FreeBee Friday

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Country Hutch

A painted hutch with working drawers and layered trim



CREATED BY DEB ROGERS

Before you begin

Build a country hutch with open display shelves, a hand-cut scalloped valance, two shallow sliding drawers and warm stained tops. This guide follows Deb's actual build photographs. Work in stages and allow each glued assembly to dry flat before moving it.

Read the measurements correctly. All dimensions are miniature inches. Width runs left to right; depth runs front to back; height runs upward. Fractions such as 1/16 refer to wood thickness unless stated otherwise.

Build to fit. Real craft wood varies. Measure the assembled openings before cutting shelves, drawer fronts or trim. Dry-fit every piece, and remove a little at a time when sanding.

Review edition. Confirmed overall sizes appear on the next page. Sizes not supplied for individual trim boards, backing and shelf locations are described as fitted parts. Do not scale measurements from photographs.

Important fit checks. The stated drawer depth is 2-1/8, while the base is 2 deep. Check the actual available space and whether the stated drawer depth includes its front before cutting. The three 1-1/2 vertical intervals are nominal layout measurements within the 4-1/2 upper section; they are not three clear openings plus shelf thickness.

“Small adjustments at the dry-fit stage make the finished piece feel carefully made.”

Materials & tools

Wood
1/8 basswood for the main shelves, sides and structural pieces; 1/16 basswood for drawer interiors and the thin finish layers; 1/4 × 1/4 square pine for the legs and front support. Choose straight pieces with smooth grain.

Finish layers
Countertop: one 1/8 layer and one 1/16 layer. Top cap: two 1/8 layers and one 1/16 layer, staggered in size. Drawer fronts: 1/8 backing with a smaller 1/16 face layer.

Tools
Metal ruler, pencil, cutting mat, sharp craft knife, suitable small saw for pine, sanding block, fine sandpaper, paper for the scallop pattern, scissors, square, brushes and low-tack painter's tape.

Assembly & finish
Aleene's Tacky Glue for furniture assembly; teal craft paint; BEHR Water-Based Stain & Poly in Golden Oak B6272, satin, as shown in Deb's photo. Follow the finish manufacturer's drying directions.

Before gluing: stain visible wood surfaces first, keeping the actual glue contact areas clean and bare. Glue marks resist stain. Cut away from your fingers and use several light knife passes.

Confirmed measurements

PART / ASSEMBLY	CONFIRMED SIZE
Lower unit footprint	6-5/8 W × 2 D
Square pine legs	1/4 × 1/4 stock; 2-1/2 long
Countertop, finished outline	7-1/2 W × 2-1/4 D
Countertop thickness	1/8 + 1/16 = 3/16
Upper cabinet, including cap	6-1/2 W × 4-1/2 H × 1 D
Scalloped trim	6 wide; hand-cut wave
Each finished drawer	2-7/8 W × 2-1/8 D × 3/8 H
Vertical layout	1-1/2 nominal intervals
Top cap thickness	1/8 + 1/8 + 1/16 = 5/16

The countertop sits on top of the base legs. Set the first upper shelf about 1-1/2 above the counter and the next about 1-1/2 above that. The top of the cornice is another 1-1/2 above the top shelf. Verify the final layout against the 4-1/2 total height before gluing.

Cutting & fitting guide

Cut first
Cut the 1/4-square pine legs to 2-1/2. Prepare countertop layers to produce a 7-1/2 × 2-1/4 finished outline. The thin layer is the top surface; shape the lower layer to create the stepped edge shown in the photographs.

Fit to the lower frame
Make the bottom shelf and the shelf supporting the drawers from 1/8 wood. Their completed assembly must fit the 6-5/8 × 2 footprint. Mark pine-post positions on the shelves before gluing. Measure any notches directly from the stock.

Fit to the upper frame
Use 1/8 wood for two sides and two shelves. Establish the 6-1/2 outside width, 1 depth and 4-1/2 total height including the cap. Cut shelf lengths to the actual distance between the sides. Fit the back to the assembled frame.

