

You Can Build the

Blue Ridge Painted Hutch

This hutch combines
unique, rural design
elements with simple
construction techniques.



Alabama Woodworkers Guild, Inc.

The Design



The hutch shown in it's original coral color.

While visiting a gift shop in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, I ran across this hutch (left). There was something about it's shape that I really liked. So I took a quick photo and began thinking how I would build a version of it.

What's to like about this hutch? It is ironic that after years of trying to improve my woodworking skills by being able to execute tedious joinery (like mortise and tenon or dovetail), this antique hutch does it's job well with rudimentary nailed together joinery. Something I find humorous in a way because many woodworkers would frown on such simple joinery methods.

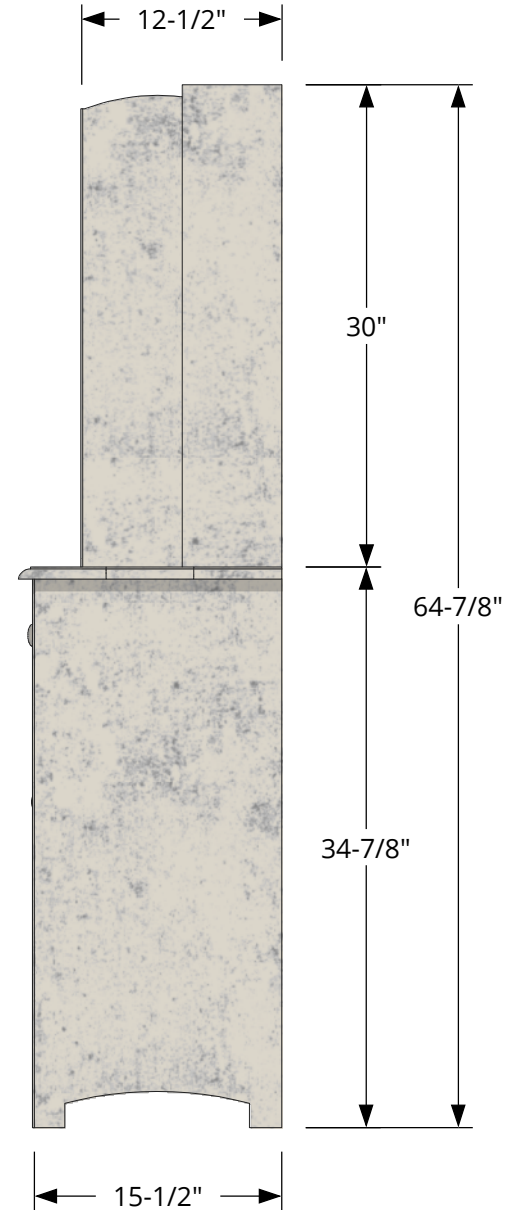
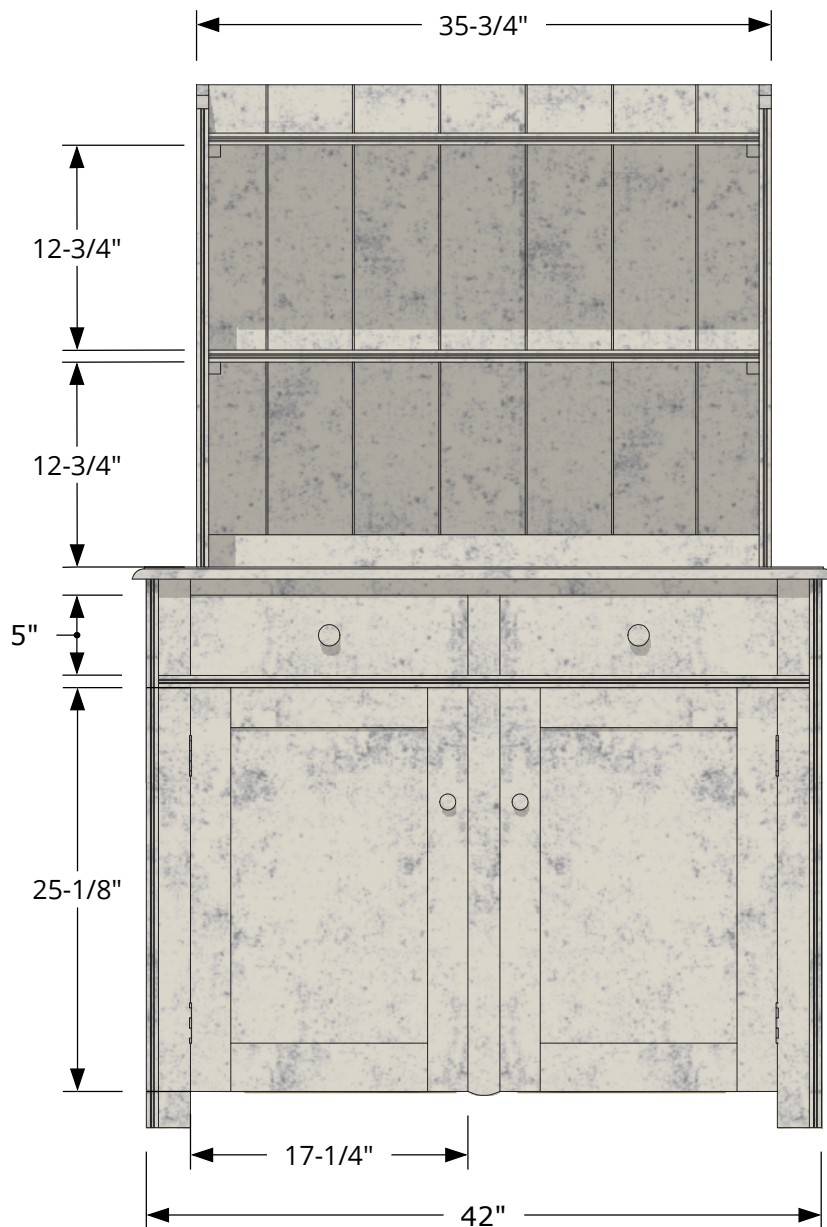
Concerning the design, the first thing to note is the open top which allows for locating tall items on the top shelf. Also unique: the upper sides have a curved profile and the sides have a generous set back compared to the base sides. The original maker added some style by including beaded trim in various places. The hutch (top section) has beaded trim along the front edges of the sides and shelves. The base cabinet has beaded trim along the front edges of the sides and the area between the drawers and doors.

In the photo, the shop owner had converted the hutch to display plates and other items. There are no doors or drawers. My design includes these components and I kept their design simple. For example, the drawer parts are simply nailed and glued together. You might think this joinery is prone to failure over time, but I have found that a nailed and glued drawer can work properly for decades as long as slides well.

Just as with the original, my design is meant to be painted. Where possible, I call for 3/4" and 1/4" birch plywood (or some other quality plywood). For most of the joinery, I like the holding power of screws which can be covered with paint making them less noticeable. Or you can counter-sink these screws and cover them with a wood plug or quality wood putty.

To help you better understand how this hutch goes together, I have included links to the SketchUp model I used to illustrate this plan (page 5). You can view the hutch in 3D and zoom in on specific parts should you need to. I hope you find this project enjoyable and rewarding to build. - Jeff Branch

Main Dimensions

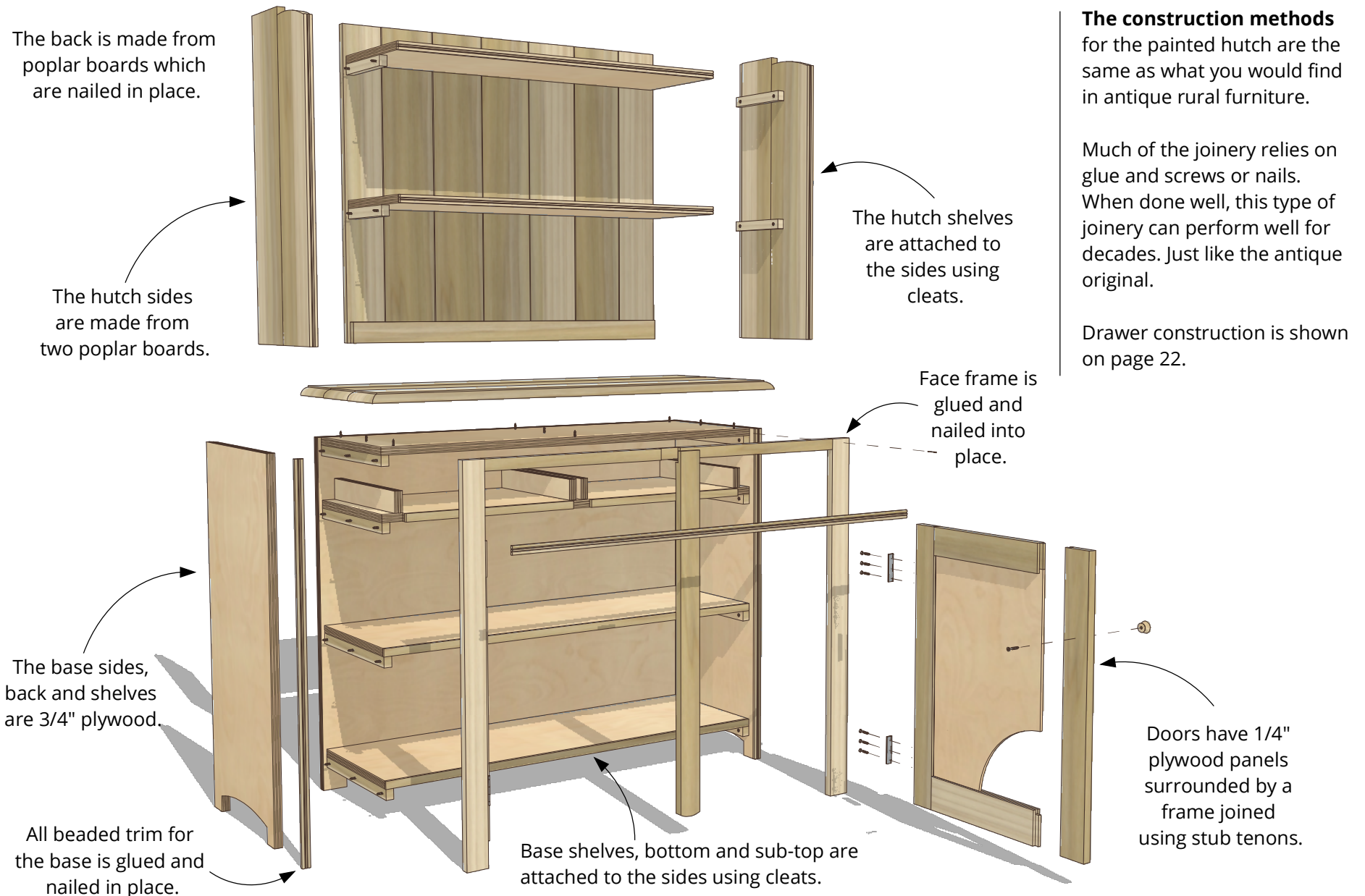


The main dimensions are shown at left. One thing to note is the spacing of the hutch shelves. They allow for a maximum display height of 12-3/4". This will accommodate a typical dinner plate. The open top enables tall objects to be placed there.

But if you want to display taller objects within the hutch, you can either adjust, for example, the location of the shelves by decreasing the lower display space. Or, you could make the hutch taller. This means expanding the length of the top sides and back components.

Avoid making the hutch look too top heavy by limiting the height of the top section to 34-7/8" or the same height as the base cabinet.

