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Pallet toe-pincher coffin

I had a bunch of pallets and I thought they be great wood to make an old-looking coffin. So here is my first how-to.



My inspiration for this project is ScareFx's \$25 Full-size toe-pincher coffin.

To make my version I used 4 pallets (2 small and 2 large) to give me enough wood for the top and sides. (free)

Obtained from
Omarshauntedtrail.com

Other materials:

- 1 sheet of plywood (\$20)
- 1 box of 1 inch dry wall screws (coarse thread) (\$5)
- 1 box of 1 3/4 inch dry wall screws (coarse thread) (\$5)
- 3 (6 foot by 6 inch) fence posts (\$5)
- 10' 5/8" manila rope (\$5)
- Three 4" black strap hinges (gate hinges) (\$13)
- 20' decor chain (\$16)
- 6 nails (free)
- (optional) rusty lock, coat-of-arms

Total cost of materials: \$70

Tools needed:

- Drill (1/8" bit, 7/8" bit)
- Sharpie
- Square
- Hand saw
- *Reciprocating saw*
- *Circular saw*
- *(optional) jig saw*
- *Tape measure*
- *Two saw horses*
- *Occasional helper...*



Use a reciprocating saw to cut off the nails from the pallets to separate the boards. This is a lot of work and you need a helper to hold up the pallet as you cut.

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Lay out the best narley pieces of wood to make your lid. Mine is 6 feet long and 27 inches at the widest point.



To make three cross braces to attach the pallet wood together at the top, center and bottom; measure the center of the lid and subtract 4 inches to get 23 inches.

Take one of the 6 foot, by 6 inch fence posts and cut off, using a circular saw, 23 inches to give you your first cross brace.

You need this piece to be wider so you can attach the two sets of wood together. Now you have the center cross brace.

Then, cut the remaining fence board in half, using the circular saw, to give you two 3 inch wide boards. Use this wood to cut the remaining top and bottom cross braces being sure to give yourself a 2 inch gap on each side of the finished lid. This is an approximate length, you may need to hand saw overhanging cross braces. You will see I needed to do that in a couple more steps.

You need the 2 inch gaps in the cross braces to give you clearance for the sides of the coffin when the lid is attached.



At the top, bottom and middle: slide a section of the fence post underneath. Leave a 2 inch space from all sides.



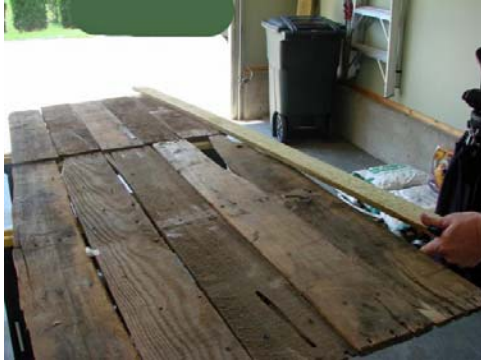
First, a word about pre-drilling. Do not skip this step. Pallet wood is old and it really wants to split. If you do not pre-drill your holes it will split like no ones' business. You've been warned....

Pre-drill holes (2 for each board) and screw in 1 inch drywall screws into the cross brace. Repeat the procedure for the top and bottom being sure to leave yourself a 2-inch gap.



Flip over and add another cross brace for stability. I used a skinny piece of pallet wood for that.

In case you noticed. The center cross brace in my picture isn't wider (6 inches) than the other top and bottom cross brace. That was a mistake of mine. The wider piece is easier to screw into the two sets of wood.



You will now mark the outline of the toe-pincher.

For the bottom angle: Take a long board and starting 16 inches from the top and 3 inches from the edge of the bottom, mark a straight line.

Repeat for the other side. For the top angle: start at that same 16 inch mark and 3 inches from the edge of the top side, make a mark. Repeat for the other side.



Using the circular saw, cut off marked edge to form the shape of your coffin.

You must make sure that the cross braces gives you enough clearance for the sides when you close it. If too long, cut off with a hand saw.



Lid nearly done but not nearly scary enough...

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Pre-drill and screw in accent boards to give it a creepier look.

They also firm up the boards if you screw in each board to the accent piece.



Cut off edge of accent boards with saw.



Top is done!!!!



For the bottom of the coffin, there is no need to use pallet wood. Plywood is fine.

Place top of lid on the plywood and trace out.

Be sure to swing one side of the top lid to the edge of the plywood so it saves you from not having to cut out one of the sides.



Here you can see the pattern made.



Cut out bottom using circular saw. Bottom and top is now complete.



First, decide how deep you want your coffin. To me, 12 inches is too shallow and 18 inches is too deep. I settled on 15 inches.

Now determine which pieces of pallet wood would work for the header, footer, two sides and two angle sides.

Pick evil-looking wood for best effect. The wood sitting at the foot of the coffin is long enough to make the header and footer when I cut it in half.



Lay out the side wood to get ready to screw together using the plywood bottom as a working table.

Make sure that you have enough wood to make the sides at least 14 inches deep. (1/2 inch bottom plus 1/2 lid plus 14 inches equals 15 inch deep coffin.)



To make the needed cross braces: Using the remaining fence board wood from the lid construction that was cut in half (3 inch wide piece) and cut off twelve 12 inch long pieces.

