

FREE BONUS GUIDE

YARD DECOR TEMPLATES

Whimsical Elf with Gifts Silhouette Yard Decor Plans

Setup & Shopping Guide

Your template is cut. Now it's time to paint, light, and mount it in the yard. ✨ This guide walks through turning this piece (half a standard panel) from template into a yard-ready, lit, weatherproof piece; then lists carefully chosen products across 5 categories: cutting material, cutting tools, paint & finish, mounting hardware, and lighting. Every row has the exact search term for Amazon and hardware stores, what to check before buying, and a realistic price range.



1/2

PANEL

5

5 SHOPPING CATEGORIES

4

MOUNTING METHODS

\$33+

STARTING BUDGET

READ FIRST · BEFORE YOU START

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03A Lighting Hardware

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LICENSE & LEGAL

THANK YOU

We are not affiliated with, sponsored by, or a dealer for any brand named here. No affiliate links. These are simply products that work for this project. Prices were checked on August 23, 2026. Seasonal and hardware products change often; always verify before ordering.

Read First · Before You Start

These pieces stand full-size, outdoors, year after year — and that changes what "good enough" material and hardware actually means. Three decisions to make before you buy plywood.

1. Outdoor-grade, not indoor

Standard interior plywood delaminates in a single season of wet soil and freeze-thaw cycles. Use only ACX exterior, MDO, or marine-grade material — see Category 01A. Interior "cabinet" plywood is the single most common reason a finished piece doesn't survive to spring.

2. Water gets in through the edge first

Water gets into painted plywood through the cut edge long before it gets through the face. Every raw edge — the outline and every interior cut, like narrow points and fine detail work in the figure — needs primer and topcoat just as much as the two flat faces do, not less.

3. A free-standing piece means wind load

A tall, flat silhouette catches wind like a sail — 96 cm / 3'2" for this project. Plan your mounting method (see Mounting) before you paint, not after.

4. Pick one light color, once

Warm white is 2700K–3000K. Cool white, 5000K and up, looks bluish and clinical. Mixing both in the same display makes a finished piece look unfinished in photos — see Lighting.

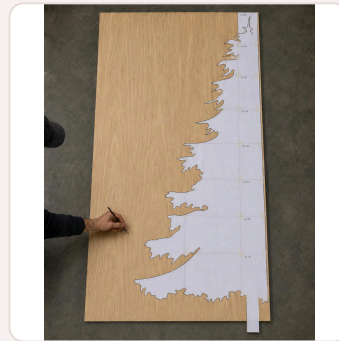
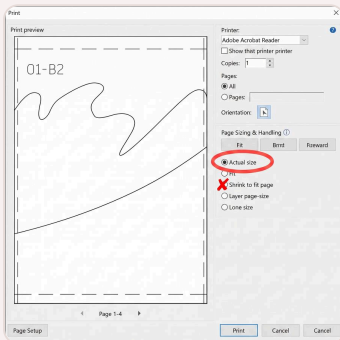
Do a test cut on scrap first. Kerf (the material width the blade removes) varies by tool: a jigsaw takes roughly 1–1.5 mm, a laser 0.1–0.2 mm, a CNC bit the full 3.2 mm (1/8") of its diameter. On narrow points like a detail tip, that difference decides whether the tip survives the cut intact. Try it on a scrap corner before committing to the whole sheet.

Cutting, Painting & Finishing

From template to yard-ready piece

How to Trace & Cut

1. **Print** — the template pack includes separate files sized for both A4 and US Letter paper. In the print dialog, set scale to "actual size / 100%" and make sure "fit to page" is unchecked.
2. **Assemble the sheets** — carefully cut along the trim marks on each page's edge, match up the letter-number grid, and tape the correct sheets together edge to edge.
3. **Transfer the pattern to the plywood** — use repositionable spray adhesive (like 3M Super 77) or a residue-free double-sided tape.
4. **Cut** — follow the line with a jigsaw and a narrow blade; switch to a scroll saw, a fine CNC bit, or a laser for narrow interior cuts like the figure's fine detail points.