Construction Techniques



Cut List

Base Cabinet

QTY	Description	Length	Width	Thick	Material
2	Base Shelf	40-1/2"	13-1/4"	3/4"	Plywood
1	Drawer Shelf	40-1/2"	13-1/2"	3/4"	Plywood
2	Base Shelf Banding	40-1/2"	3/4"	1/4"	Poplar
1	Sub-Top	40-1/2"	13-1/2"	3/4"	Plywood
8	Base Shelf Cleat	13-1/2"	1"	3/4"	Poplar
4	Drawer Guide	13-1/2"	2"	3/4"	Plywood
3	Base Top	43-3/4"	5-7/16"	3/4"	Poplar
2	Base Side	34-1/8"	15-1/8"	3/4"	Plywood
1	Base Back	41-1/4"	34-1/8"	3/4"	Plywood
2	Face Frame Stile	34-1/8"	2"	3/4"	Poplar
1	Face Frame Center Stile	32-1/8"	2"	3/4"	Poplar
1	Face Frame Top Rail	36-1/2"	1"	3/4"	Poplar
2	Drawer Shelf Trim	17-1/4"	3/4"	3/4"	Poplar
2	Side Beaded Trim	34-1/8"	3/4"	3/8"	Poplar
1	Face Frame Beaded Trim	40-1/2"	3/4"	1/4"	Poplar

Doors and Drawers

QTY	Description	Length	Width	Thick	Material
4	Door Stile	25-1/8"	2-1/2"	3/4"	Poplar
2	Door Rail Top	13"	2-1/2"	3/4"	Poplar
2	Door Rail Bottom	13"	3"	3/4"	Poplar
2	Door Panel	20-3/8"	13"	1/4"	Plywood
2	Drawer Front	17-1/4"	5"	3/4"	Poplar
4	Drawer Side	14-1/8"	5"	3/8"	Pine
2	Drawer Back	16-7/8"	4-1/2"	3/4"	Poplar
2	Drawer Bottom	16-7/8"	13-3/4"	1/4"	Plywood

Hutch

QTY	Description	Length	Width	Thick	Material
2	Hutch Side A	29-1/8"	6-1/4"	3/4"	Poplar
2	Hutch Side B	30"	6-1/4"	3/4"	Poplar
2	Hutch Shelf	34-1/4"	11-1/8"	3/4"	Plywood
2	Hutch Shelf Trim	34-1/4"	3/4"	3/8"	Poplar
4	Hutch Shelf Cleat	7-1/2"	1"	3/4"	Poplar
1	Hutch Bottom Rail	34-1/4"	2"	3/4"	Poplar
2	Back Board End	30"	4-1/4"	3/4"	Poplar
5	Back Board	30"	5-5/8"	3/4"	Poplar

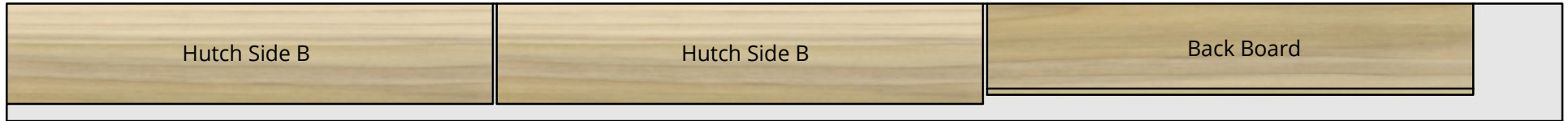
You will also need these items available at Woodcraft.com: two small door knobs like 161858, two large knobs to serve as drawer pulls like item 161859. Also door hinges like 16R59, and two door catches like item. 27H03.

You can download the SketchUp model of the Blue Ridge Painted Hutch by clicking [this link](#). You can then upload the model and view the model with SketchUp's free web version at [this link](#).

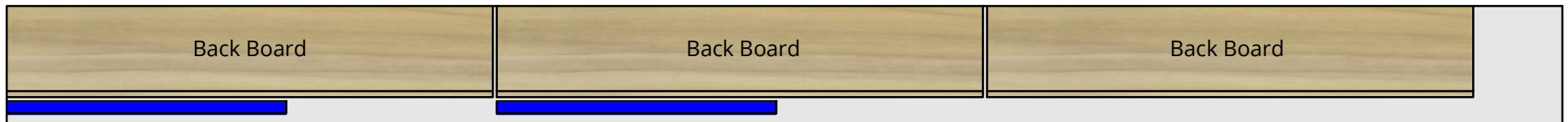
Be sure to understand and follow the safety steps found in your tool user manuals.

Never underestimate the potential danger associated with woodworking power tools and hand tools. Be sure to use safety glasses along with dust and ear protection when appropriate. Make sure you have easy access to first aid supplies. Never become fatigued or complacent in your workshop. Work safely at all times.

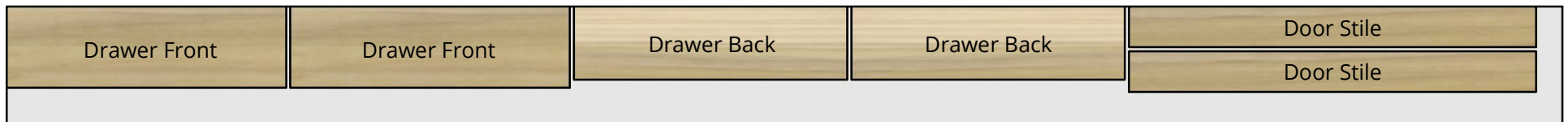
Cutting Diagram

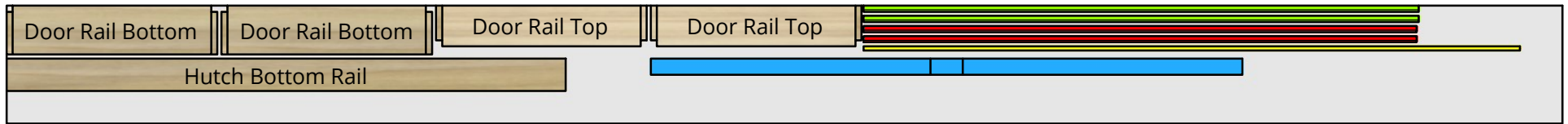


All boards this page are 8' 1" x 8" poplar or equivalent.

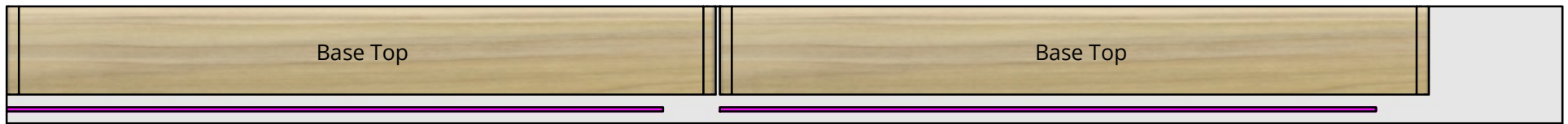


 = Drawer Shelf Trim

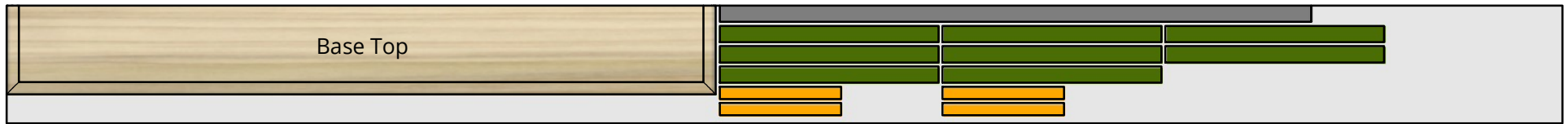




8' 1" x 8" Poplar or equivalent.



8' 1" x 8" Poplar or equivalent.



8' 1" x 8" Poplar or equivalent.



3' 3/8" x 6" Pine or equivalent.



- = Hutch Shelf Trim
- = Side Beaded Trim
- = Face Frame Beaded Trim
- = Face Frame Top Rail
- = Base Shelf Banding
- = Face Frame Top Rail
- = Base Shelf Cleat
- = Hutch Shelf Cleat

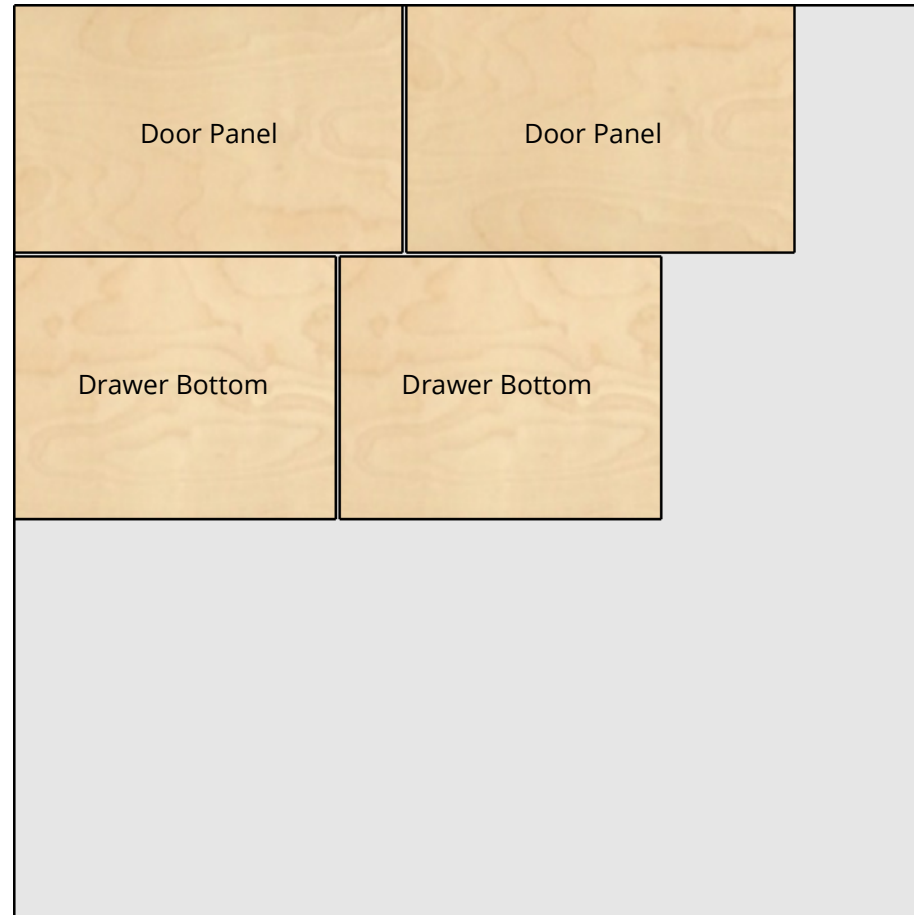
3/4" thick 4' x 8' Baltic birch plywood or equivalent.



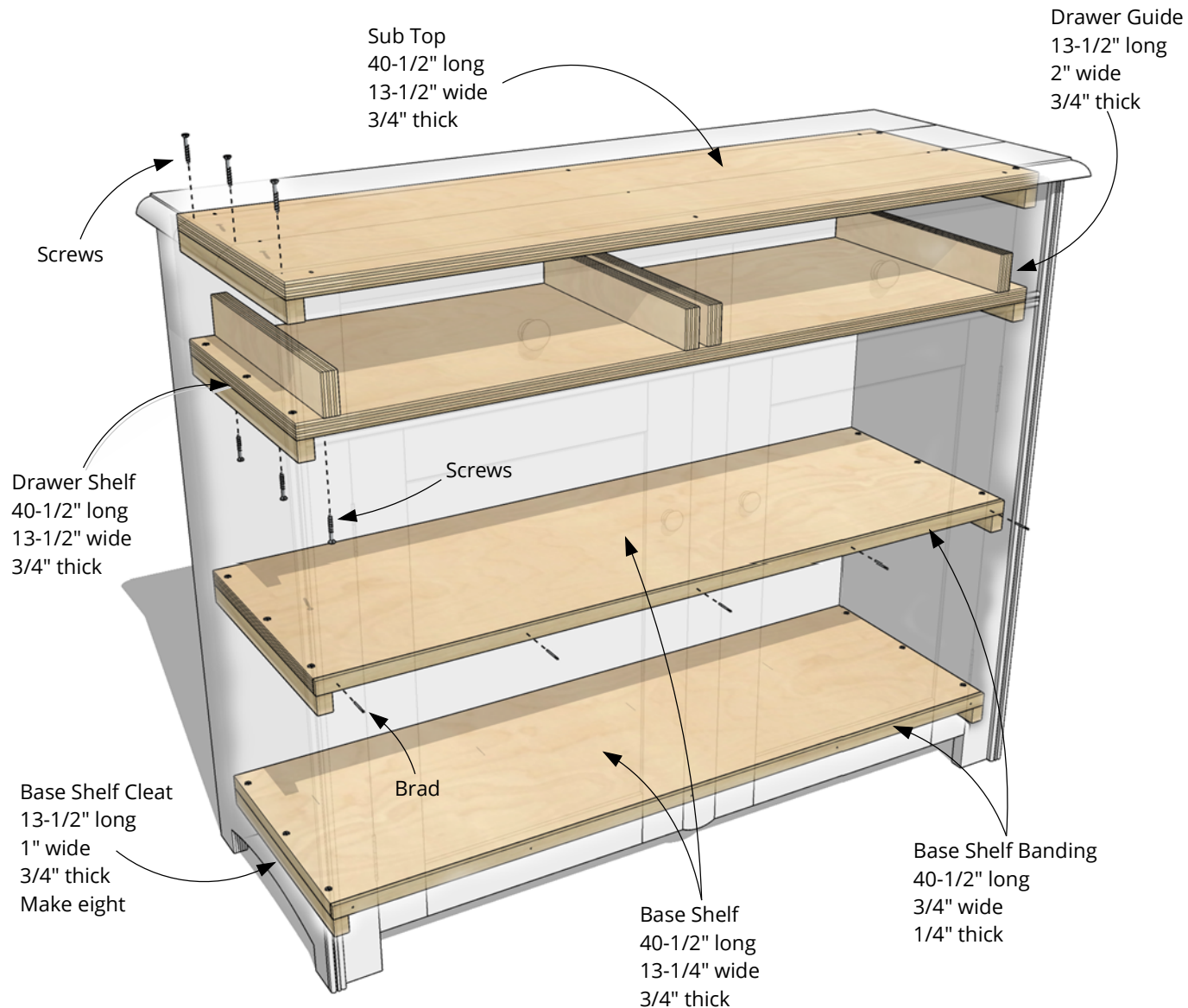
3/4" thick 4' x 8' Baltic birch plywood or equivalent.



