

DIY: Oversized dummy boards

By Steve Davies

These I have found to be very useful particularly during a Bailey Comb Change and for growing a nucleus into a full colony.

I make several two-frame and three-frame dummy boards as this gives me extra flexibility and, in the case of the Bailey Comb Change, whatever you put in the bottom brood box needs to be replicated in the top. For this you will need at least four of each size.

The measurements given will be for a three-frame dummy board to fit a 14x12 brood box. I have found it helpful to have an empty frame to use as a template (or the component parts).

Other than the top bar, the thickness of the timber is not critical but the top bar must be 10mm to maintain bee space. The width also does not need to be exact but these measurements replicate two and three frames in the brood box and makes life easier.

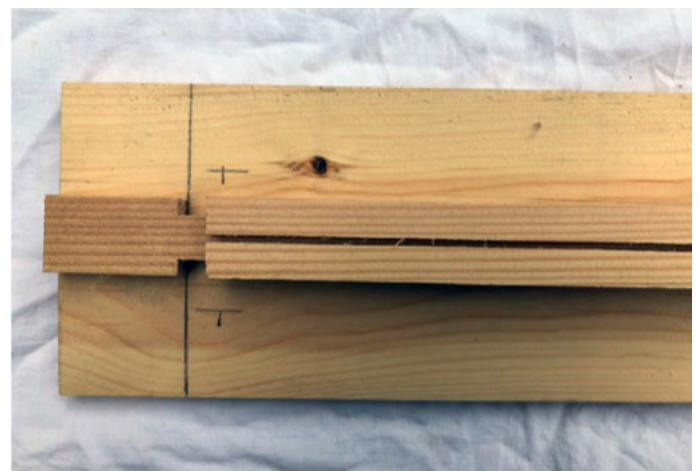
Materials needed:

- One length 432mm x 95mm x 10mm prepared timber for the top bar (length x width x thickness).
- Two lengths 270mm x 95mm x 20mm for the side bars.
- One length 355mm x 95mm x 20mm for the bottom bar.
- Two sections of 5mm plywood 355mm x 300mm.
- 8 x 50mm lost head nails.
- Small amount of good quality wood glue.
- Selection of frame nails.



Construction:

- Having cut the timber to size, mark the top bar 38mm from each end. Alternatively, use a standard top bar as the template but make sure you use the outer rebate for the mark.



- Then, mark and drill two holes either end on the inside of the lines. These will secure the side bars so they need to be half the width of your timber; ie. if using 20mm thick wood, drill the holes 10mm from the line.
- Repeat the same process on the ends of the bottom bar, again, half the width of the side bars.
- Apply a liberal amount of wood glue to one end of a side bar. Align that end to one of the top bar lines and nail together. Do not drive the nail fully home just yet to allow for minor adjustments.
- Repeat the process on the other side bar.
- Make sure both side bars are at right angles to the top bar and then drive the nails fully home. Wipe off any surplus glue.
- Next, apply a liberal amount of wood glue to the ends of both side bars then nail the bottom bar to both. Again,

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check that the frame is reasonably square before driving the nails fully home.

- Lay the frame on one side and apply wood glue around the edge of the side bars, bottom bar and top bar (between the side bars only – do not extend along the full length).
- Place one piece of 5mm plywood on top of the glue making sure it is aligned with the outside edges of the framework. Don't worry if it protrudes slightly, this will be fixed at the end!
- Using either a staple / nail gun (or simply a hammer and frame nails), evenly nail down the plywood using about four nails per edge.
- Turn the frame over and repeat the same process. Wipe off any surplus glue as you go along.
- Once the glue has set, sand down any overlaps of the plywood/frame. Then sand down the complete dummy board especially the edges of the plywood – nothing worse than getting plywood splinters, they're almost invisible to find!
- That's it, your dummy board is ready to use. There is no need to treat or paint this as it is inside the hive. You can, if required, fill this with compacted sawdust/Celotex for insulation.

The measurements for a two-frame 14 x 12 dummy board are as follows:

- Top bar – 432mm x 60mm x 10mm (length, width, thickness).
- Side bars – 270mm x 60mm x 20mm.
- Bottom bar – 355mm x 60mm x 20mm.
- 5mm plywood – 355mm x 300mm.

This method can easily be adapted for different frames, Langstroth, Dadant etc – just use an empty frame as your template. 