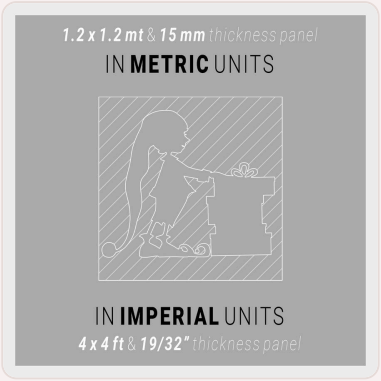


Finishing

Once cut, sand the surface: start with 80-120 grit and finish with 150-220 grit, softening sharp corners slightly. Budget roughly half a day (3-5 hours) for half a standard panel. Then prime both faces and every cut edge (fine detail points included), followed by 2-3 thin coats of exterior paint — let each coat dry before the next.

Cutting Material

6 · \$28 – 170



This project needs half a standard panel. This single decision determines how long a piece lasts outdoors. ✓ marks a price verified from its source as of August 2026.

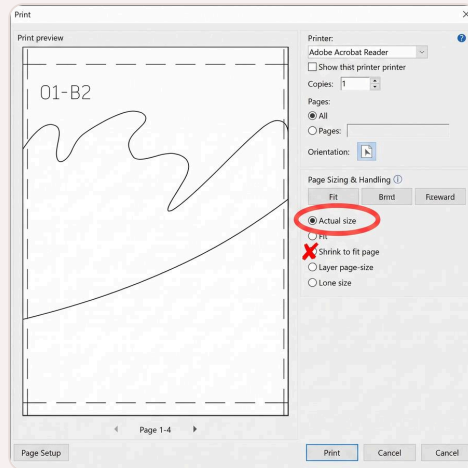
#	PRODUCT	SEARCH TERM	WHERE	PRICE	WHAT TO CHECK
1	MDO sign-grade plywood ✓	mdo plywood sign board 3/4 inch	HD/Lowe's special order, sign suppliers	\$50 – 170 / sheet	Paint lasts roughly 3x longer than on bare plywood. The recommended choice for this project.
2	ACX exterior plywood	3/4 inch acx exterior plywood 4x8	Home Depot, Lowe's	\$28 – 45 / sheet	A more affordable alternative. 19/32 in. (1.9 cm) thickness, 4×8 ft (1.2×2.4 m) sheet. Check that the face grade is B or better.
3	Baltic birch plywood	3/4 inch baltic birch plywood 4x8	Amazon, hardwood suppliers	\$60 – 90 / sheet	The cleanest cut edge, but not outdoor-grade on its own — seal every face and edge.
4	Ground-contact pressure-treated plywood ✓	ground contact pressure treated plywood sheathing	Home Depot	\$45 – 70 / sheet	Use this for any leg or support that sits directly in wet soil.
5	Marine-grade plywood	marine grade plywood 3/4 4x8	Specialty lumber yards	\$80 – 150 / sheet	Overkill for most yards; only worth it in very humid climates.
6	PVC / Sintra foam board (won't rot)	sintra pvc foam board sheet 3/4 inch	Sign suppliers, Amazon	\$60 – 120 / sheet	Never rots, cuts like wood on a jigsaw or CNC, but costs more.

Buy one sheet more than you calculated — next to the half a standard panel you need, it almost always comes in handy for a spare, a test cut, or a wrongly cut detail tip.

01B

Cutting Tools

4 • \$10 – 239



If you're cutting it yourself, the hand tools below are enough. If you'd rather have it CNC- or laser-cut, you don't need to buy a machine — you can send your file (SVG/DXF) to a local cutting shop or a network like 100kgarages.com.