If you don't have enough wood, grab another fence post cut in half lengthwise and continue to cut your needed pieces.

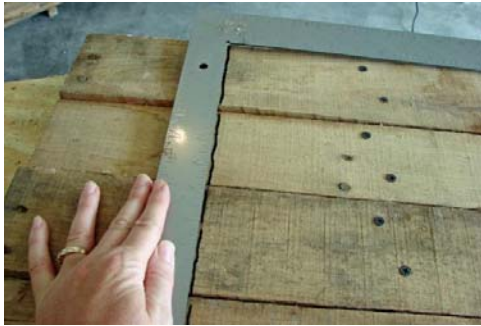
Grab another fence post (6 inch wide) and cut off two 12-inch pieces.

Using the same procedure you used to make the lid, pre-drill and screw in the side boards into the cross braces. First use the 3 inch wide cross brace for each set of pallet wood and then use the 6 inch wide cross brace to join the two sets together. Be sure to have the cross brace level with the bottom of the side. There will be a large gap left at the top. This will allow the lid to clear when closed.



Here's how the side looks when held up on the bottom.

Mark where the side of the coffin angles away to the header. You will be cutting the excess of the side off.



Using a square, mark off the needed amount. Cut off with a circular saw.



Sides are done. Make the top angle sides and the header and footer but do not cut to the proper fit. You will do that later on.

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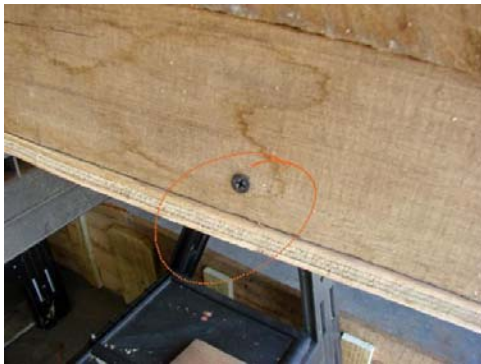


Using the thick wood from the center spine of the pallet wood, cut off 3 to 5 inch pieces of wood. You will need 8 pieces total.

While side is held up in place, slide up one of the pieces of wood you just cut. That will serve as the anchor for the side. Mark the placement with a Sharpie. Put side back down on floor.



Pre-drill and screw in 1 3/4 " screws in three places on the wood anchor. Use two wood anchors for the one side. Repeat process to attach the other side to the bottom.



Pre-drill and screw in 1 3/4" screws into the wood anchor. Do a total of three screws for each anchor.



Measure the opening at the footing between the two sides. Using your square, measure that on the footer/header piece and cut the footer out with a circular saw.



Again, mark where a wood anchor is needed for the footer, pre-drill and screw in. Then, attach the footer to the wood anchor. You can see that I also had a space open for my wiring to go through for the MIB I will be making the coffin into.



Pre-drill and screw in each side into the footer.
I screwed in each board to make it very solid.



Now for the angle sides. Measure the distance from the end of the side to the header. Using your square, mark off and cut the side to fit.

Mark, pre-drill and screw in anchor wood and attach the angle side.



To add strength, use another cross wood to span the side and the angle side together. Pre-drill and screw in from the other side.

Screw in each board to cross wood.

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Follow same procedure for the footer to attach the header. All the sides are on!



As you can see, there are cross braces everywhere! I hope you remembered to leave a 2 inch clearance at the top or the lid won't fit on.



Measuring from the bottom plywood, mark the perimeter of the coffin 14 1/2 inches high. Cut this out with the circular saw.



Cut is done and pretty even.

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To add rigidity, pre-drill and screw in 1 3/4 screws from the bottom up to the cross pieces in the inside. Do that for each one.

Also, go around and screw in all loose boards until you feel comfortable that it is strong. I did this because this will end up being a MIB and will take punishment from pneumatics.



Lid fits nicely. Now it needs an accent piece on both sides. Again screw the accent piece to each board to make it much more rigid.



Now with accent piece. Much scarier. In part III I will add hinges and rope handles and call the coffin build DONE!

The final touches to the coffin. I added rope handles, hinges and chains.



To make the rope handles measure and mark two holes 7 inches apart halfway up from the bottom of the coffin. Get it as close to the angled part of the coffin as you can.



Drill out with a 7/8 bit.

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Buy 10 feet of 5/8 inch manila rope at Home Depot. Cut into four lengths (2 1/5 feet each). Insert one rope into the hole and knot. Repeat for the other side.



Put two handles on each side of the coffin.



Screw in three 4-inch black strap hinges (gate hinges) onto the long side of the coffin.



I bought 20 feet of decor chain at Home Depot. Regular link chains are pretty expensive and heavy (\$2 a foot).

This was only 77 cents a foot and had a good rattling sound. I separated the chain into two 10 foot lengths. I will drape the extra chain onto the back nails to add to the rattling sound.



To attach the chain to the bottom: I slightly hammer in a nail, hook the chain over it and hammer the nail again to bend it over the chain.



To keep the chains from falling off the edges I put a nail in each corner. I thought this coffin was done but DH suggested I put a giant lock where the chains cross and a bat plaque or coat-of-arms in the center of the coffin. Good ideas...darn him.