1/4" thick 4' x 4' Baltic birch plywood or equivalent.



Build the Base Cabinet



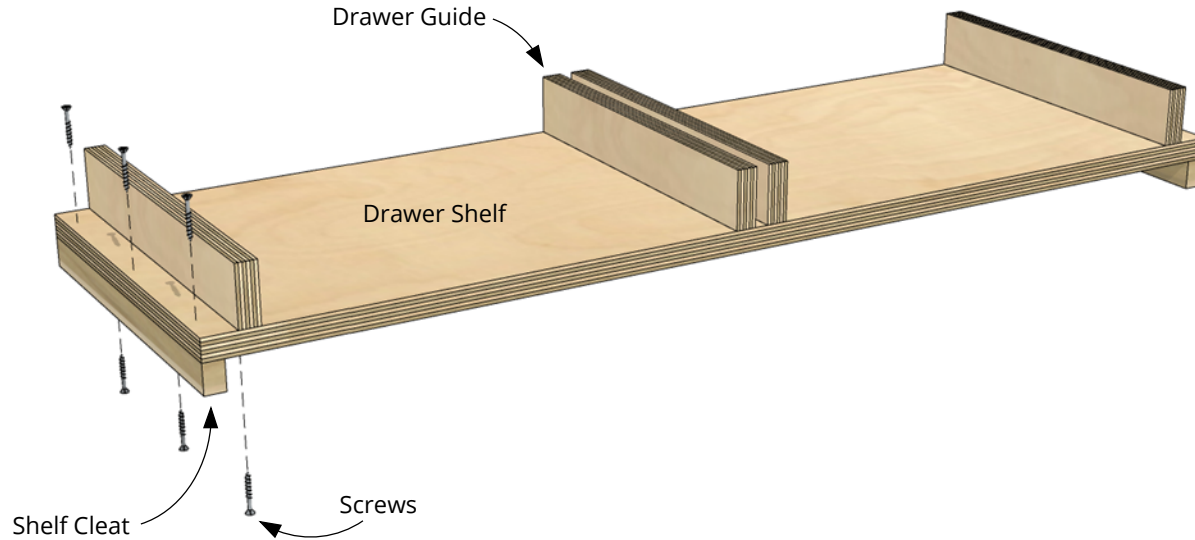
If there were a way to peak inside the Blue Ridge Painted Hutch, we would see a row of four fixed cross members which help provide the basic structure of this project. This is where we will start.

Begin by making the base shelves, drawer shelf and sub top. Using plywood, cut these parts to final size. Cover the front edge of the base shelves with 1/4" thick poplar banding using glue and brads. Add the base shelf cleats using glue and screws.

Next cut the drawer guides and add them with glue and screws. These screws are driven from underneath the drawer shelf.

Pre-drill screw holes in the sub top in preparation for mounting the base cabinet top. See page 13 for the recommended hole placement.

Sand parts as you progress through the project.

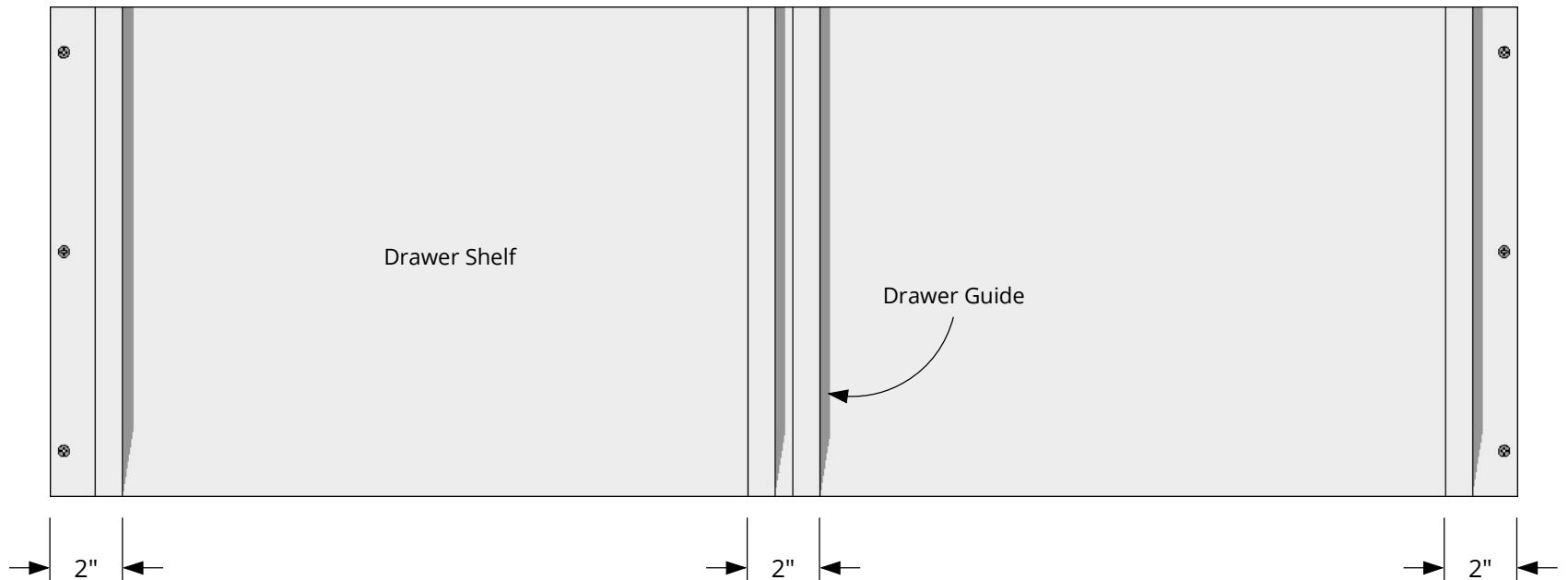


The drawer shelf deserves extra attention. Proper placement of the drawer guides is important. Normally I would add the drawer guides later in the project, but driving screws through the bottom of the drawer shelf and into the drawer guides later could be difficult.

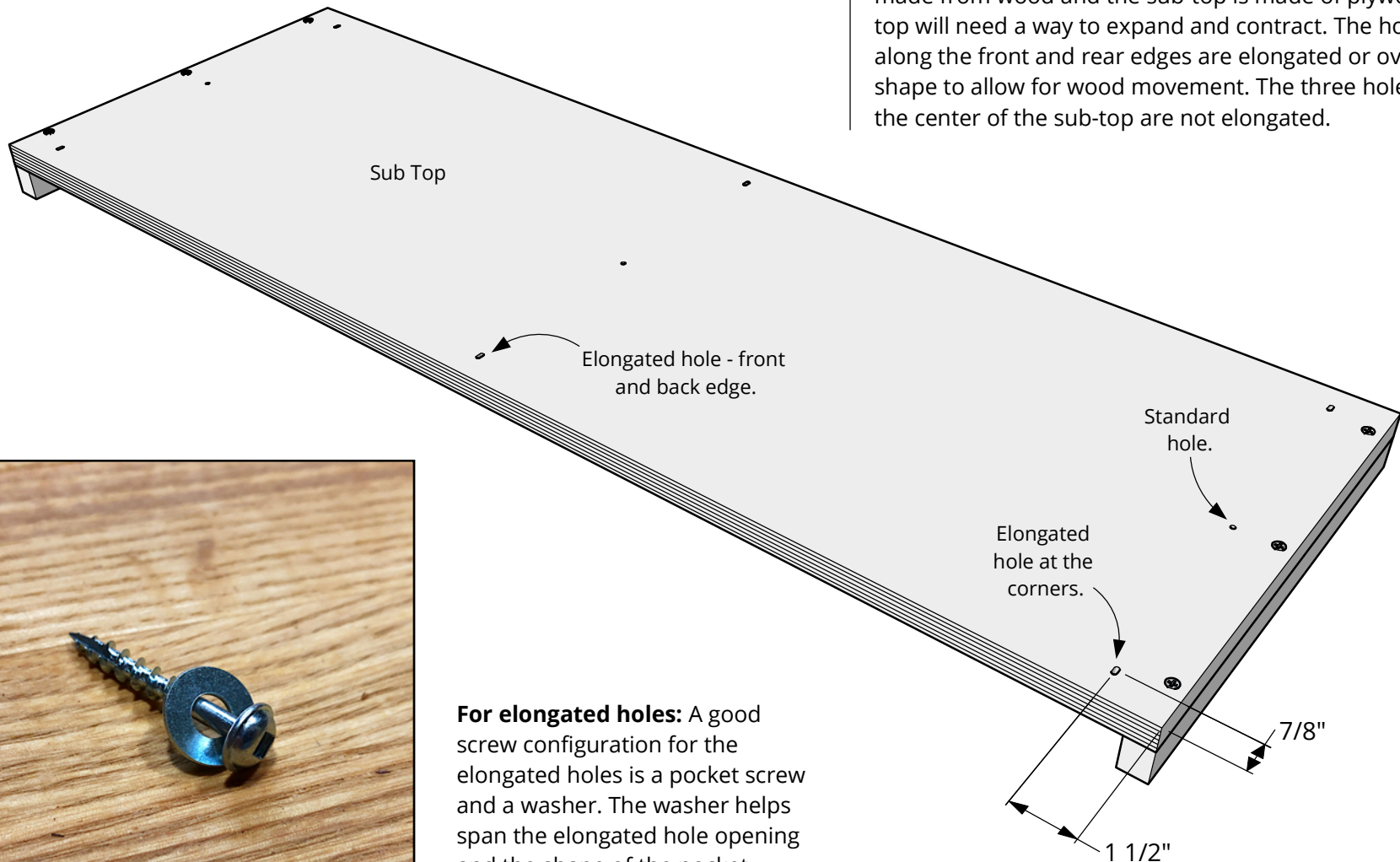
Attach the shelf cleats with glue and screws. Mark the placement of the drawer guides and attach them with screws and glue.

