

Custom Storage for

BY TOM O'DONOVAN

When I graduated from a station wagon to a small pickup truck to serve my own home-improvement projects and a part-time business, I quickly realized that I needed a way to organize the truck bed to contain tools, supplies, and materials. Originally, I looked at commercial drawer systems, and although the sleek aluminum-and-steel units were attractive, their cost definitely wasn't.

Being frugal, I figured I could come up with something just as functional for much less money, if not less work. The resulting three-part storage system has served me well over the past 15 years with few, if any, compromises over more expensive metal systems. In fact, building the storage system myself allowed me a level of customization that store-bought units didn't offer.

One other advantage: I can remove the entire storage system from the back of my truck in about five minutes. I simply back up to a pair of sawhorses and pull the plywood boxes onto them. Then I'm all set to load my camping gear.

Probably the best thing about this system is that it can be installed without drilling any holes or making permanent alterations of any kind to the vehicle.

Note: I have a locking cap on the rear of my truck to protect tools from theft, but you can rig up a lock for this system if you don't have a cap. □

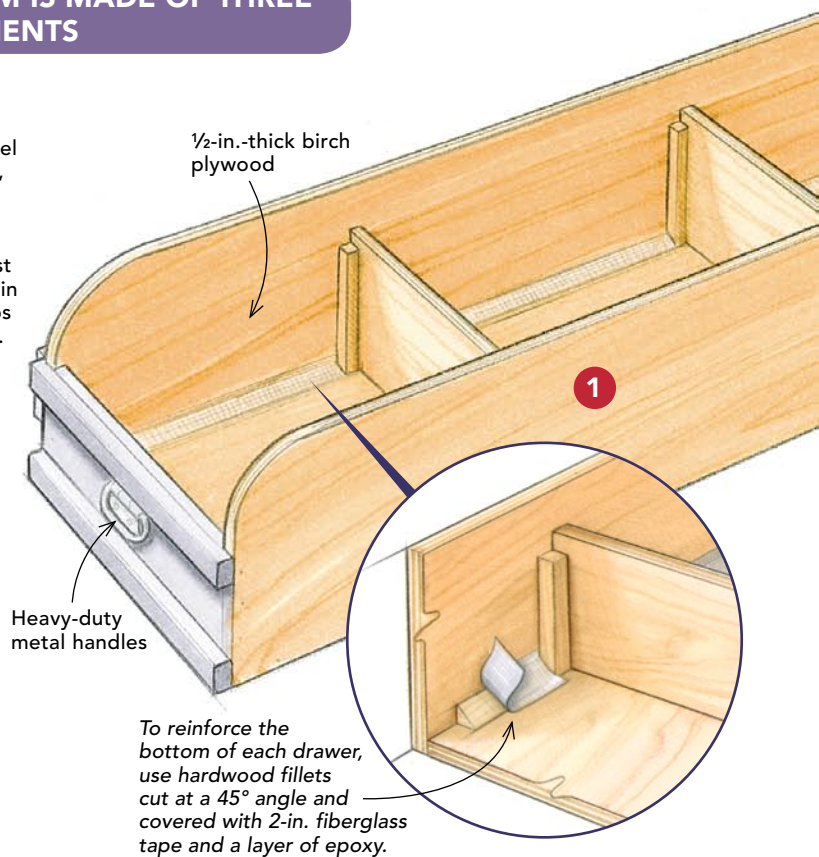
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Plywood drawers keep tools safe, costs to a minimum, and removal easy