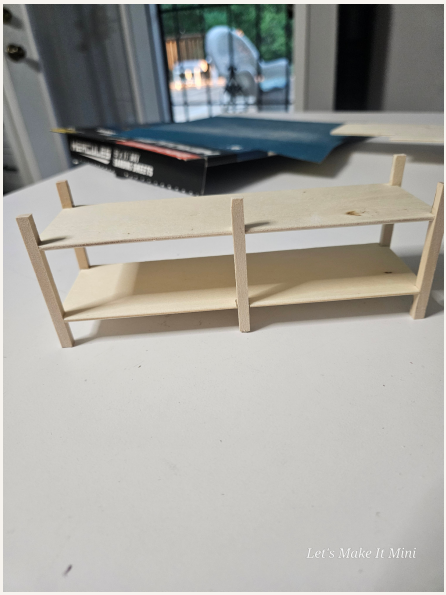
Fit decorative parts last
Cut the hand-shaped valance 6 wide. Make three staggered top-cap boards to suit the assembled cabinet and desired overhang. Exact individual cap-board lengths and depths were not supplied; use the actual cabinet to mark each layer.

Drawer parts: use the finished dimensions as a fitting target, not as the size of every loose part. Choose your butt-joint arrangement, allow for 1/16 material thickness, and test a single drawer before duplicating it.

1. Assemble the base

Mark the lower shelf and drawer-support shelf together so the post locations match. Dry-fit the square pine posts, then glue the shelves in place with the front centre support dividing the two drawer bays. Keep the frame square and the feet level. The stained counter will sit directly on top of the legs.

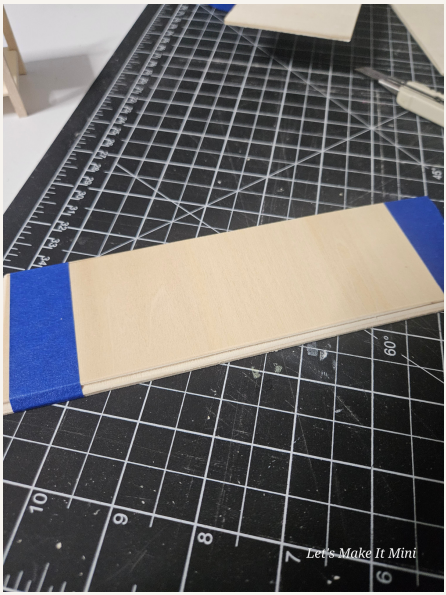




The photographs show the prepared pine pieces and the assembled lower frame. Fit shelf notches to the actual post stock.

2. Layer the countertop

Glue the 1/8 lower board and 1/16 top board into a flat, stepped countertop. Keep the back edges aligned if that is the fit required by your back panel. Tape or weight the layers evenly while they dry, then sand a gentle bevel along the exposed front and ends. Aim for the confirmed 7-1/2 × 2-1/4 finished outline.





Dry-fit the counter on the leg tops. Check equal side overhangs before applying glue; keep the top flat.

3. Make the paneled back

Cut the back to fit the assembled hutch. Mark vertical board lines with a ruler, then use a suitable pointed tool or file to make shallow grooves. Make several gentle passes instead of trying to cut deeply in one stroke. Sand away raised fibres and check the panel against the base and upper frame.

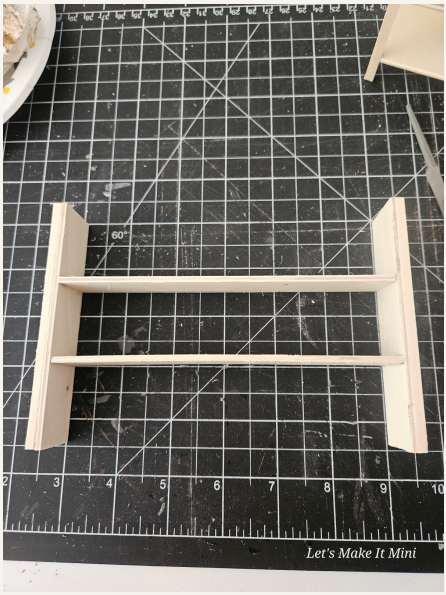




Deb creates the board effect in a single panel. Keep the grooves shallow enough to preserve the strength of the backing.

4. Build the upper shelves

Dry-fit the two upper sides and two shelves. Mark corresponding shelf positions on both sides together, using the nominal 1-1/2 spacing as a layout guide. Allow for the shelf thicknesses and the 5/16 top cap within the total 4-1/2 upper height. Glue the shelves square between the sides; allow the assembly to dry before fitting the back.





Check that both shelf fronts line up and that the finished upper unit stays within the confirmed outside dimensions.

5. Shape the scalloped trim

Cut a paper strip to suit the 6-wide valance. Fold it into repeated sections, sketch a gentle curve, then cut through the folded paper and unfold to see the full wave. Adjust the paper until you like the rhythm. Trace it onto the wood and cut away the waste with controlled, light passes.

