



http://www.hauntedhousemakers.com/CemeteryGate_one.aspx



As seen in Haunted Attractions Magazine Issue#33

Most people do not like to think about death, or one of its constant reminders, cemeteries! The place we could all end up someday gives most of us an uneasy feeling. This natural creation to a graveyard is why they are so ubiquitous in Haunted Attractions. While tombstones and low-lying fog are the "body" of the cemetery, a well-made entrance can greatly contribute to that suspension of disbelief and sense of unease by adding a level of realism. The entrance to your necropolis serves to set the atmosphere and builds anticipation while holding your patrons captive, preparing them for what is to come. Building a cemetery gateway can be a simple and fun project, and adds a finishing (or beginning) touch to your cemetery.

Materials

4 - 1" x 12" x 8' Pine boards

4 - 1" x 10" x 8' Pine boards

Four 4' x 8' x 1/2" OSB/Plywood Sheets

4 - 2" x 4" x 8' (2x4s)

One Sheet Luan Wood (thin)

One Box 2 1/2" Finish Nails

One Box 1 1/2" Finish Nails

One Box 1" Finish Nails

One Box 3" Drywall Screws

Two Lanterns (your choice)

1" Molding (optional)

2" Crown Molding (optional)

2 - Flicker Bulbs

2 - Cable Clamps

2 - Electrical Boxes for lanterns

2 - 9' Extension cord with ground

Sand Paper (several grades)

Wood Glue

Wood Filler

- **Electrical**

Begin by removing one "knock out" plug from each electrical box, and secure an electrical cable clamp into each of the holes. Cut the female end off the extension cords and push the stripped end into the box through the clamp. Strip the shielding from the wire ends and connect them to the lantern using wire nuts and electrical tape. Once the wire nuts are securely taped in place, screw in the flicker lamp bulbs and plug in each lantern to be sure that they are working. Tighten the cable clamps and set the electrical items aside.

- **Construction**

Cut the four 1 x 10s and the four 1 x 12s to a length of 7'. On the center of the 1 x 12s, about three quarters of the way up, locate the point where you would like to install the lantern and mark the center point. This is an aesthetic choice; mine were about 24 inches from the end of the board.

Using a 2" hole saw and a keyhole saw, cut about a hole at this location big enough to fit the electrical box into. Secure the box to the board and then install the hardware that comes with the lantern attachment to the face of the box. Attach the lantern temporarily into place, and check for a good fit. Then remove the lanterns and set them aside.

For each of the two columns, you will use two of the 1 x 12s and two of the 1 x 10 boards. The boards of similar size will be opposing each other as you assemble the column. Attach the four boards to each other using the 1 - 1/2" finish nails to create a 7' rectangular tube, and repeat the process for the other column. Check the construction for sturdiness and then counter sink the finish nails about 1/8" using a nail set. Fill the holes and any cracks with filler and let them dry. When the filler dries you can sand and smooth all edges.

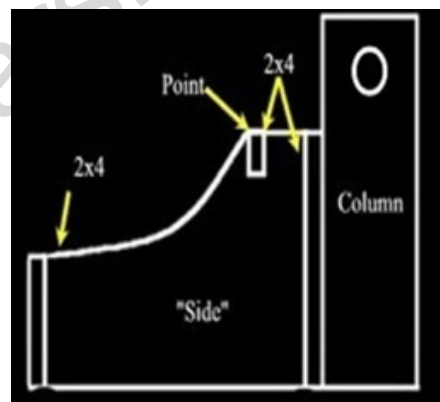
Sketch out a basic arch on one sheet of Plywood. Use the full width of the 48" plywood and mark the two points as shown below:

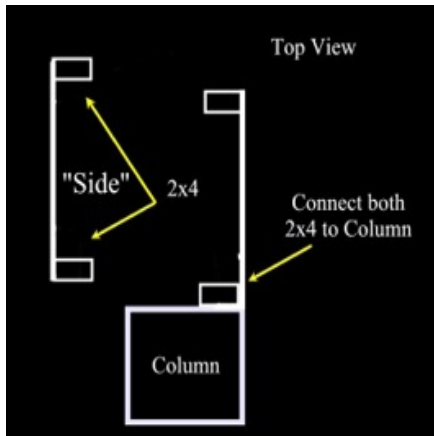


The radius of the curve is about 7' , and the center point is directly above the edge of the plywood with the 25" length. Take your time during this part. A pencil and a long piece of string come in handy, as does a helper. When you are satisfied with the shape, cut out the arch using a jigsaw. Sand the edges and smooth out any waves or rough spots. This piece will be your template to make the other three front and back "sides" needed to create the two arches. When you are finished with the first one, use it to trace out the pattern on the plywood to create three more exactly like it.

