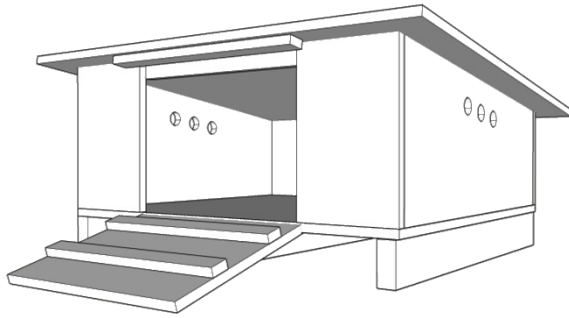


An Easy to Build House for Tortoises

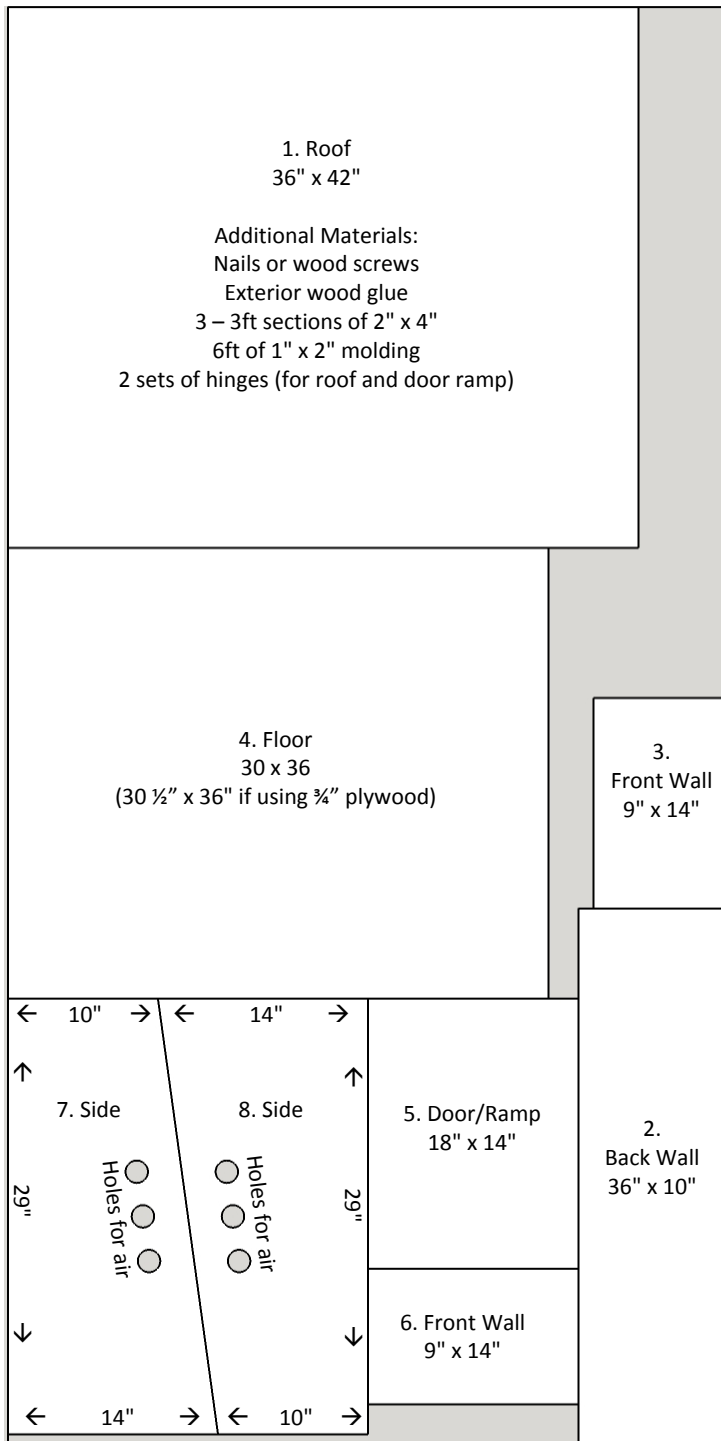


This pattern is for a house large enough for two adult California desert tortoises. The house is designed to be cut from a single 4' x 8' piece of 1/2" or 3/4" plywood. This house has a hinged roof for easy access and cleaning and a hinged door that lowers to form a ramp into the house. The roof provides a 3" overhang on all sides to prevent water leaking in when it rains. The house is raised up on 2 x 4 footings to help prevent flooding.

The walls of the house should be assembled on top of the floor. Use glue and nails or screws to fasten the boards together. The roof should be attached to the back wall with one set of hinges. The door/ramp can be attached to the floor with the other hinges. The sections of 2 x 4 should be attached to the underside of the floorboard to serve as footings.

One 20" piece of the 1 x 2 molding into be attached across the inside of the door opening, as the top of the front walls. This will stop the door/ramp from folding into the house when it is closed. Another 20 inch piece of the molding should be attached to the underside of the roof, centered in the door opening, approximately 1 1/2" in from the edge. This will serve to lock the door/ramp in place when it is closed – simply lift the roof slightly, lift up the door/ramp to close it, and drop the roof back down to lock the door/ramp in place. The remaining molding cut be cut and nailed ot the rampto provide traction for your tortoises when entering or leaving their house.

After the house has been assembled, you should paint or seal it, both inside and out, before allowing your tortoises to use it. If the house is going to be placed directly on soil or grass, concrete bricks or stepping-stones can be sunk level with the ground surface to help prevent the footings from rotting. A layer of straw or shredded paper should be used for bedding.



Cut panels in number order
Make sure the house is insulated