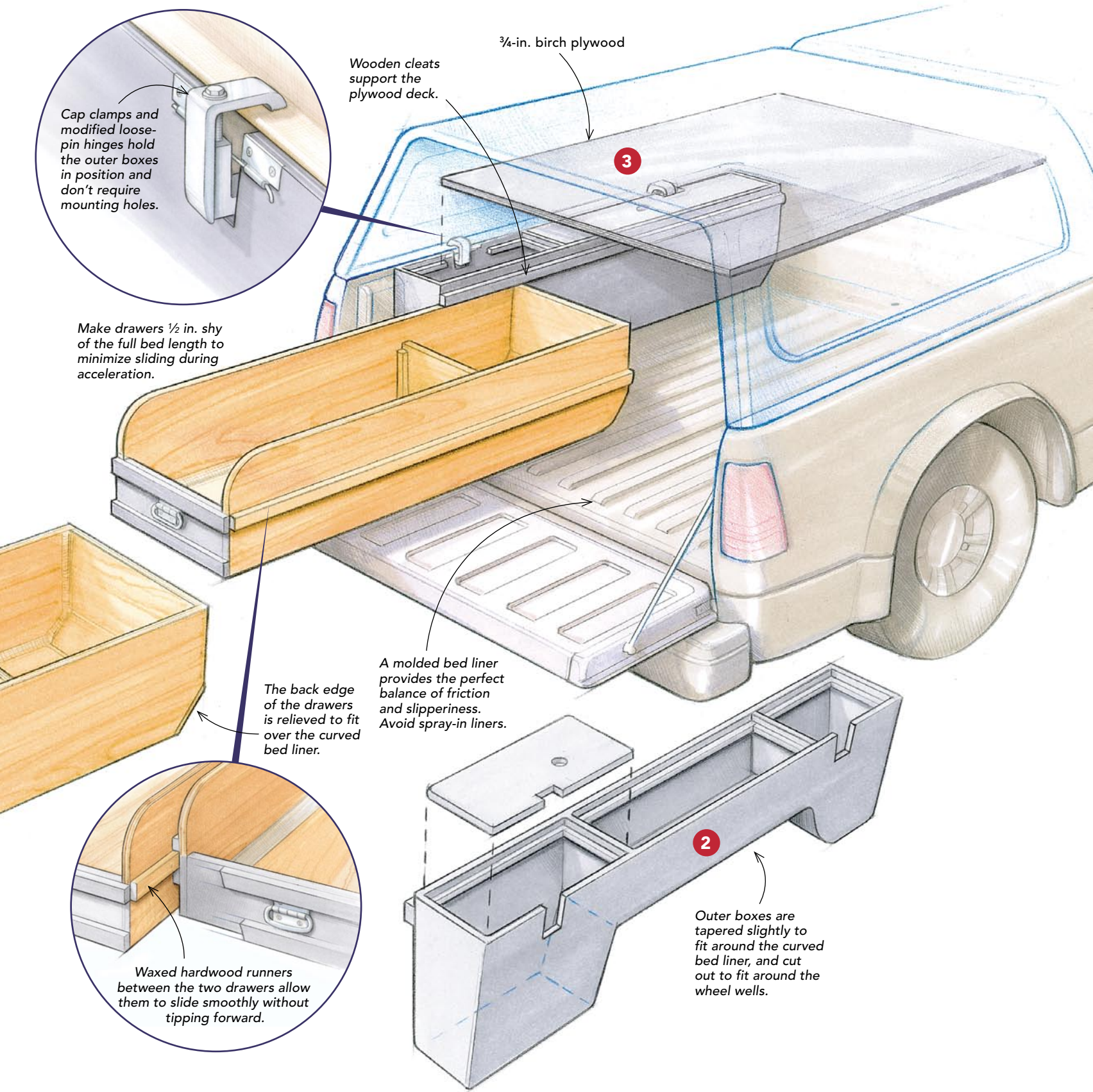


THE STORAGE SYSTEM IS MADE OF THREE INTERLOCKING ELEMENTS

- 1 A pair of **sliding drawers** fits between two outer boxes. These drawers travel on interlocking 1x runners, so they can be extended without tipping.
- 2 The **outer boxes** fit against the sides of the bed, held in place with the same clamps used to attach a truck cap.
- 3 Between the two outer boxes, a **¾-in. plywood shelf** spans the gap, providing a flat deck for loading lumber and sheet goods.



a Pickup Truck



Cap clamps and modified loose-pin hinges hold the outer boxes in position and don't require mounting holes.

Make drawers 1/2 in. shy of the full bed length to minimize sliding during acceleration.

Wooden cleats support the plywood deck.

3/4-in. birch plywood

3

The back edge of the drawers is relieved to fit over the curved bed liner.

A molded bed liner provides the perfect balance of friction and slipperiness. Avoid spray-in liners.

Waxed hardwood runners between the two drawers allow them to slide smoothly without tipping forward.

2

Outer boxes are tapered slightly to fit around the curved bed liner, and cut out to fit around the wheel wells.