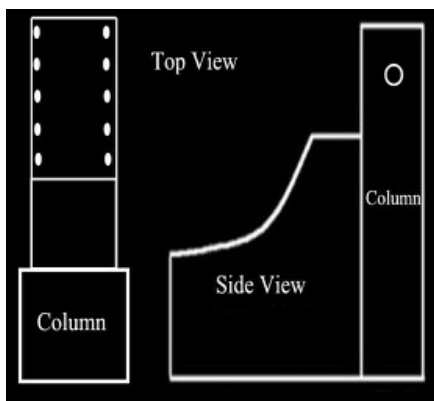
Using the 2 x 4s, cut 4 pieces 48" long, 4 pieces 25" long, and 2 pieces 7' long. These boards will be used to attach the front and back arches together to form the finished pieces. Nail the 48" and the 25" 2 x 4s to the arch sides making two mirror images of each other. Attach these arch halves to the columns using the 3" drywall screws through the two 48" pieces. Make sure they are centered on the column and are 10" apart face to face. Then take the 7' piece and tack it on the flat part of the piece where the curve hits the 48" side. This becomes a spacer between the two arch sides.

From the plywood scraps left over from the arches, cut two rectangles 25" L x 10" W and nail them to the upright 2 x 4s of the arch pieces. They should be flush with the 2 x 4s. then cut two 7' L x 10" W pieces and nail them flush onto the horizontal 2 X 4s on the two arch pieces. For the curved surface, cut a piece of Luan 10" W x 7' L. This is a little longer than you need, but you can test fit the piece and cut it to actual length. Run a bead of wood glue along the curved edges of the arch, and starting flush at the end near the 25" 2 X 4s, use 1" finish nails to tack the luan down along the edges nailing it to the 10" plywood edges, curving it slowly as you go (See Below)





Next, cut two 14" X 12" pieces for the tops of the columns and nail all them down using the 2???" finish nails (See Left)

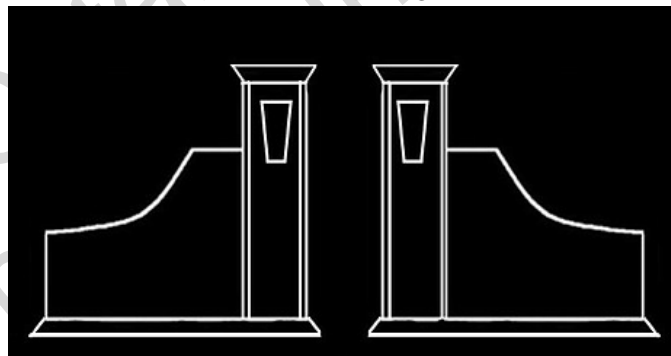


Use the 2" hole saw or paddle bit to drill a hole in the bottom and back of the column to run electrical plug through and install the lanterns. The gateway is now functional, but kind of plain. Now it depends on the finished look you want for your gateway. To add detail to the columns I attached 2" crown molding around the top of the columns and around the whole base of the gateway and 1 " molding along the column edges with 1" finish nails (See Left)

Complete the look of you gateway by painting it to look like faux stone or with a marble finish. For added effect you can distress the gateway with rust stains or add some vines for that true abandoned look.

While most of us will end up in a graveyard someday, no one likes the uneasy feeling that a cemetery brings. A cemetery gateway serves to set the atmosphere, and builds anticipation while holding your patrons captive.

Here is how the finished project should look like:



Tops & Both Molding Sets Completed

Start by painting it all with a dark base color. I used Monster Mud® (Terror Syndicate) which I mixed a little black latex paint into, then mixed thoroughly and covered the entire posts. Let dry. This will then be painted with an additional lighter gray and splotted on black paint from a spray can for added effect. You may also want to use a "Web Shooter" or stretchy web for an even more added effect.

I'll talk about the arch sign, which connects the two posts, a little later.

Good luck and Remember: "Always wear safety protection and use caution when operating saws or other dangerous power tools.

(Word of Advice: It's always easier if somebody helps you out. Believe me you'll need it!!!!)

Here are a few additional pictures of the Entrance to give you a

