

## **Building a Garden Table**

Instructor: Dick Flanders  
Jan. 21, 28 Feb. 18, 25 Mar. 18, 25  
Stillwater Shop

Cost: \$120

This table is based on a bench Dick built last winter at the Banner Hill School of Woodworking in Windham, NY.

It is a major commitment which requires six class sessions as well as some homework. It involves the use of design and structural features and methods that are fundamental to all furniture building and will provide background and experience for many future projects.

The class will cover the range of basic design, selection of material, stock preparation, layout, rough sizing, cutting joints, dry fitting and assembly and then final assembly. Although the application of finish will not be part of the class the options and their advantages and disadvantages will be discussed.

We will make a table that I built this spring/summer to match the bench. This table is intended to be like a coffee table, but it could also be used as a flat top bench.

My unit is made from white oak so it will be durable outdoors in the garden. Joinery is all mortise and tenon, which will be roughed out with band or table saw and drill press, then fitted by hand cutting with chisels and planes.



This class is suitable for beginners through advanced woodworkers, although it will be advantageous to already know how to sharpen and use block planes and chisels. Having taken Tom Osborne and Bill VanBrunt's plane tuning and sharpening class would be ideal.

Class sessions will be 3 hours, 6:30 to 9:30 PM on Thursday evenings. Six sessions are scheduled for completion of the table.

If you have your own planes and chisels, they will be a real asset for this project. If you do not have these tools yet, you should seriously consider getting some.

The hand work to create this table is not overly difficult, but there are several mortises and tenons to cut. We will do the power tool cutting in class, but a lot of the chisel and plane work can be done at home between classes. Final fitting of joints will be done in class sessions and everyone should have a table/bench ready for the application of the finish at the end of the class.

The first session will involve a review of the table/bench that I have made. Class participants will create a drawing of their project (sizes could vary) and a material list. At this point we will decide what materials to use (white oak, cedar, mahogany, redwood, Douglas fir or other suitable material for outdoor use). Students will need to purchase their material and have it available for the next session. (Or we could go as a group to

Curtis Lumber or other sources and get the materials). (Note – NWA members are eligible for a 10% discount on hardwood products at Curtis Lumber).

The next session will involve layout of the materials for cutting, allowing adequate sizes to include the tenons. We will do the sawing of materials on either the table saw or band saws, then any jointing and planing necessary for final sizes. Top slats can be cut to width now, but leave length oversize until the base size is established.



The third session will involve layout location and sizes of the mortises. The drill press will be used to rough out the mortises after layout. Next we will layout the tenons and start to rough cut them. This will again involve use of the table saw and band saw. The fourth session will continue with the mortises, cutting them to final size with a chisel. Following this we will use a block plane and chisel to size the tenons for a snug fit-up.



Fifth session will continue the fit ups of tenons to the mortises. Once all the tenons are fit to their mortises, the tables will be dry assembled to verify everything goes together as planned. Depending on how you decide to attach the top slats, with pocket hole screws or with mortise & tenon, we will work on this part as well.

The sixth session will be the end – tables will be glued up and clamped so that they can be taken home for sanding and finishing as you desire. (If glue ups are not dry, plans can be made to pick up the tables the next day or another time after the last class). Students who have clamps available will be asked to bring them in prior to the dry assembly session and they can take their glued up table home with clamps in place if necessary.

We will discuss various finish options, but the actual finishing is up to you. That could actually be another class in itself, separate from the design and build process.

Tools recommended for this class:

- Chisels, 3/8", 1/2", 3/4" and 1" (Sharp & ready to use)
- Mortise chisels only if you care to hand cut the mortises
- Wooden or brass mallet for use with chisels
- #3 or #4 hand plane, block plane, and rabbet or shoulder plane. (Sharp & ready to use)
- #2 pencils and an eraser
- Sketch pad or other paper for your drawings of the table & parts
- 12" ruler and triangles or squares for drawing purposes
- Layout tools: mortise gage, rotary marker, marking knife, small square, tape measure or folding rule, (some or all of these tools will be used, but you can get by with just a couple of them)
- Clamps – sizes to be determined by the size of your project. These will be needed at dry fit up time (session 5) and the final glue up session.
- I will bring Forstner bits and brad point bits for the mortises. If you have your own, feel free to bring them. I will also bring a Kreg pocket hole jig.