

# **The Art of Dollhouse Miniatures**

Complete Instructions  
and Scale Plans

## **Miniature Garden Wheelbarrow Planter**



by The Dollhouse Miniatures Craftsman  
Al Latwaitis

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## General Comments

The material I used for this miniature wheelbarrow project is wooden coffee stirrers found at my local food store. I bought the stirrers for two dollars not knowing what I would make with them. I just couldn't pass up a whole fist full of "lumber" for my miniature modeling projects. Wooden strips are available at the various craft stores but those that I found were too large for this 1" scale project. (Although I bought some of them too. Just gotta have lumber, you know.) As it turned out, when I scaled down my full sized plans for a wheelbarrow planter the coffee stirrers were the exact width needed.

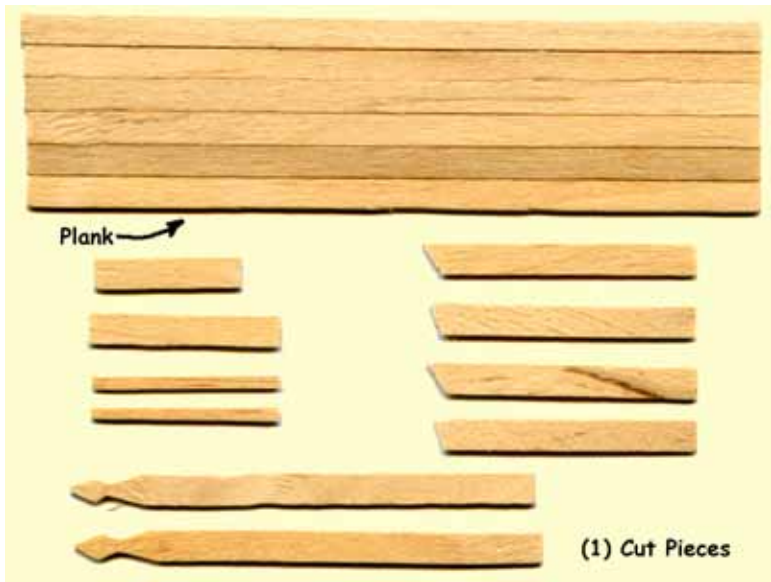
Other than a light wiping with 220 grit sandpaper, to remove some fuzzies, I did not do much sanding, wanting to keep the wood as rustic as possible. And because I knew I'd be staining the piece I wanted the stain to take to the grain of the wood as much as it could.

The cutting of the pieces is pretty straightforward. I used an Xacto knife making several passes for each cut. When cutting the angles and notches on the bottom piece, several passes (cuts) becomes very important as the wood is a hardwood and has a tendency to split. Also several cuts is safer when using the sharp xacto knife. Unwanted "red dye" on your project is very difficult to cover if you choose to paint it...lol...NO that's not why miniature wheelbarrow red!

I use Loctite's Gel Control Super Glue for just about all of my small wood projects. It provides just enough time to get the pieces into position, dries fairly fast (10-15 secs) and gives a real strong bond. You will get some of this on your fingers and I don't have a super answer how to get it off. After a few times of washing your hands, and with the moisture from your skin, the glue will just peel off. I do work on a piece of wax paper as the glue has less tendencies to stick to it. I've also worked on a piece of glass which if the glue gets on the glass a razor blade can be used to clean it off.

Now on to the project.

To begin, edge glue six strips together to make a plank. I took and ran a small bead of glue the length of a strip, placed it flat on the work surface and butted a second strip up to it continuously running my fingers up and down the length of the pair until the glue set. Using this method makes up for any irregularities or gaps in the strips. As the glue sets it would fill gaps and hold the pieces together. I repeated the process for the balance of the strips. Set this assembly aside while it cures and begin to cut the other pieces.