Using Screws

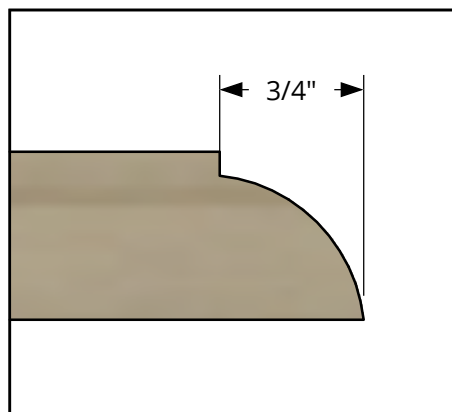
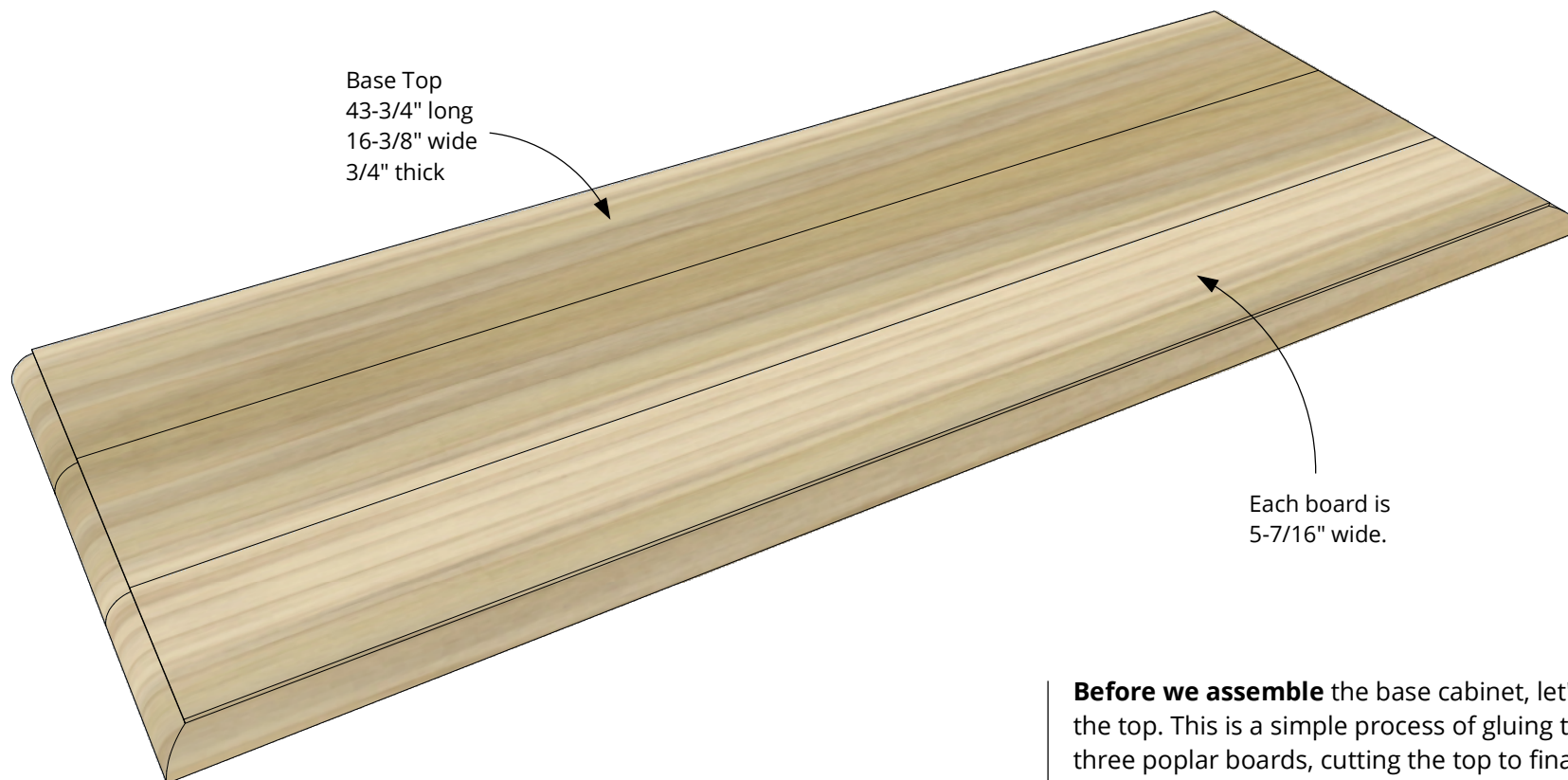
Many of the screws for the base cabinet will be out of view or at least hard to see. Painting the interior of the cabinet will further make the screws less noticeable. But if seeing these screws is undesirable, simply counter sink the screw heads and cover them with a quality wood filler.



Pre-drill holes for the top. The top will be attached to the sub-top with screws. These screws should be located near the edges of the of the sub-top. Gaining access later to drive these screws will be tricky, so let's go ahead and pre-drill the screw holes in the sub-top. And because the top is made from wood and the sub-top is made of plywood, the top will need a way to expand and contract. The holes along the front and rear edges are elongated or oval in shape to allow for wood movement. The three holes along the center of the sub-top are not elongated.



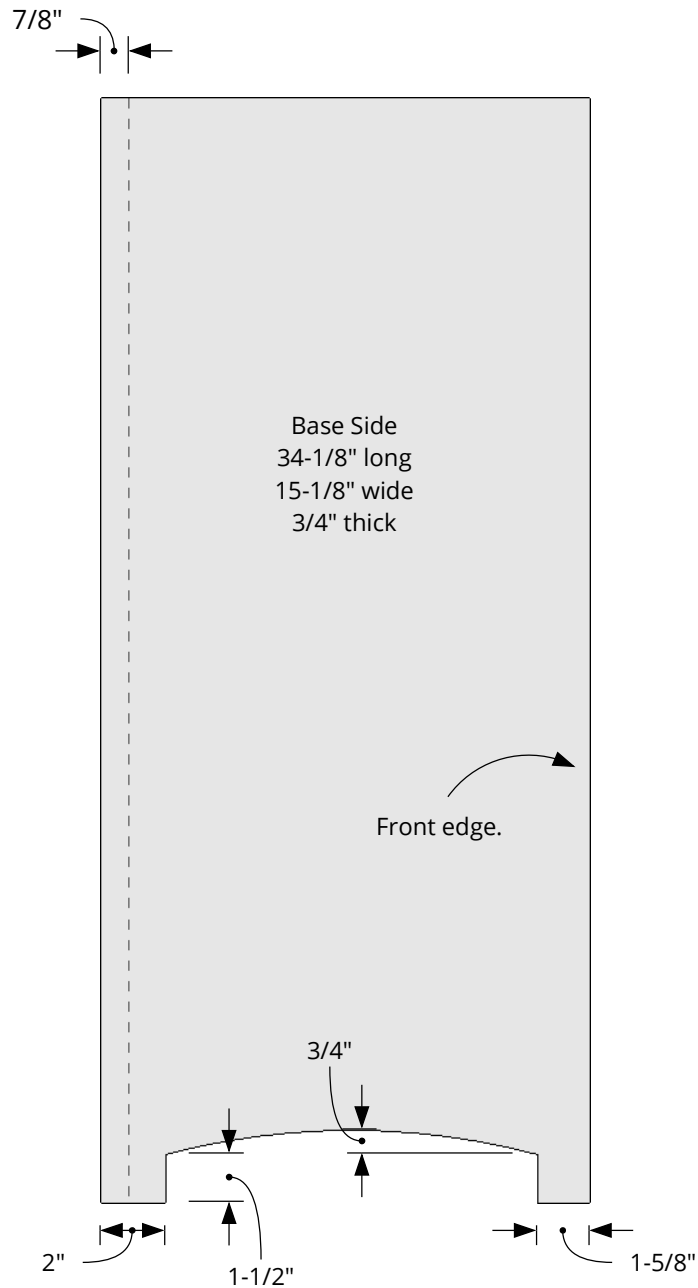
For elongated holes: A good screw configuration for the elongated holes is a pocket screw and a washer. The washer helps span the elongated hole opening and the shape of the pocket screw's head works well with a washer.



Edge Profile. The top gets a round-over profile on the front and sides. The image at the left is shown full size.

Before we assemble the base cabinet, let's create the top. This is a simple process of gluing together three poplar boards, cutting the top to final size and adding the edge profile with a router and a round-over bit.

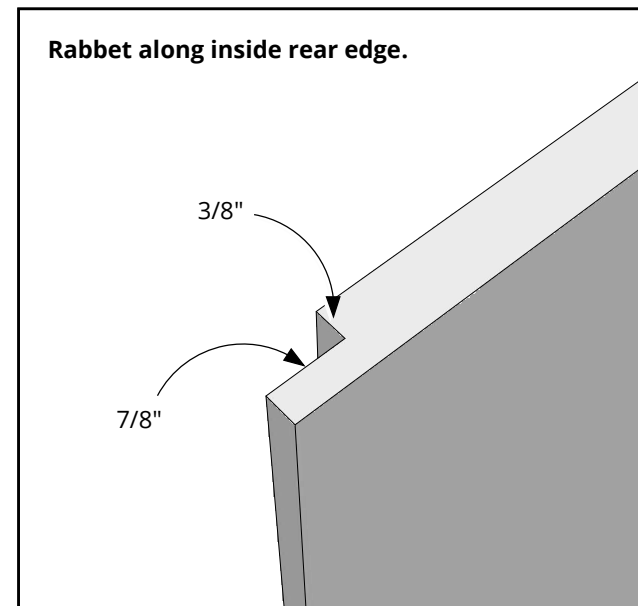
Concerning the round-over bit, the profile shown requires a big bit that can be expensive. I consider the Blue Ridge Painted Hutch to be a somewhat primitive design. By that I mean it is not refined piece of furniture. While the original had a round-over as shown, it would be appropriate to omit an edge treatment altogether or to change it to a profile of your liking.