#	PRODUCT	SEARCH TERM	WHERE	PRICE	WHAT TO CHECK
1	Jigsaw ✓	dewalt 20v jigsaw · bosch js470e jigsaw	Amazon, HD, Lowe's	\$109 – 239	The minimum tool for this project. Buy a wood-specific down-cut blade separately.
2	Wood-specific jigsaw blade set	jigsaw blade set wood down cut	Amazon	\$10 – 20	Buy before you cut: the blade that comes in the box is usually the wrong type for 3/4 in. (1.9 cm) plywood.
3	Variable-speed scroll saw	scroll saw variable speed	Amazon	\$50 – 180	The fastest way to get clean interior corners like fine detail points.
4	CNC cutting service (local shop)	cnc cutting service near me · 100kgarages.com	Local carpentry/sign shops, 100kgarages.com	\$40 – 90 / panel (~\$1.25 – 2.80 / sq ft)	Just send your file — no machine to buy. Price depends on the figure's detail level and the shop's cutting time; material is usually not included.

Scaling note: scale % = target height ÷ original height × 100. After scaling, re-check the narrowest point (like a detail tip) against your tool's kerf.

Paint & Finish

6 · \$8 – 66

Total surface for half a standard panel is roughly 15-17 sq ft (1.4-1.6 m²) — generally covered by 1-2 gallons of primer and 1-2 gallons of paint.

#	PRODUCT	SEARCH TERM	WHERE	PRICE	WHAT TO CHECK
1	Exterior wood primer	zinsser exterior wood primer quart	Amazon, HD, Lowe's	\$18 – 26 / ~0.95 L	Blocks tannin staining coming through from raw wood.
2	Exterior gloss white paint ✓	rust-oleum protective enamel gloss white exterior paint gallon	Home Depot	\$65.98 / ~3.8 L	One can covers a multi-piece set in 2 coats.
3	White gloss spray paint ✓	rust-oleum white gloss spray paint outdoor	Amazon, HD, Lowe's, Walmart	\$5.96 – 17.88 / ~350 mL	Faster for touch-up areas like edges and fine detail points.
4	Clear spar urethane topcoat ✓	varathane exterior spar urethane quart	Home Depot, Lowe's	\$25 – 52 / ~0.95 L	The step people skip most — without a topcoat, UV chalks the paint in a single summer.
5	Exterior wood filler	exterior wood filler	Amazon, Home Depot	\$8 – 15	Fill screw heads and any tear-out from cutting before priming.
6	Exterior wood glue ✓	titebond iii ultimate wood glue	Amazon, Home Depot	\$7.49 – 9.98	Waterproof grade. Use it when laminating a support for a stake.

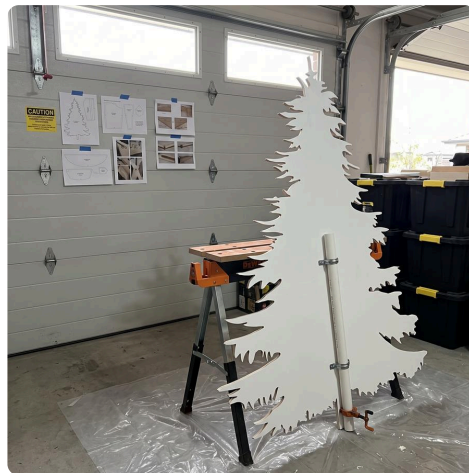
Mounting

There are four mounting methods to choose from — pick whichever fits your yard, or mix methods across different figures.



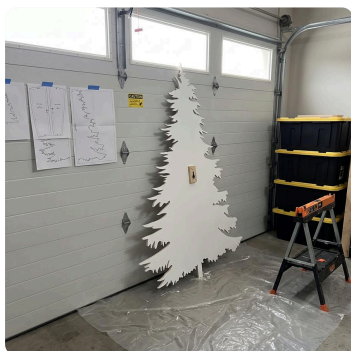
With a Plywood Stake

Put leftover plywood scraps from cutting the figures to use. Cut a piece with one end pointed, screw the flat end to the back of the figure, and drive the pointed end into the ground. If the ground is hard, moisten the soil lightly before staking.