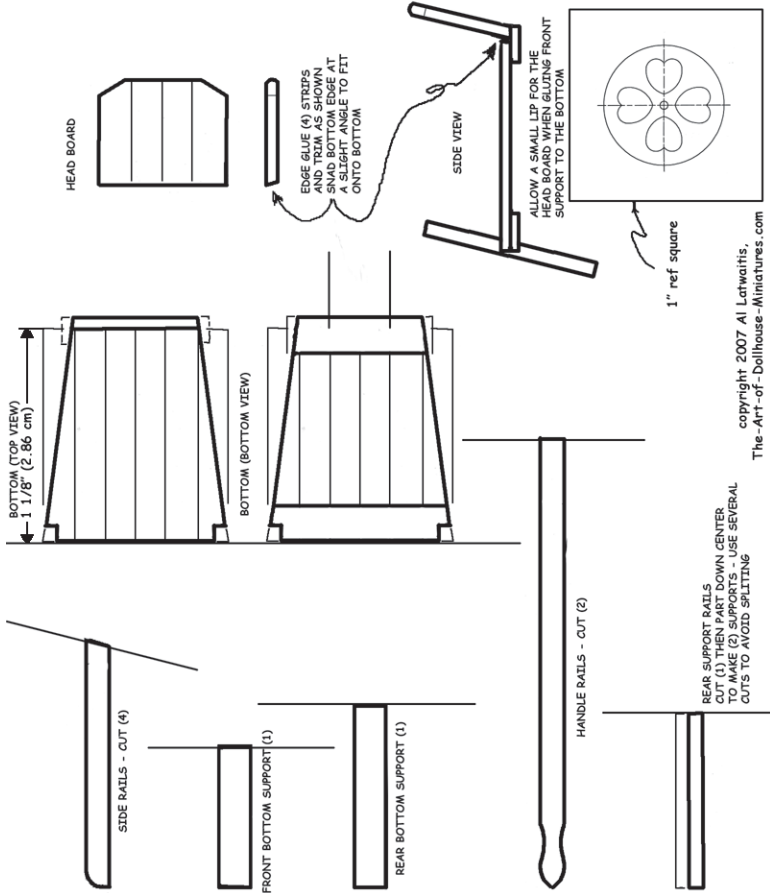


The drawing is to scale and there are extended guidelines to align your razor knife to. I lay a strip over my drawing, align one edge and place my razor knife on the wood, aligned to the guidelines, and gently rock the knife, front to back, to get a good groove started. Then taking the piece off the drawing I continue to cut through the piece using several strokes as mentioned above. Don't be in a hurry because as you get close to cutting through the last little bit, the wood wants to split out. I don't cut halfway then flip over because I can never get the second side cut aligned perfect to the first side cut. Holding these little chunks of timber is hard enough without have to sand the edges square.

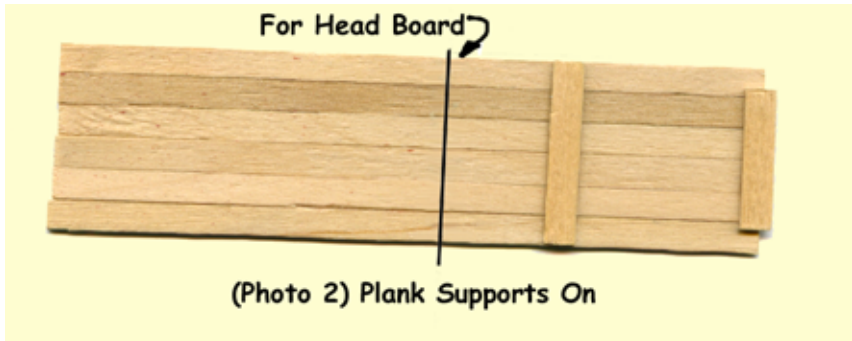
For the rear support rails cut one piece to the length on the drawing then carefully split this piece in two, lengthwise. (All the warnings about the wood splitting apply here too. Several light cuts will yield two small straight pieces.)

To get the shape on the side rails I used an emery board and just rolled it over the edge until I was satisfied with the radius.

To get the shape for the handrails I whittled (carved), filed (rat-tail file from jewelers file set) and sanded (Sand paper wrapped around a small dowel). If you whittle at all be very careful, again, because the little pieces will chip off and you'll end up with handles like my sample in the this picture. (Stop giggling - you've been there too.)