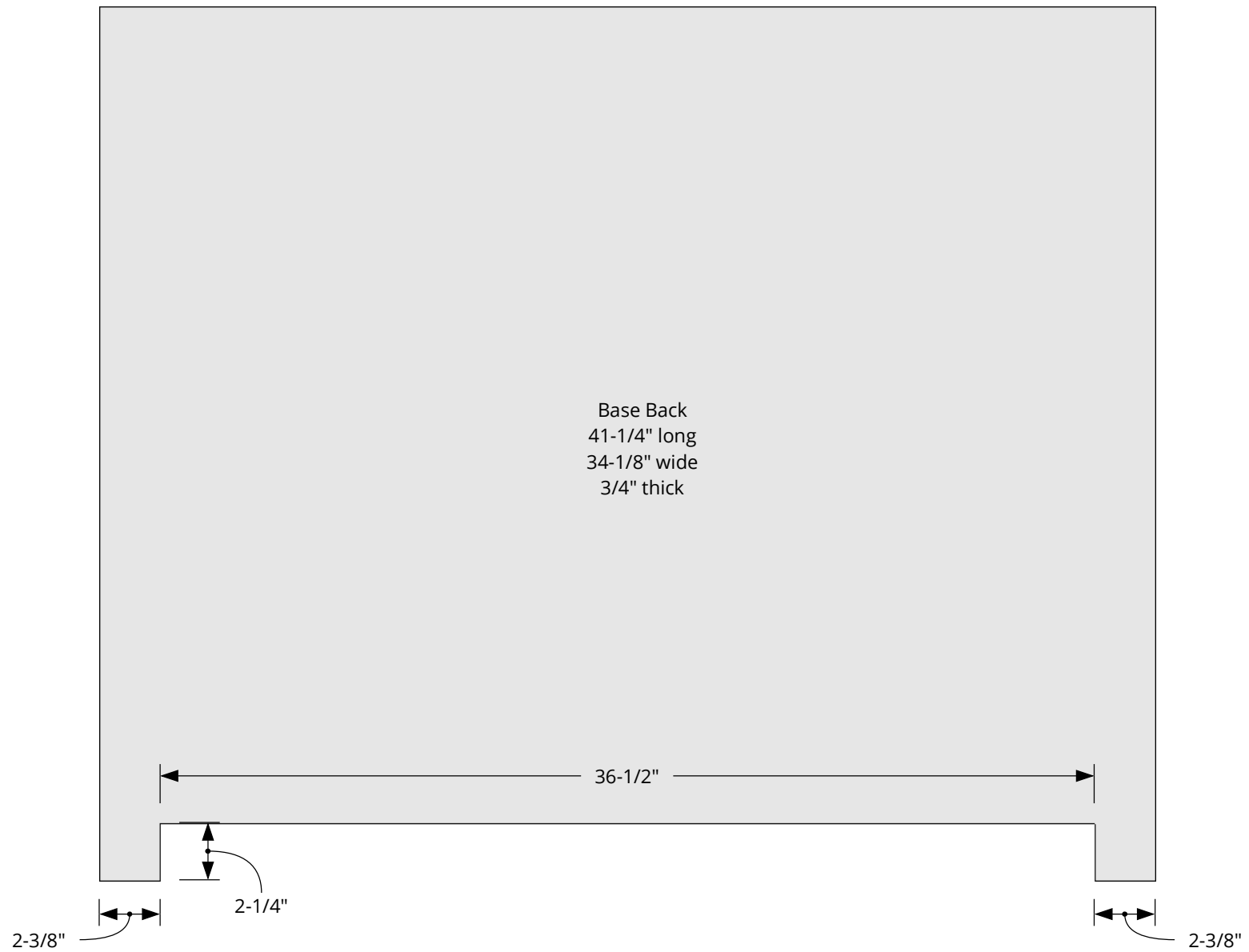


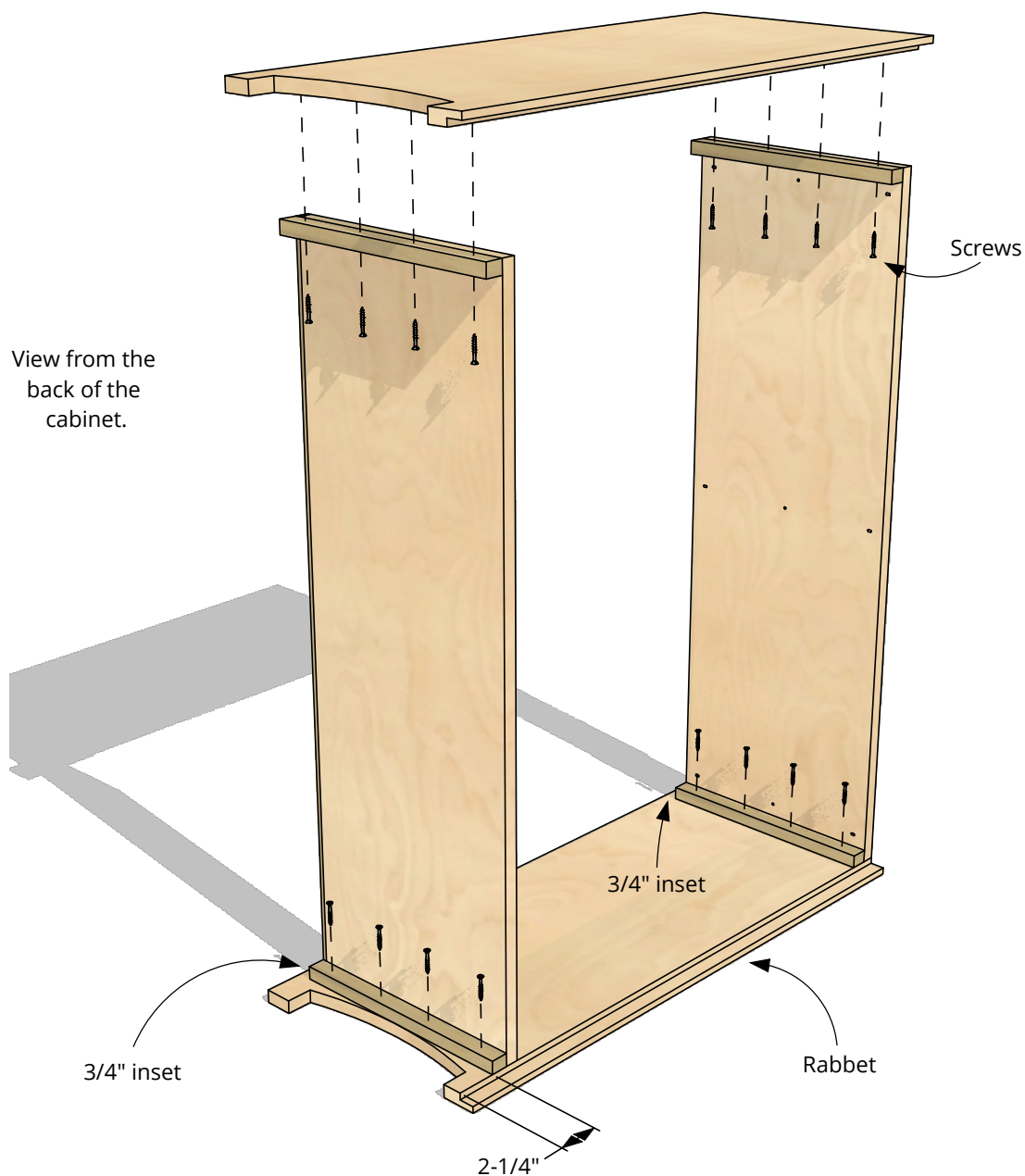
The sides are next and are formed from plywood. Cut the base sides to final size. Create a 7/8" x 3/8" rabbet along the inside rear edge of the side to accept the back (image below). I chose a 7/8" rabbet to ensure the edge of the back would be totally out of sight.

Next form the feet as shown. Note the front feet are 3/8" smaller than the rear feet. We'll add 3/8" thick beaded trim later.

Next page: Cut the plywood back to final size and form the feet as shown.



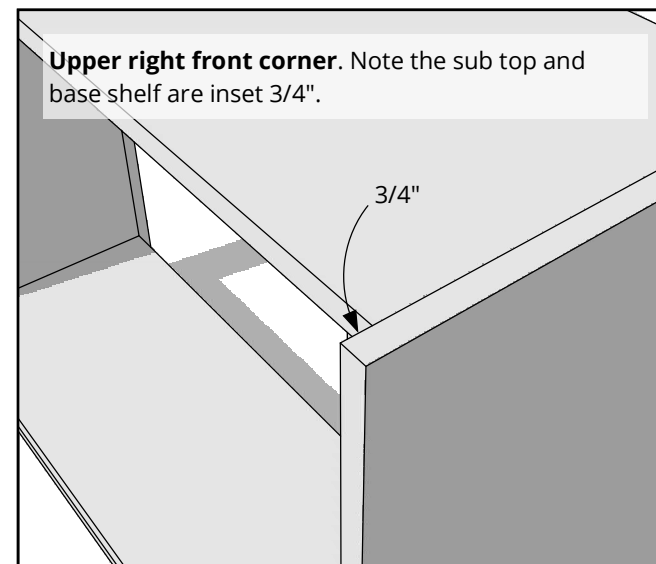


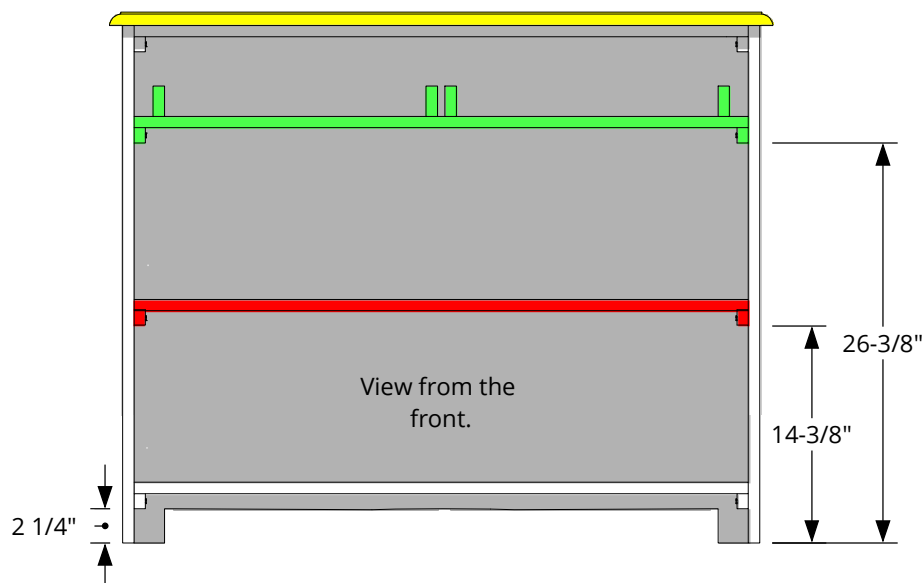


Begin bringing all the various base cabinet components together by securing the lower base shelf to the left side using glue and screws. The lower base shelf is positioned 2-1/4" from the bottom of the feet. Note the image is looking from the back of the cabinet. The lower base shelf is positioned flush with the back rabbet. This will create a 3/4" inset at the front edge of the shelf. Attach the lower base shelf with screws and glue. Make sure the lower base shelf is square to the left side.

In the same way, attach the sub top to the left side. It aligns flush with the top edge of the side and the back rabbet. Ensure that the sub top is square to the left side.

Add the right side using screws and glue. Make sure the case is square.





With the base cabinet beginning to take shape, let's add the top, the remaining shelves and the back. I have color coded the next steps.

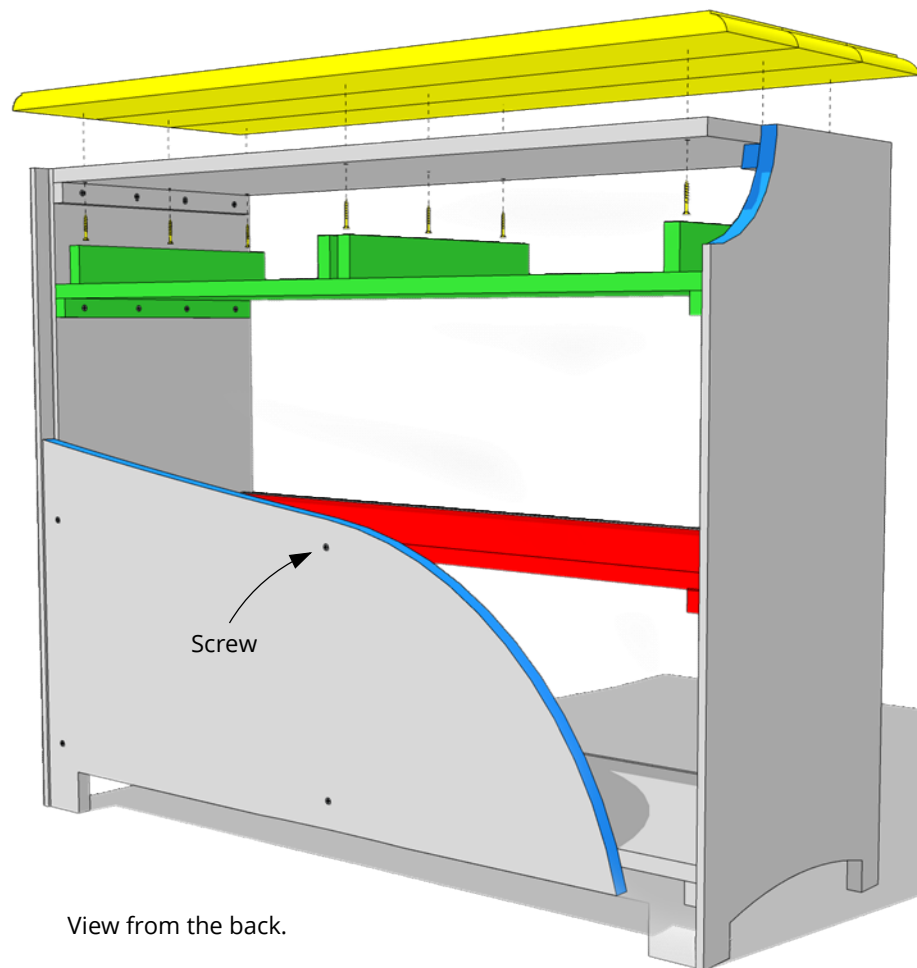
Yellow: Add the top - Position the top flush with the back and center along the length of the cabinet. Attach the top driving screws with washers as seen on page 13. No glue.

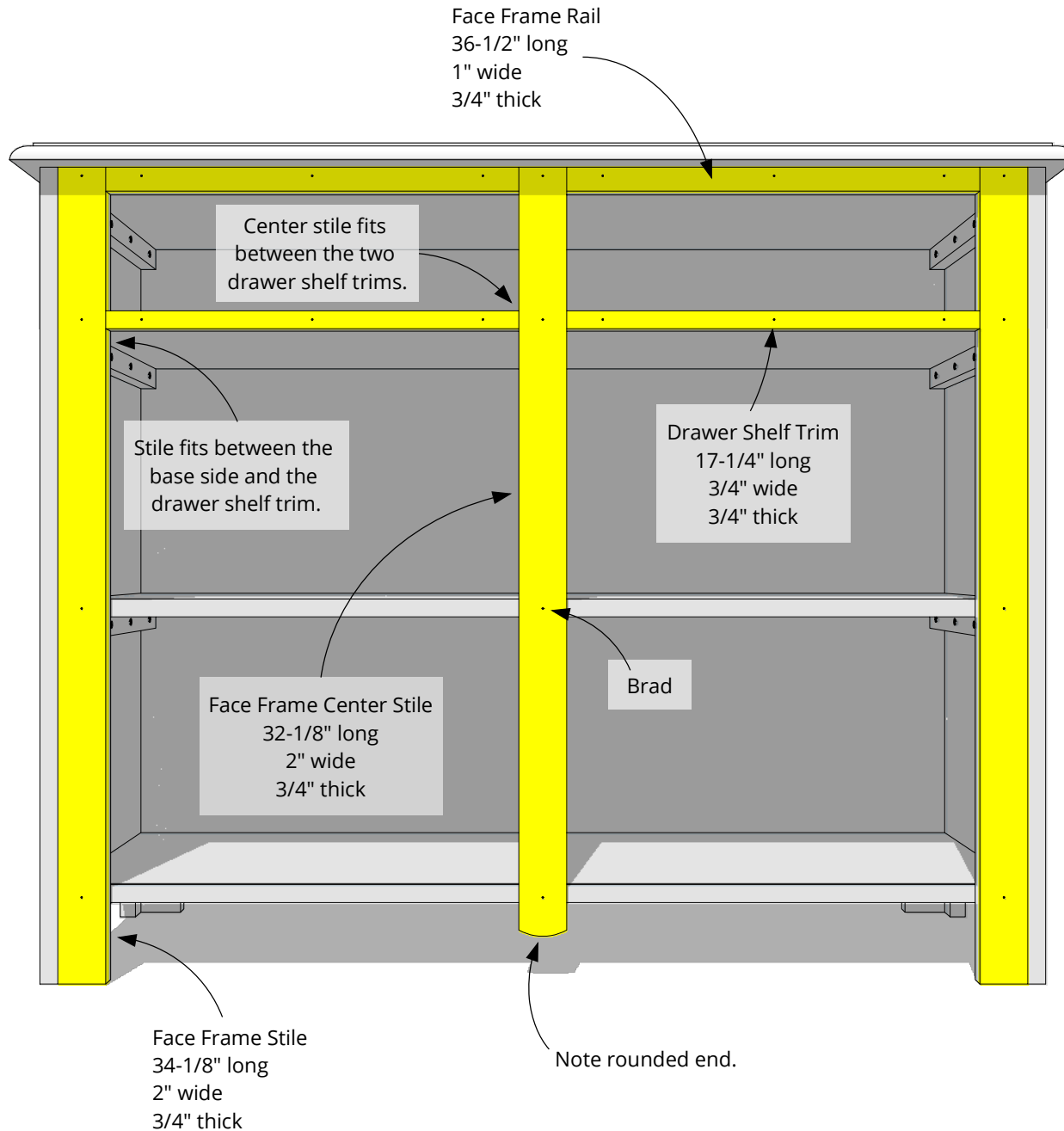
Green: Add the drawer shelf - The drawer shelf cleats are located 26-3/8" above the floor and is flush with the back rabbet. Attach with glue and screws.