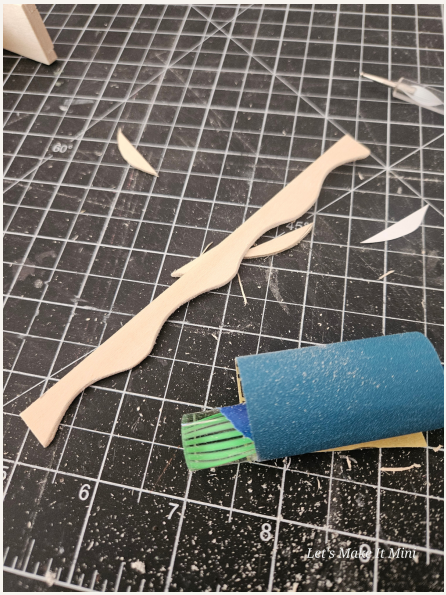




The wave is hand cut. The paper pattern creates a repeated design without requiring a printed template.

6. Sand & fit the wave

Smooth each curve with fine sandpaper wrapped around a rounded support. Work slowly, keeping the top edge straight and the narrow portions strong. Dry-fit the valance between the upper sides, then glue it in place and hold with low-tack tape. Sand any proud ends flush after the glue has dried.





Use the same paper pattern if making another hutch. Slight variations are part of the handmade finish.

7. Paint & join the sections

Paint the base, paneled back and upper shelf assembly teal while the corners remain accessible. Use thin coats and let them dry fully. Keep the stained counter protected. Fit the upper shelving against the back on the countertop, check that it is upright and centred, then glue and tape it securely until dry.

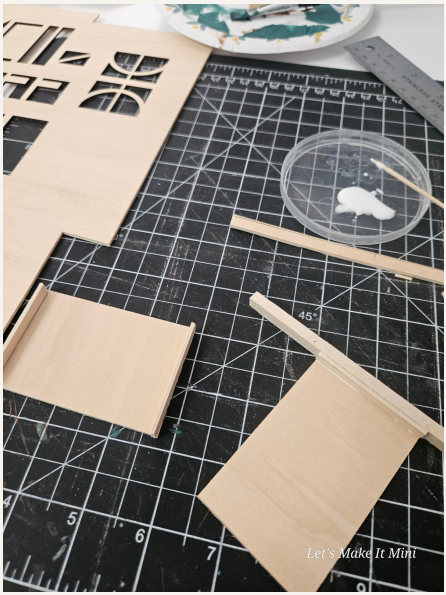




Remove tape carefully after the joints have set. Touch up exposed wood and small paint gaps before adding the drawers.

8. Assemble the drawers

Make two shallow drawer trays from 1/16 wood, with a bottom, two sides and a back. Target the confirmed finished size: 2-7/8 wide × 2-1/8 front-to-back × 3/8 high. Check how the front contributes to that depth. Assemble one tray first and test it in its bay; sand for a smooth sliding fit before making the second.





The base is 2 deep, so confirm the available drawer travel and back clearance. Keep paint and glue ridges out of the sliding path.

9. Add the stained details

Make each drawer front from a 1/8 backing and a smaller 1/16 face, leaving a narrow border. Make the top cap from three boards: two 1/8 and one 1/16, staggered in size. Dry-fit the layers to the cabinet, glue flat, then sand the exposed edges into a soft bevel matching the countertop.





Stain the visible surfaces before final attachment. Deb uses Golden Oak satin Stain & Poly for the top cap, counter and drawer fronts.

10. Finish & style

Attach each finished drawer front while its tray is seated in the correct opening, keeping the glue on the tray contact area only. Protect the surrounding frame so the drawer cannot accidentally be glued shut. Fit the dry top cap, check the overhangs and glue in place. Once everything has cured, test the drawers and arrange your favourite miniature dishes.



Keep heavy pieces on the lower shelf, and vary the height of the upper displays. A few open spaces help the scalloped trim and paneled back show.

Your final check

Structure
The legs sit level; the shelves are square; the upper unit stands straight against the back; the counter and cap layers are flat with balanced overhangs.

Drawers
Both trays slide freely and remain removable. The fronts clear the legs and centre support. There is no glue squeeze-out or thick paint in the sliding paths.

Finish
Edges feel smooth, stain is even and fully dry, and the teal paint covers any exposed construction marks. Clean away sanding dust before styling.

Make it yours
Try cream paint with walnut-toned trim, a softly worn green finish, or a colourful cottage palette. Use the same construction and fit checks whichever finish you choose.

Designed and built by Deb Rogers
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