

Easy Cold Frame

After Ray Anderson of Rhode Island built a dollhouse for his daughter, he adapted some of the construction ideas to an easy cold frame. The nice thing about this cold frame is that it goes together quickly and also breaks down and stores handily once warm weather sets in.



Although the plan at the bottom of the page shows the dimensions of Ray's cold frame, it would work in almost any size, depending on how much space you have in your garden and what you'll be growing in it. If you overwinter tender shrubs, you'll need a larger one than if you just get an early start on pepper seedlings. Ray suggests measuring your seed-starting flats and trays before you start to make sure the cold frame fits your equipment.

After he determined the cold frame's final size, Ray bought a few sheets of 1/2-inch plywood. Then he measured two side pieces (A), a back piece (B) and a front piece (C). Third, Ray cut the plywood to fit, making sure that the interlocking slits were cut to the thickness of the plywood plus 1/8 inch so they slid together easily (see illustration).

Once the sections were cut out, Ray painted one side of each sheet white. When he put the cold frame together, the white side faced in to increase the amount of light bouncing around inside the cold frame. One caution: Don't use a waterproofing sealer on the inside of the frame — the fumes could damage tender seedlings.

After he slid the pieces together, Ray stapled clear, heavy plastic to the top of the frame. On warm days, prop the whole contraption up on edge to let air circulate and prevent plants from getting too warm.