Red: Add the second lower shelf - the cleats for this shelf are located 14-3/8" above the floor and is flush with the back rabbet. Attach with glue and screws.

Add the back by positioning it within the rabbets along the back edge of the sides and attach with screws. Drive screws through the back and into the various shelves as shown.

Cut aways. The image below includes cut aways in the side and back to provide detail.



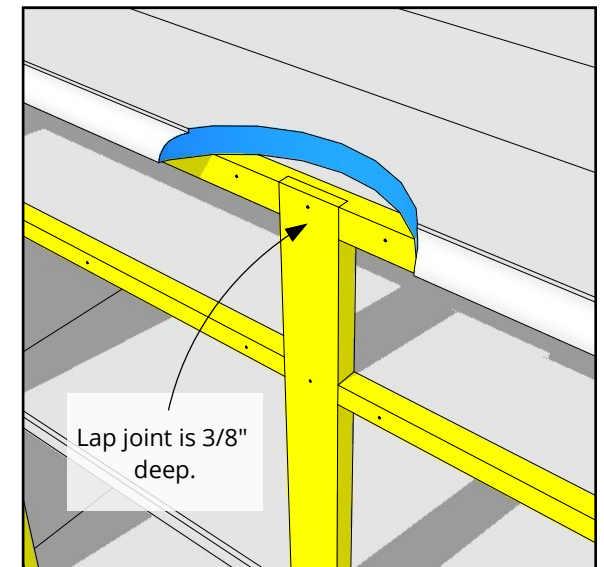


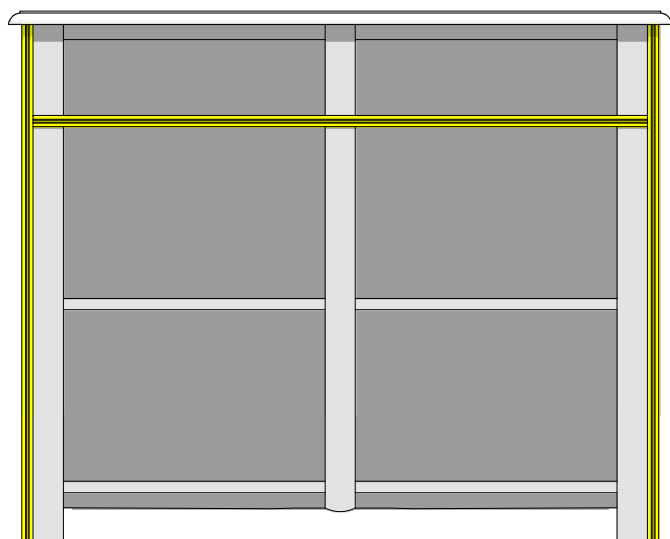
The face frame is next. Cut the various parts to size. Just as is common with rustic, rural furniture, these parts are nailed in place and this simple joinery is enhanced with glue.

The left and right face frame stiles are placed flush with the front edge of the base sides.

Create a lap joint where the face frame center stile intersects the face frame rail (see cut away image below) and form a rounded end on the center stile as shown.

Attach the face frame stiles, face frame center stile, face frame rail and the two drawer shelf trims to the base cabinet with brands and glue.

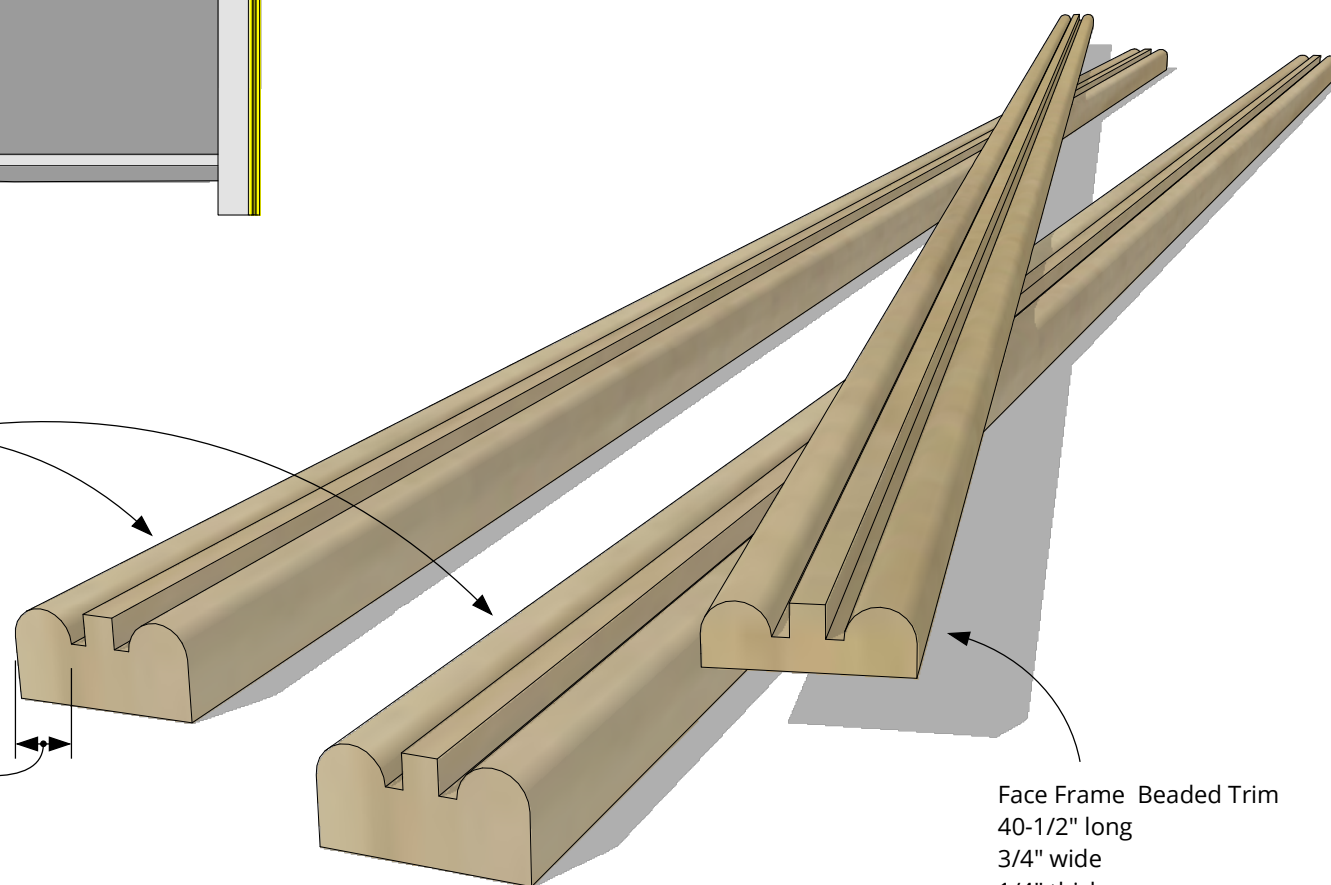




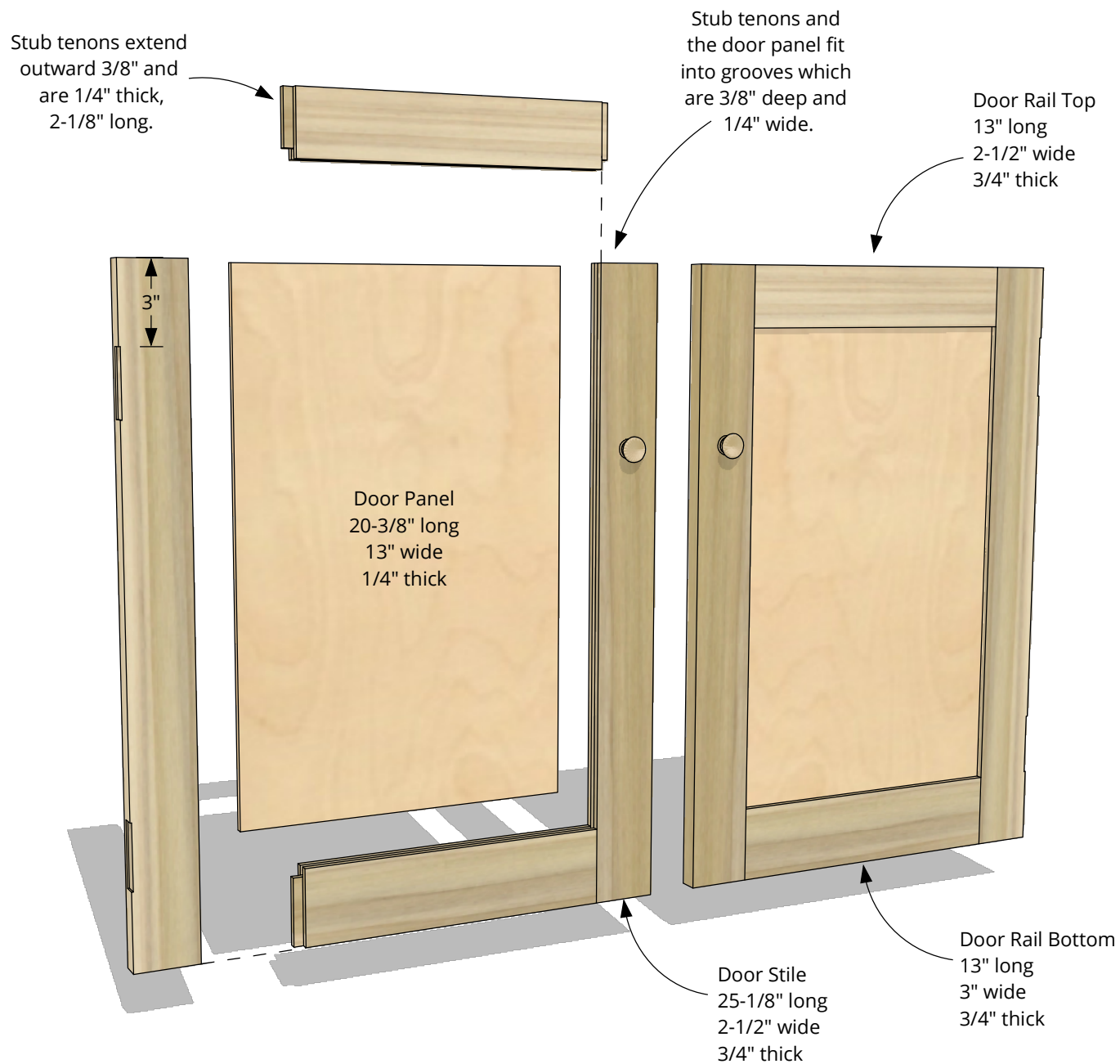
Add some style. Add the beaded trim to the front edge of the sides and the face frame below the drawer openings (highlighted in yellow at left). You can make the beaded trim with a router equipped with an appropriate beading bit. See item number 812858 at Woodcraft.com. Or create a similar profile using your table saw making a small "V" shaped groove and rounding the edges. Note the face frame beaded trim isn't as thick as the side beaded trim. Attach the trim using glue.