With a Telescoping PVC Pipe

For a more permanent setup: attach a PVC pipe to the back of the figure, and drive a second, slightly wider pipe into the ground to create a fixed sleeve. At setup, all you do is slide the pipe into the sleeve; taking it down at season's end is just as easy.



Mounted to a Wall

If staking into the ground isn't an option, mount the figure to a wall or fence instead. Attach a keyhole plate to the back and set a wood spacer block a few centimeters thick underneath it — this keeps moisture from building up and leaves room for backlighting.

If you don't have soil to stake into and there's no wall or fence nearby, a weighted sign base is a practical third option — the kind sold for sidewalk signs and event banners. These usually work as a slotted or clamped stand: slide the panel's bottom edge in, then fill the base with sand or water for ballast. Match the base's rated capacity to the panel itself, not just its weight — a tall, flat silhouette catches wind like a sail, and this figure (96 cm / 3'2") needs a base built for that height. In an open, wind-exposed spot, I'd still run a couple of thin guy-lines from the panel down to the ground even with a weighted base — the base keeps it from tipping over, the lines keep it from rocking and slowly working the base loose over a season.

Mounting Hardware

6 · \$5 – 45



What you need depends on which mounting method (stake, PVC pipe, wall, or weighted base) you choose. Prices without a ✓ are estimates — we couldn't price these live, check before ordering.

#	PRODUCT	SEARCH TERM	WHERE	PRICE	WHAT TO CHECK
1	Schedule 40 PVC pipe (various diameters)	schedule 40 pvc pipe	Home Depot	\$8 – 20 / 3m	The pipe on the figure and the sleeve pipe in the ground need different diameters that nest together — test-fit in store.
2	Cantex PVC pipe clamp	cantex pvc pipe clamp	Home Depot	\$5 – 10 / 5-pack	2-3 clamps are enough to secure the pipe to the panel.
3	Keyhole hanger plate kit	ook waddell keyhole hanger kit	Amazon, Home Depot	\$5 – 9 / 2-pack	Used with the wood spacer block for wall mounting; keeps the panel slightly off the wall.
4	Stainless L-bracket and exterior screws	exterior l bracket corner brace stainless	Amazon, Home Depot	\$8 – 15	Use exterior/deck-grade screws only — interior screws will rust.
5	Weighted / sandbag sign base	outdoor sign base weighted sandbag	Amazon	\$20 – 45	For patios/decks where you can't stake into the ground; size its capacity to the panel.
6	Guy-wire wind kit	tent stake guy line wind kit	Amazon	\$10 – 20	Add this for pieces taller than roughly 150 cm (4'11") — the tallest piece here is 96 cm / 3'2" — even if you're using a weighted base.

If you'd like, add an LED strip behind the figures for a nighttime effect too. The spacer block from wall-mounting comes in handy here — the gap it leaves between the panel and the wall gives light room to spill out along the edges.

WHAT KIND OF LED	12V, outdoor-rated, IP67 waterproof strip. Warm white (3000K) tone comes closest to the amber glow in reference photos.
HOW MUCH YOU'LL NEED	Based on this composition's total outline, roughly 10-13 ft (3-4 m) of strip (usually sold in 5 m (~16 ft) reels, so about 1 reels).
HOW TO MOUNT IT	Since these silhouettes have curved, organic outlines, a rigid aluminum channel won't follow the shape — stick the strip directly to the wood using its own adhesive backing instead. For extra hold outdoors (cold weather weakens adhesive tape over a season), lay down a strip of stronger outdoor-rated double-sided mounting tape (3M VHB or similar) first and press the LED strip onto that, then add a small flexible mounting clip every 15-20 cm along the run. A thin bead of clear silicone sealant along both edges adds further grip and weatherproofing, especially on a tight curve.
POWER SUPPLY	You need an outdoor-rated (IP65/IP67) transformer that steps 220V/120V down to 12V. Size its wattage by multiplying the strip's watts-per-meter by your total length.
OUTDOOR ELECTRICAL	Plug the transformer into a GFCI-protected, weatherproof (WR-rated) outdoor outlet; use an "in-use" cover. The extension cord should be UV- and water-resistant.
CUT ENDS	Seal every end you cut with silicone sealant or a waterproof end cap — otherwise the strip's IP rating is meaningless.