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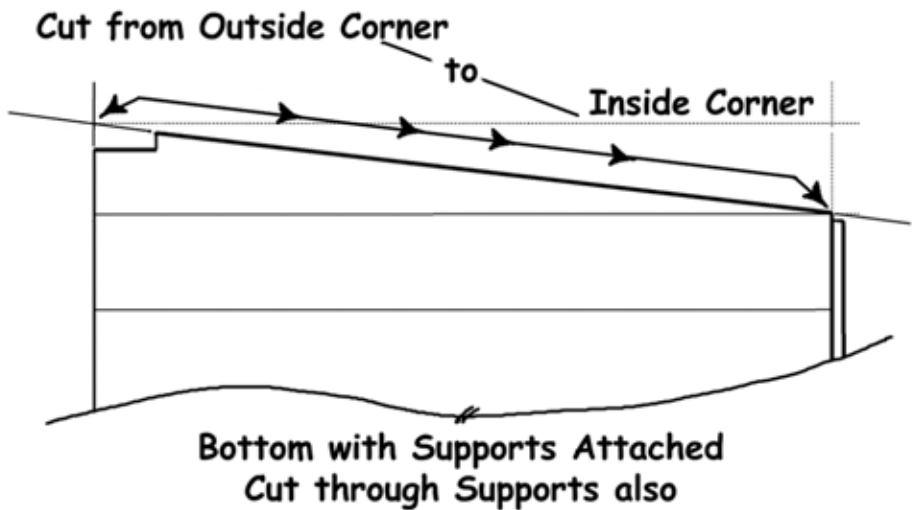


Now take your plank and measure the bottom (as shown in the bottom (top view)). I glued the rear bottom support on now before cutting to help add some stability and to provide a cutting guide to the plank.

You can glue the front bottom support on now also, noting the slight offset from the leading edge of the bottom plank. This will be where the headboard will be glued to the assembly after cutting the bottom.

Allow to dry. You don't have to wait forever just long enough so that the two supports don't shift when cutting and handling the plank. Before you cut the bottom to length, mark the headboard distance from the rear bottom support and cut the plank here first.

OK, using the rear bottom support as a guide, cut the bottom and headboard apart. Carefully cut two strips off the headboard piece, and make the angle cuts as shown in the headboard view.



The two angles on the bottom are made by placing the bottom with the cross supports down. Align a straight edge from the rear most corner of the bottom to the joint between the 1st and 2nd strips at the front. Carefully cut from rear to front using several cuts. Going from rear to front allows that, as you get most of the way through the strip, if it chips off it will not do any harm, (says so right here in the fine print).

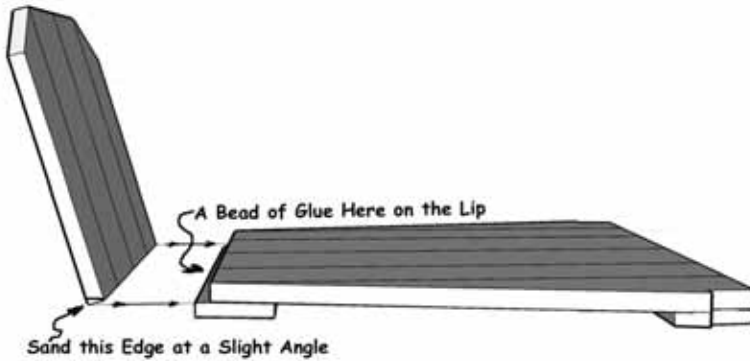
Now cut the notches for the rear support rails. I cut the two top cuts in the bottom from the side first, cross grain, then from the rear. When I get through the strip I turn the bottom over and work on the support. I cut from front to back, cross grain, then from the side.