Side Beaded Trim
34-1/8" long
3/4" wide
3/8" thick

1/4"



Face Frame Beaded Trim
40-1/2" long
3/4" wide
1/4" thick



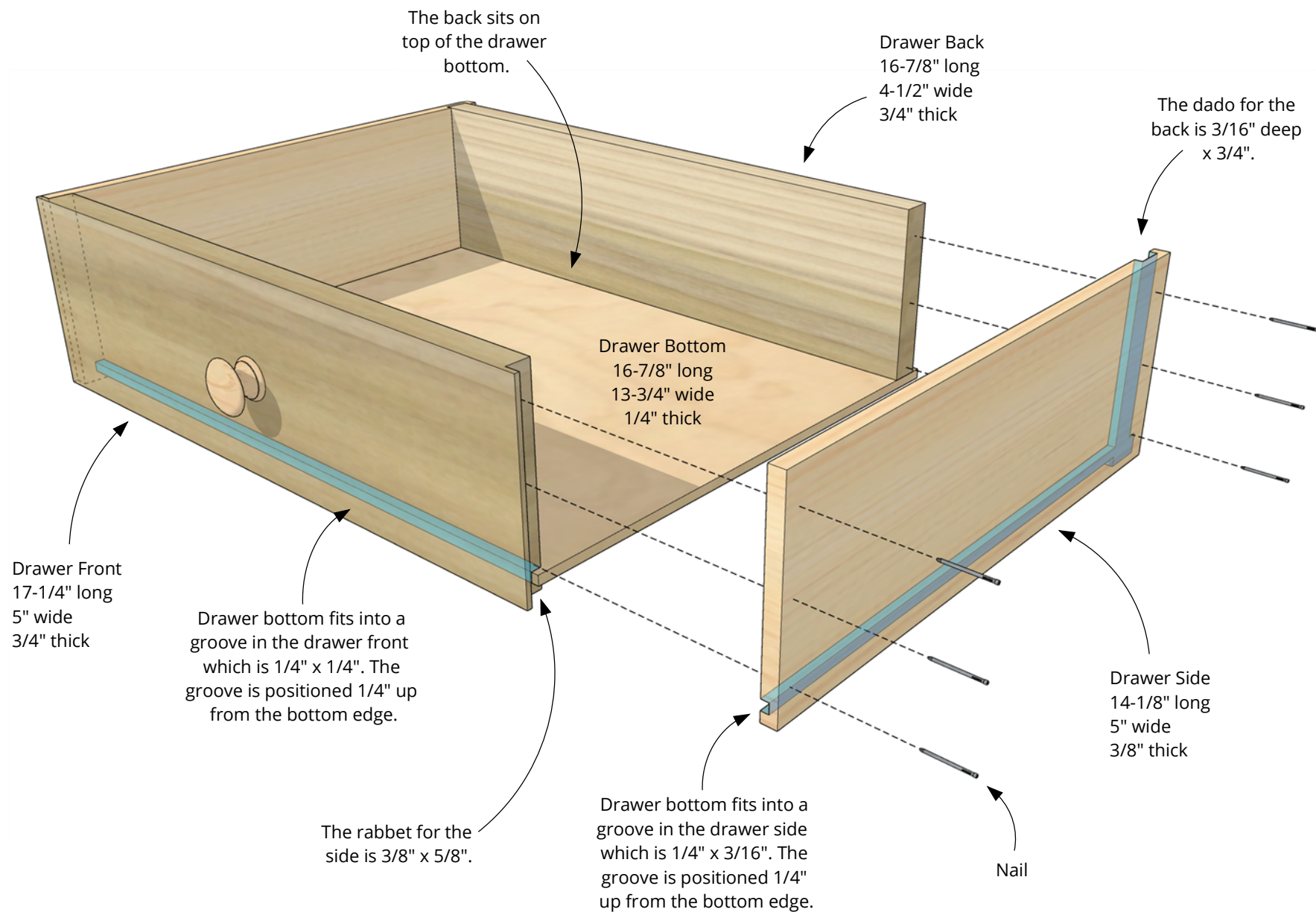
Another big step: building the doors. These doors are identical in size and are inset doors. To achieve a proper fit, it's best to make them slightly bigger than their openings and then trim them back to fit. For example, add 1/8" width to the door rail and stile dimensions and then size them to the cabinet openings. Note that the bottom door rail is 3" wide and the door rail top is 2-1/2" wide.

Joinery is stub tenon and groove with glue. The panel, which is 1/4" plywood, can float in their corresponding 3/8" grooves or you can add glue.

The knob is centered on the width of the door stiles and the center of the knob is 7-1/8" from the top.

Once the doors are assembled and fitted, add a mortise to accept hinges. The hinge mortises are located 3" from the ends of the door stiles. Make a corresponding mortise in the face frame stiles and attach the doors. Add magnetic door catches (page 23).

Next page: Cut the drawer components to size, create the grooves and dados, and assemble with nails and glue.





Let's pause and take a look at where we are. We have the base cabinet completed.

The doors are mounted and fit well. The drawers are completed and they slide well also.

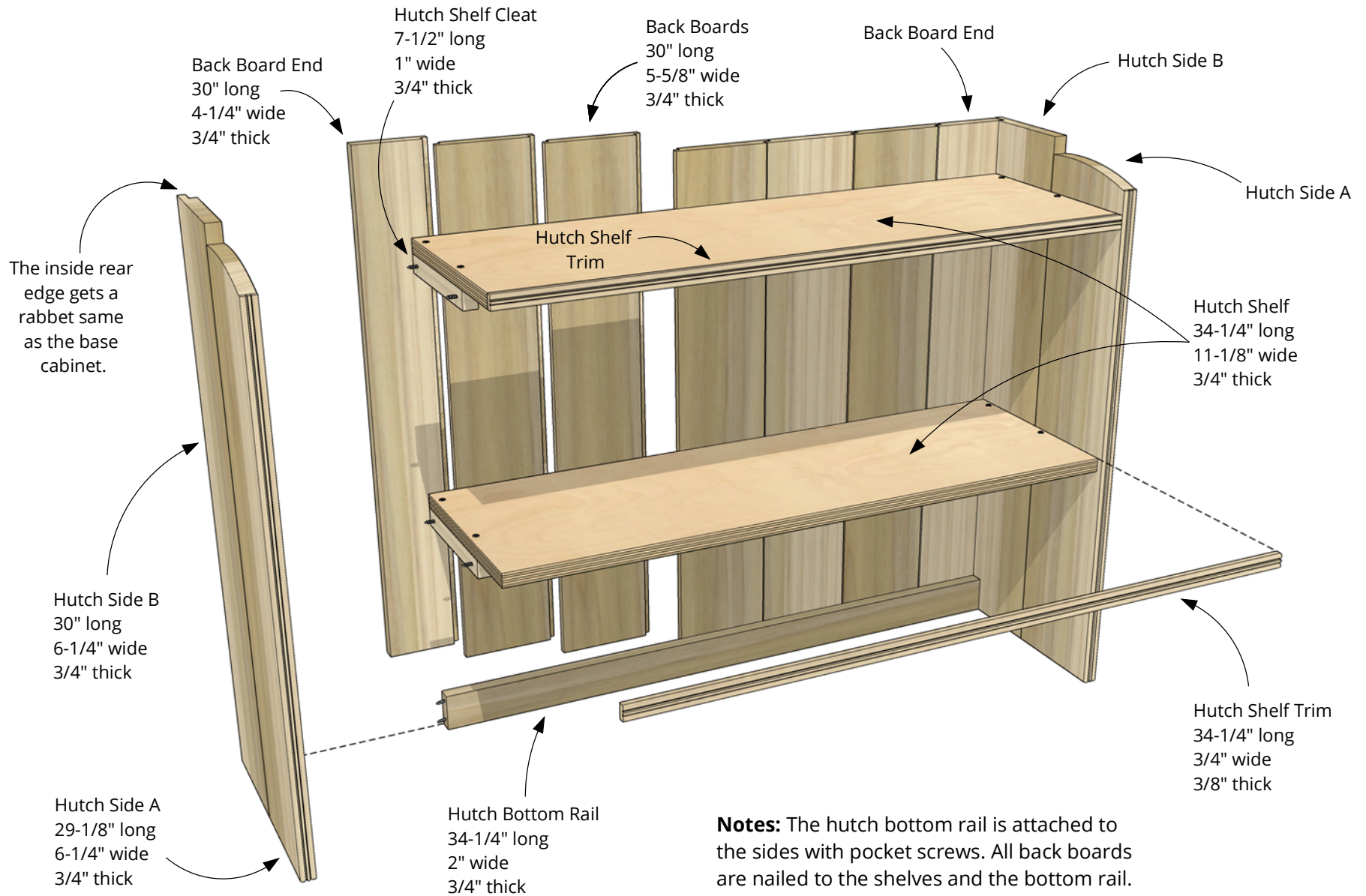
All the parts have been sanded up to 150 grit paper.

Build the Hutch

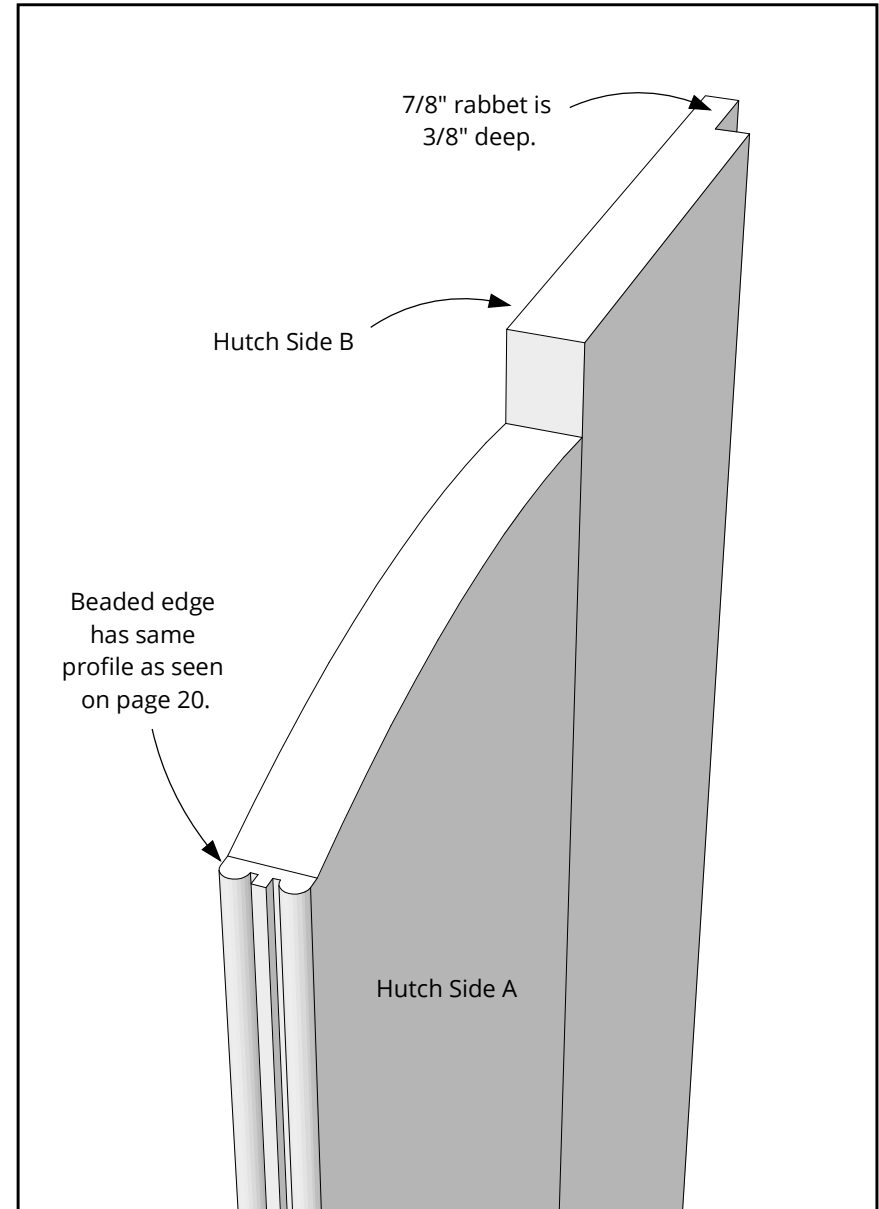
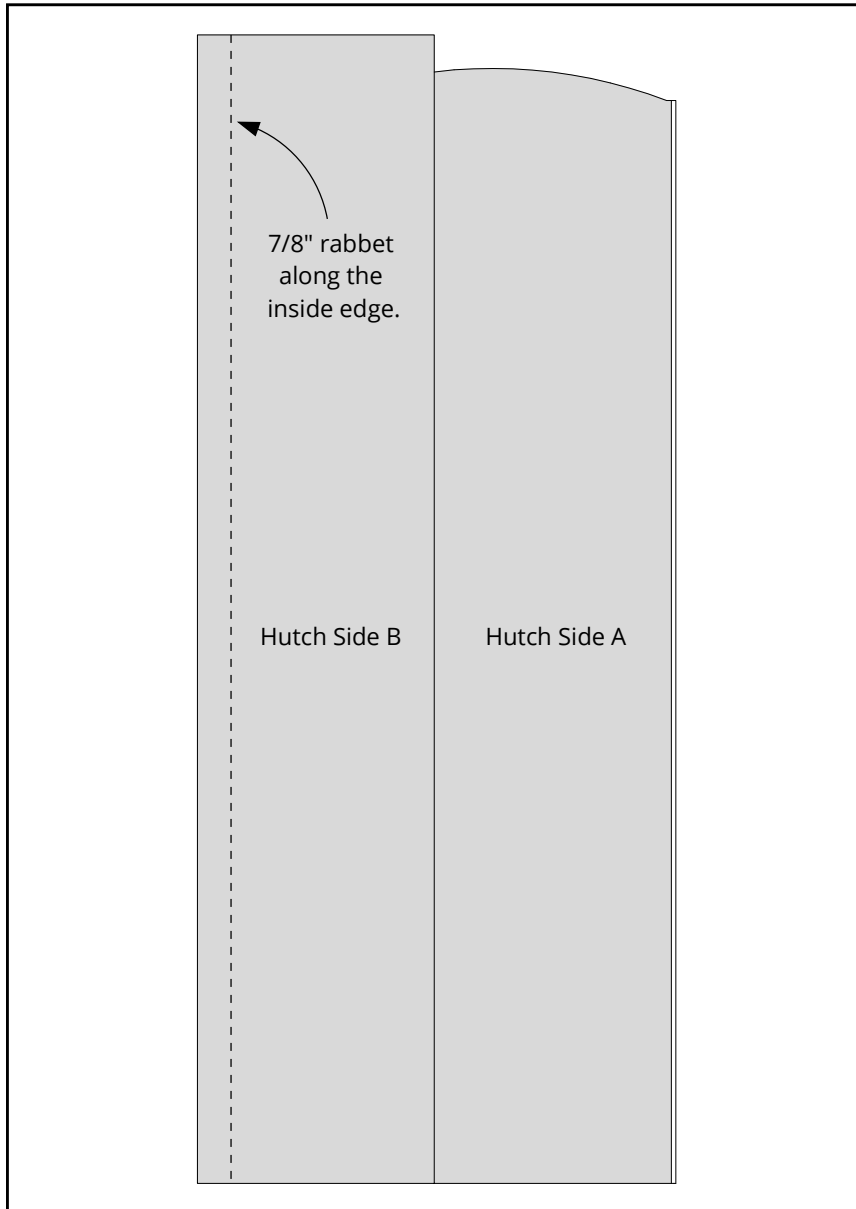
The next step: complete the hutch. The process is similar to building the base. Create the shelves by cutting them to size. Add beaded trim to the front of the shelves and attach the shelf cleats with screws and glue.

