note: The plywood can be the 15/32 inch thick plywood found in a lot of home centers these days but you should not go any thinner. Look for plywood panels already cut to the 2-foot square size. Also, an 18-inch piano hinge or 2-1/2 inch utility hinges may be substituted for the 2 inch utility hinges.

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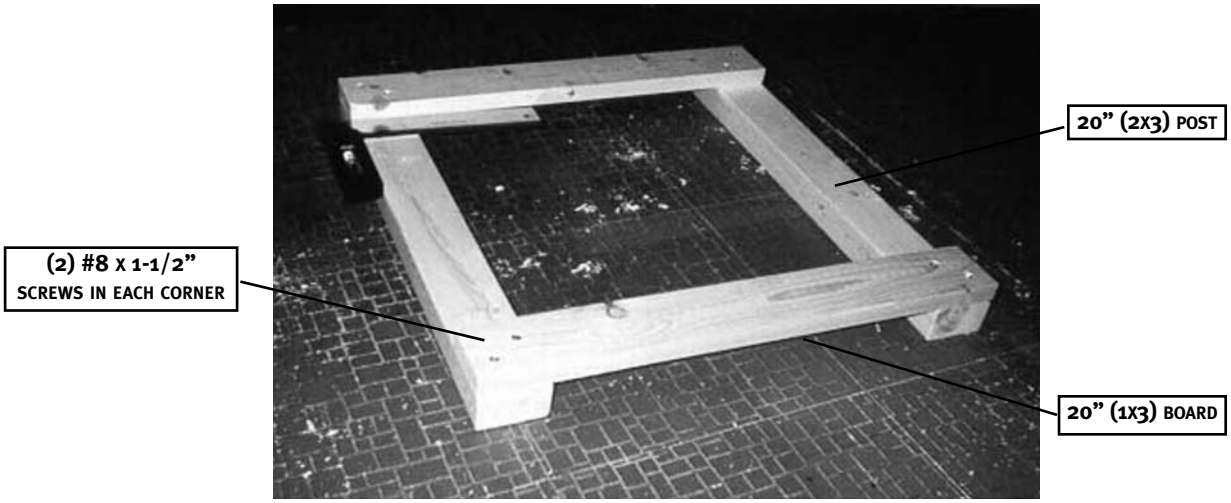
Other considerations:

- Avoid using treated lumber for this project to prevent any exposure of the cats to the chemicals impregnated in treated lumber. Paint should give adequate protection from the weather.
- Standard pine lumber will be adequate for this job. There is no need to use hardwood, cedar or other "weather-resistant" wood as long as the station is protected with paint.
- Power tools can make this project go a lot faster but hand tools are quite sufficient for construction.
- I recommend pre-drilling pilot holes for the screws to reduce splitting the wood. The drill holes should be slightly smaller than the diameter of the screw (I usually drill a 1/8th hole for a #8 screw). I also countersink the screw heads.
- Locate the feeding station away from normal traffic but within sight so it can be easily checked from a distance. Make sure the cats will have a good escape route if they feel threatened while feeding.
- Place the corners of the feeding station on bricks if it is to be located in a dirt or grass area.
- Once a feeding station is established, food should be provided on a daily basis although it can be skipped but no more than one day in between supplies.

Pre-assembly:

1. Cut four (4) 20 inch tall posts from the 2 X 3.
2. Cut nine (9) 20 inch long boards from the 1 X 3's.
3. Cut eight (8) 21 1/2 inch long slats (or 22 inch if that seems easier to measure) from the 1 X 2's.



Assembly:

1. Form each side by screwing two of the 20" (1 X 3) boards to two posts as shown in the sketch. Use at least two screws at each intersection for strength.
2. Attach the two sides to each other using four more 20" (1 X 3) boards as in the sketch.
3. The base unit should now be 20" wide by 21-1/2" deep by 20" tall.