If running a full LED strip system is more than you want to take on, a couple of solar-powered spotlights staked into the ground in front of each figure give a similar uplit look with no wiring, no transformer, and nothing to plug in. The trade-off is real, though: solar panels need several hours of direct sun to charge, so shaded spots under eaves or trees will undercharge, especially given how short winter days already are. Cold weather also cuts battery capacity and runtime — expect noticeably less light on the coldest nights of the season, right when you're most likely to want it. If your display sits somewhere with decent daytime sun, this is genuinely the easier route; if it's mostly shaded or you're somewhere with harsh winters, the wired strip holds up better. Either way, an inexpensive outdoor timer on the wired setup — or just relying on the solar spot's built-in dusk sensor — means you're not walking out to flip a switch every evening.

Lighting Hardware

6 · \$12 – 40

Based on the ~10-13 ft (3-4 m) of strip calculated in the Lighting section. ✓ marks a price verified from its source as of August 2026.

#	PRODUCT	SEARCH TERM	WHERE	PRICE	WHAT TO CHECK
1	Warm-white LED strip/tape, 12V, IP67	12v led strip light warm white ip67 waterproof	Amazon	\$16 – 35 / 5m (~16 ft) reel	Look for "strip/tape," not "rope light" — the flexible adhesive backing lets it follow the figure's curved outline directly.
2	Outdoor-rated mounting tape (3M VHB or similar)	3m vhb outdoor mounting tape	Amazon, Home Depot	\$8 – 16 / roll	Apply first, then press the LED strip onto it for a stronger hold than the strip's own tape alone — a small flexible clip every 15-20 cm or a thin bead of clear silicone along the edge adds extra security.
3	12V waterproof LED transformer/driver	12v led power supply waterproof ip67	Amazon	\$18 – 38	Size the wattage by multiplying total strip length by the reel's watts-per-meter figure.
4	Flat outdoor extension cord, ~7.6 m (25 ft)	outdoor extension cord flat 25ft	Amazon, Home Depot	\$12 – 22	Must be rated for wet locations.
5	Solar LED spotlight, 2-pack ✓	solar led spotlight outdoor yard	Amazon, Walmart	\$25 – 40	For the wireless alternative — see the note on the Lighting page.
6	Outdoor light timer	outdoor christmas light timer	Amazon	\$12 – 22	Dusk-to-six-hours-on is a standard default setting.

This Piece's Budget

Plywood Panel(s) half a standard panel of MDO or ACX plywood (4×4 ft (1.2×1.2 m), 19/32" (15mm))	\$18 – 30
Primer + Paint (Combined Product) A combined "paint + primer in one" product for seasonal use	\$15 – 25
Mounting Hardware Stake, PVC pipe, wall, or weighted base — varies by method	Depends on method
Lighting (LED Strip & Transformer) Optional, ~10-13 ft (3-4 m) of strip + transformer	Depends on method

ESTIMATED TOTAL (REQUIRED ITEMS)

\$33 – 55

When to Buy

January – February	Best prices on paint and hardware. Post-holiday clearance on exterior paint and lighting.
March – August	Build season. No seasonal price pressure — a calm window to cut and paint before the rush starts.
September – October	Solar and LED lighting stock deepens. The widest model selection of the year.
November	Peak demand. Popular lights and stake models start selling out.