Begin creating the sides by first forming hutch side A. Cut it to length and width, then add the curved profile to the top as seen on page 26. Create the beaded profile on the front edge (it is the same profile as shown on page 20). This is not an applied trim; the beaded profile is cut directly on the front edge of side A. Cut side B to final size and form a rabbet as seen on page 25. Glue the side boards together.

Build the Hutch



Notes: The hutch bottom rail is attached to the sides with pocket screws. All back boards are nailed to the shelves and the bottom rail.

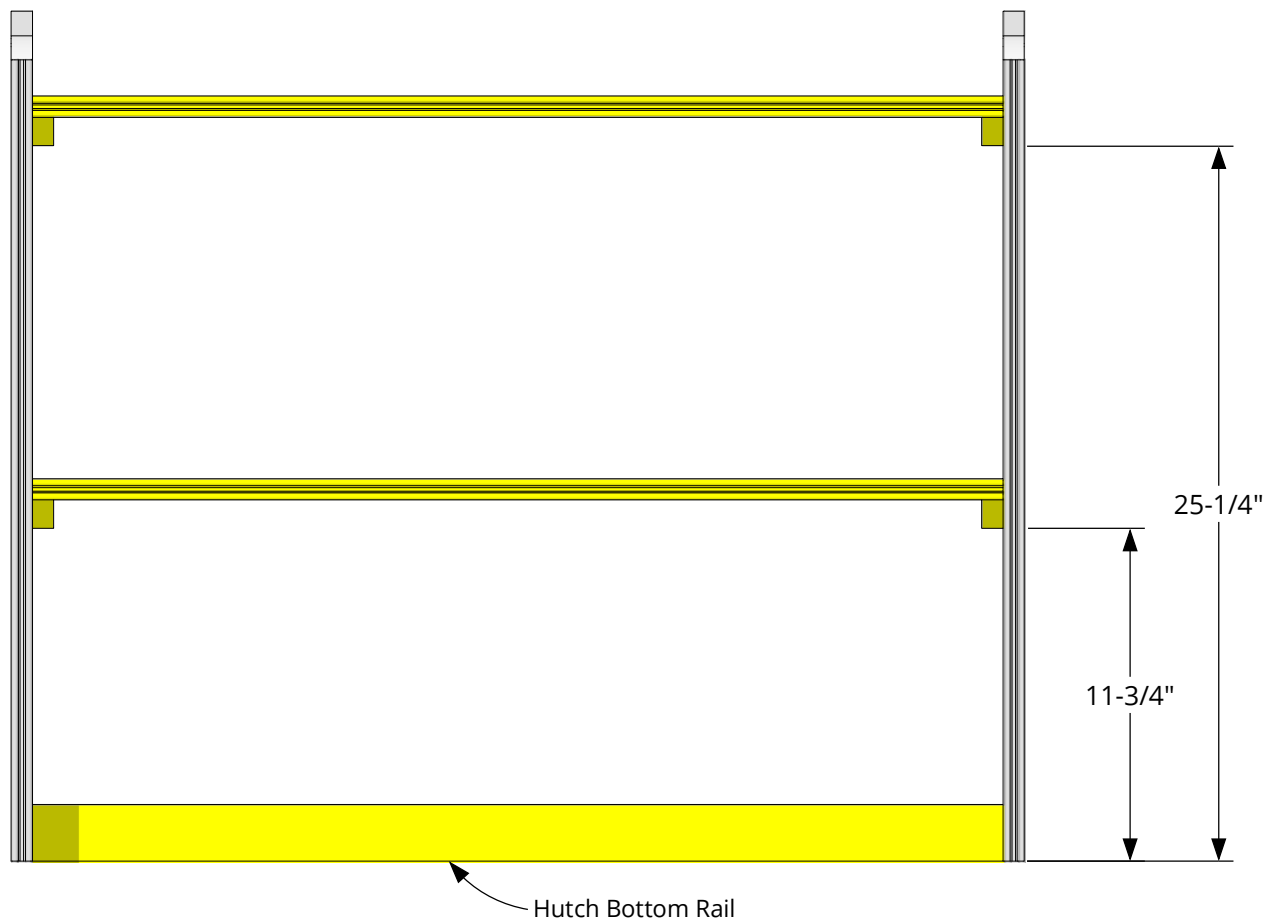


Full size view of hutch side curved profile.

Beaded edge.

Hutch Side B
(partial view)

Hutch Side A
(partial view)

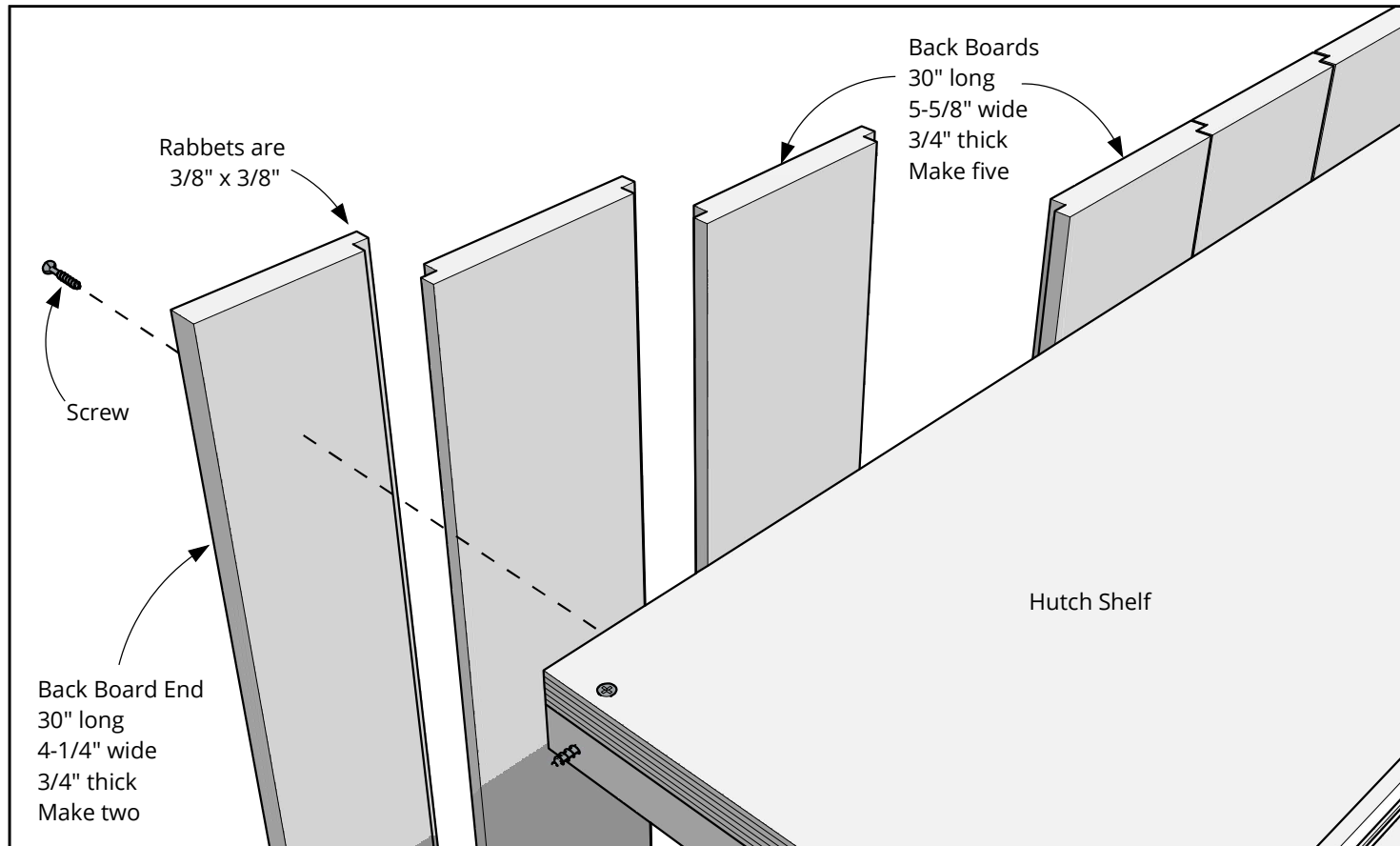


The case for the hutch begins to take shape by attaching the shelves to the sides. This is accomplished by first cutting the hutch shelves to size and adding the shelf trim with glue and brads. Attach the hutch shelf cleats to the shelves using glue and screws.

Attach the hutch shelf assemblies to the sides using screws. See the cleat locations in the image at left. The rear edge of the shelves/cleats are flush with the rabbet in the back inside edge of the sides (page 25). Make sure the case is square.

Next add the hutch bottom rail using pocket screws making sure the screw pockets are located towards the back. The back of the bottom rail should be flush with the side rabbet.





Add the back boards as shown (I have hidden the sides so you can see better). The back board ends are more slender than the remaining back boards. The end boards fit in the rabbets in the hutch sides. The back boards and the ends are sized to all some space for expansion and contraction. It is a good idea to pre-paint these boards to ensure proper coverage should the boards contract.

Space these boards evenly across the back and attach them to the hutch by driving nails or screws through the

back into the shelves and the bottom rail. It's important that all these boards align well at the top.

Final Sanding

At this point, your hutch is finished. Inspect all surfaces for any repairs and fix them. Since the hutch will be painted, repairs will be easier. Fill all nail holes with a quality wood filler and sand any areas which need attention.

Before we can call this project finished, we have to decide what finish we will put on it. If you search the internet for "distressed painted furniture technique" you will find almost three million results.

Before you do anything, practice different techniques on scrap lumber. I think the most simple approach is to start with Minwax Water Based Wood Stain in Colonial Pine following the directions.

Once dry, sand with a 300 grit paper. Follow the stain with a latex paint of your choice. Some people like to use two colors; your final color on top with a contrasting color underneath. Use a fine abrasive pad or sand paper to rub through the layers of paint revealing the wood stain underneath. Focus on areas that would normally get wear like around the door and drawer pulls.

There are plenty of YouTube videos showing a variety of techniques. Choose the one which best fits your skill level and give it a try.

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