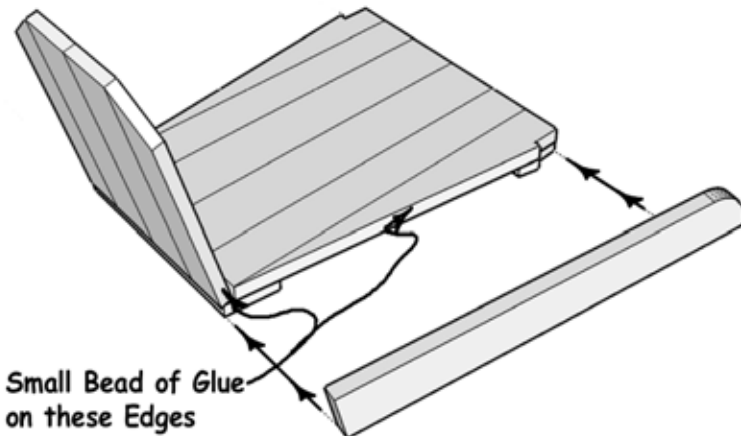
We're just about ready to assemble everything.

Before we do, sand the slight angle on the headboard and radius over the top, if you want. I used an emery board, held the headboard at an angle and took a few swipes just so I had a better gluing surface.

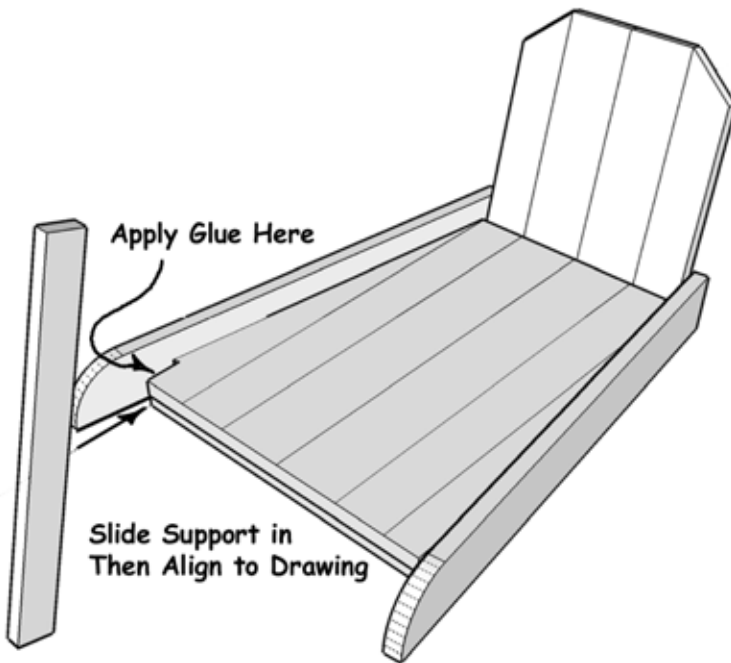
Glue the headboard in place using the drawing to set the angle.



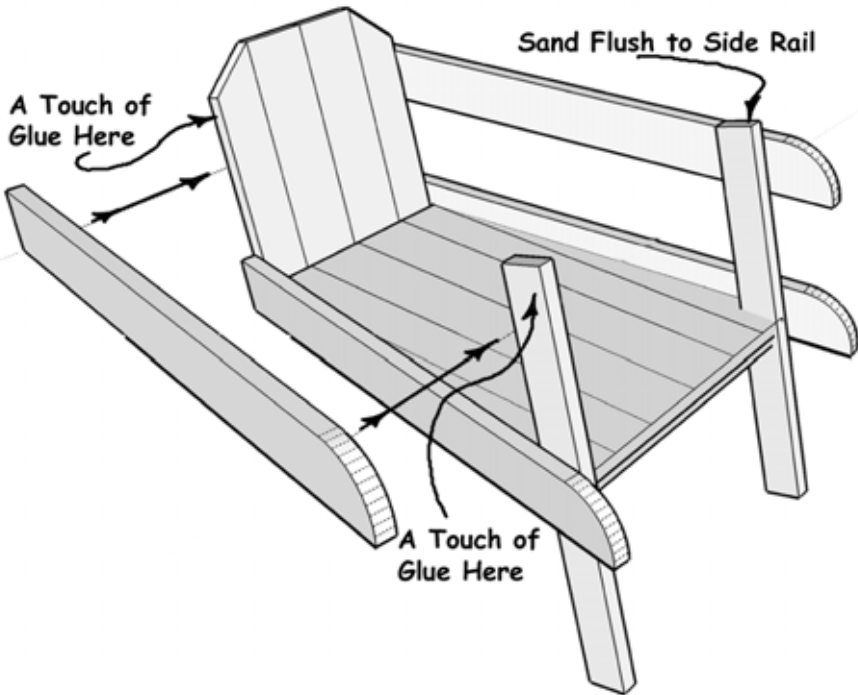
Now glue the lower side rails into place, one on each side. Align the side rails to the bottom of the supports. I did it this way only because it was easier to align and get straight. I put a small bead of glue on the edges of the bottom and a touch on the edge of the headboard, set it down on the work surface and then slid the side rail up to it. Nice and neat I thought. Repeat for the other side.