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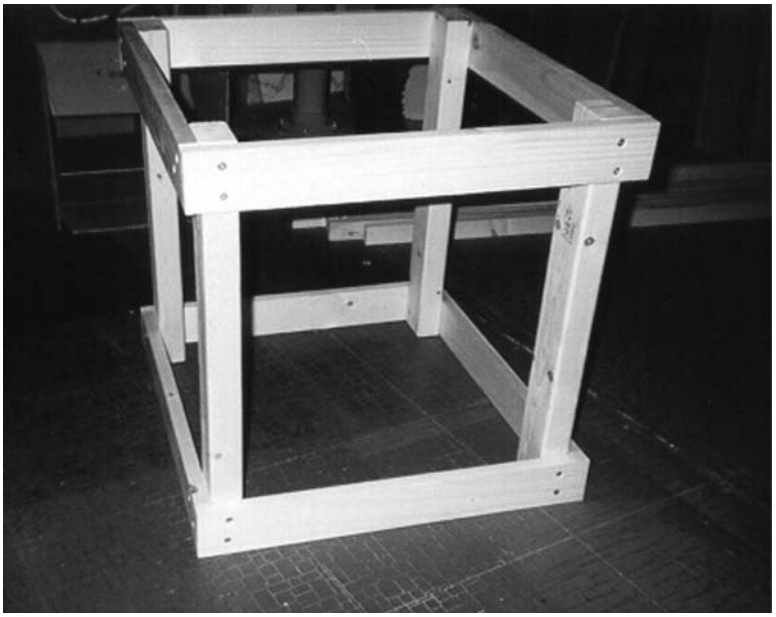
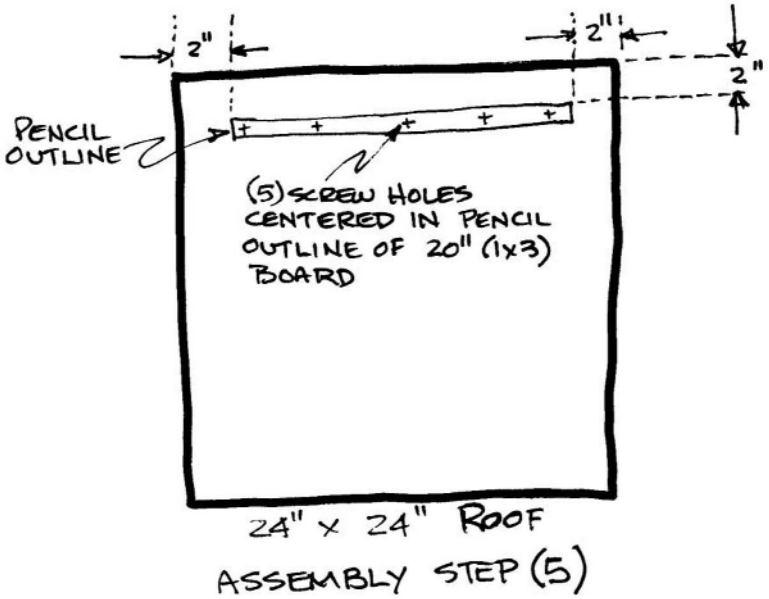


4. Take the plywood roof and turn it upside down on a flat surface. Place the remaining 20" (1 X 3) board centered side-to-side on the plywood and 2" in from the back edge. There should be 2" clearance on the sides.

5. Draw an outline around the board onto the plywood. Temporarily remove the board from the plywood and drill screw holes through the plywood roof, centered in the penciled outline from the board. (This will help make sure your screws will hit the board when you attach it to the roof. See sketch.



6. Now replace the board onto the penciled outline and drive screws through the roof from the other side of the roof and into the board (attaching the board to the underside of the roof).

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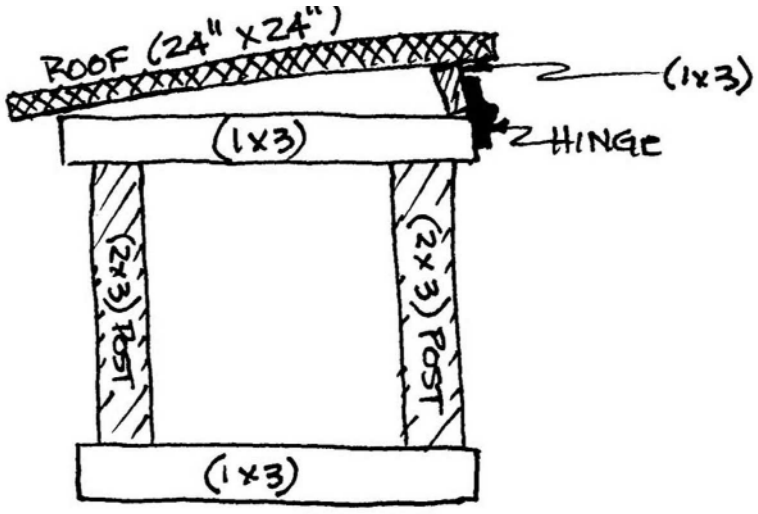
7. Flip the roof right side up and place on top of the base, lining up the board you just attached to the underside of the roof with the top back edge of your feeding station.

Attach the roof to the base with the hinges making sure the hinge pin is centered between the two boards and relatively straight.



8. Space the 21-1/2 inch (1 X 2) slats, running front to back, to form a platform base. These can be attached with finishing nails.

The feeding station can now be painted and then shingled, if desired. Be sure to paint all surfaces, especially the bottom of the feeder, for the best protection from moisture. I attached standard roofing shingles to protect the roof, using 1/2 inch staples. A pack of shingles costs less than $10 and should cover around four feeding stations. Paint alone is also adequate but it will require repainting as it wears off.

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