Final Checklist

Check every box before you spend anything. Each one is a mistake someone already made and wrote to us about.

- ☐ Printed the template at 100% scale and checked the reference square with a ruler
- ☐ Chose an outdoor-grade sheet: MDO, ACX, marine, or PVC foam
- ☐ Bought one extra sheet beyond the half a standard panel needed, for test cuts
- ☐ Sanded and primed every face and cut edge (fine detail points included) before painting
- ☐ Applied a UV topcoat over the paint
- ☐ Picked one color temperature (2700K–3000K) for every light in the display
- ☐ Decided which mounting method – stake, PVC pipe, wall, or weighted base – fits my yard
- ☐ Added guy-lines for the tallest piece (96 cm / 3'2")
- ☐ Bought exterior-grade screws and brackets, not interior hardware
- ☐ If cutting it myself: re-measured the file's narrowest point (a detail tip) against my tool's kerf

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What you can do

- Print as many copies as you want for your own use.
- Cut as many pieces as you want for yourself, family, and gifts.
- Scale the templates up or down, and change materials and finishing to suit your build.
- Photograph what you made and share it online or elsewhere.

What you can't do

- Resell, relicense, share, email, lend, or gift the digital files or any part of them.
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- Bundle them into another paid or free product, course, or membership.
- Use this guide's text, tables, or images in your own listings or content.
- Claim authorship of the templates or the guide.

Selling what you make

You may sell a small number of finished physical pieces you personally cut and made from the templates, as an individual maker. Mass production, factory or subcontracted manufacturing, and selling the digital files themselves (or a derivative of them) are prohibited. If you want to produce in volume, write to us and we'll arrange a commercial license.

Safety: please read

Power tools, CNC routers, laser cutters, and outdoor electrical wiring can cause serious injury, fire, or death. This guide is for informational purposes only. Always follow the safety instructions that come with your own tools and products, wear proper protective equipment, and never exceed the rated load of any circuit. We accept no liability for any injury, damage, or loss arising from the use of this guide.

Third-party products & prices

We are not affiliated with, sponsored by, or a dealer for 3M, DEWALT, Bosch, Rust-Oleum, Varathane, Zinsser, Titebond, Cantex, OOK, Waddell, Home Depot, Lowe's, Walmart, Amazon, Etsy, eBay, 100kgarages.com, or any other company named in this guide. There are no affiliate links, and we receive no commission. Prices were checked in August 2026, are shown in USD, and are subject to change.

About the images

The templates themselves were not AI-generated — the design in this pack was hand-drawn and dimensioned as a vector file for laser, CNC, and hand cutting. The photos in this guide are from the real project.



Thank you, and one small favor

Is your yard looking good? Would you leave a review?

Every design in this pack was drawn, scaled, and checked into a clean vector file before it was ever sent out. Reviews decide whether the next person finds this pack at all, far more than anything we can do ourselves. It takes about a minute.

WHAT HELPS MOST

- Star rating: the single biggest factor.
- A photo of your finished yard: buyers trust a real build far more than any listing photo.
- A sentence on how it went: what material you used, how long it took.

If something's wrong: Please write to us before leaving a review. A missing file, a scale that doesn't line up, a step that doesn't make sense — whatever it is, we'd much rather fix it for you than have you struggle with it alone. We read and answer every message, and most things get resolved the same day.

Leave a review: On Etsy, open You → Purchases and reviews, find this order, and select Leave a review. You can add photos there too.

Questions: Write to us from any listing page in the shop. We read and answer every message.

IF YOU LIKED THIS PIECE

The Full 7-Figure Yard Christmas Decor Set

The elf, both reindeer, four pine trees, Santa's sleigh, and more — our entire yard silhouette collection in one pack, one price.

https://www.etsy.com/listing/4360482587/diy-christmas-yard-silhouette-all-7?utm_source=pdf_guide&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=downloadable_guide

Thank you for building with us. Merry Christmas.