Next glue the two rear support rails in place. I have placed a cross mark on the drawing for an approximate location for these supports. This position depends on how much you want you wheelbarrow to tilt forward. A dab of glue in the notches and slide the rail in, setting the angle to the headboard, I slipped my rail in, laid the assembly over the drawing, set the angle, let it set and I had one side done. I did the same for the second side but aligned the rail, by eye, to the first one.



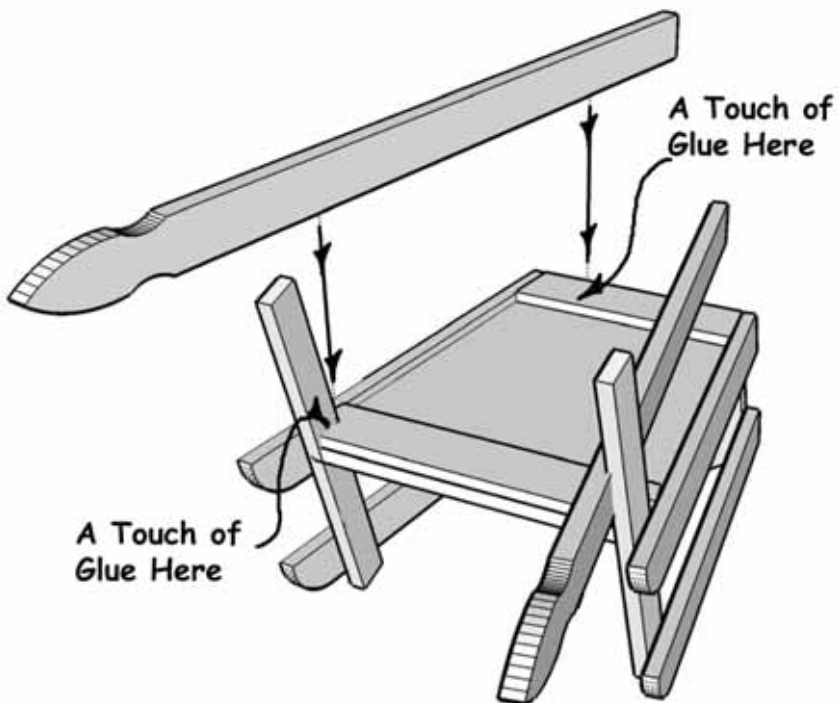
Now glue the two upper side rails in place. Once your glue is set take your emery board and round off the support rails to match the radius on the side rails. Now is a good time to dress -up all of your edges with the emery board, making everything neat and tidy.



With this assembly laying on its top, place two marks on the front bottom support that align to the outside of the two inner plank strips (huh). These marks are where the handle rails will be glued to the bottom.

Before we glue the handle in place we need to decide on what we'll be using for the wheel. I used a 5/8" dia. wooden button. Really looks good from one side, tire and all, but just looks like a chunk of round wood from the "back" side. If you choose a larger diameter wheel then the two glue marks I've suggested above will have to change.

The marks I have suggested bring the two handles together up front and after I glued the handles in place I was able to slide my "wheel" into place with the minimum amount of glue. Go ahead now and glue your handles in place holding the rear portion up against the support rails. Voila!! Done.



I chose to stain mine because I love the wood grain, but you can certainly paint this little fellow and he'll look just as good.

I truly hope that you try this project and enjoy it as much as I did. (So much so, others will be forthcoming.)

Thanks for the opportunity to share.

Al

