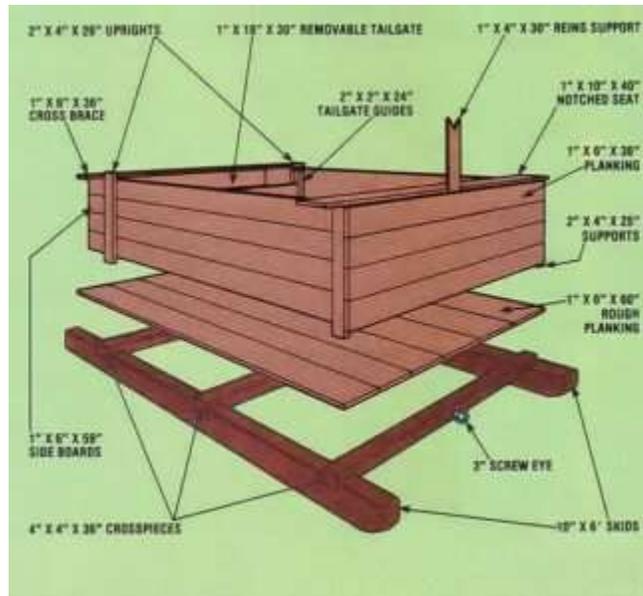


# Build a Horse Drawn Sled

By Gladys Mackey Beattie

If you run a small farm and own a horse, or any draft animal, a horse-drawn sled can help you get more work done. Here's how to build one.



Here In Quebec, we've found our easy-to-build horse-drawn sled to be just about the ideal device to handle the kind of haulin' chores that crop up almost daily on a farm. And—since most of the materials needed to **construct** the simple freight carrier are probably already around just waitin' to be used—you can put the versatile sled to work on **your** homestead for next to nothing!

## Easy Construction

To make a 3' X 6' model, lay out two 6' posts or Poles that taper from approximately 10" to about 8" in diameter. If the skids have some natural curve at their larger ends, so much the better ... as the

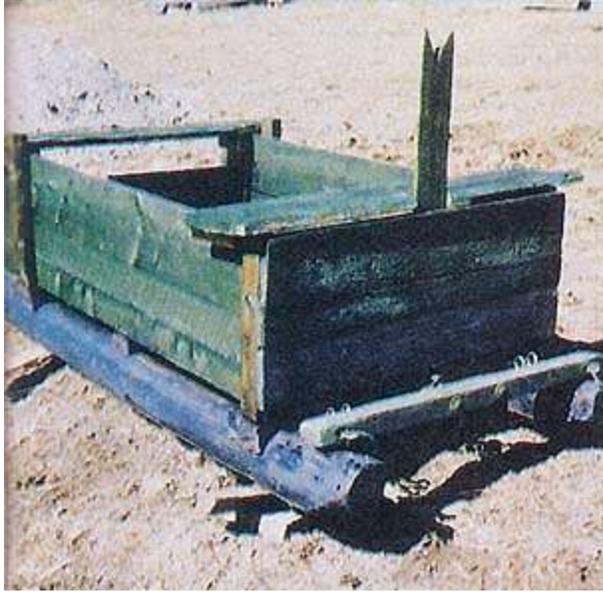
bottom front of each runner must be hewn or sawed off to form an angle of approximately 45°.

With that done, place the posts side by side (as they'll appear on the finished sled) and cut three notches—each 3" deep and 4" wide—in the top of both runners ... to accommodate the three 4" x 4" x 36" crosspieces. ***(Make sure that the mortices match and are square to the skids and that the skids are parallel when the braces are in place...*** otherwise, you'll have a crooked sled that will never run true.) Now, nail the crosspieces securely in place, and your basic frame is complete.

To make the floor of the sled, you'll need approximately six 1" x 6" x 60" boards. Nail the planks ***solidly*** to the crosspieces to help keep your sled square under rough conditions.

## **Custom Design**

The size and type of box you build will, of course, depend on how you plan to use your sled. Since we utilize our hauler for garden work, we made the box walls 24" high and added a removable tailgate. The latter feature makes for easy loading and unloading, but keeps produce from roiling out of the carrier's back when we're climbing the hill that leads to our house ... and also enables us to haul more manure per trip without leaving small deposits of it all along the route to the garden.



While constructing your box, keep your “horsepower” in mind, too. Our container will hold approximately 1/4 ton of manure, which is about all you should expect a smallish draft horse to pull over rough ground. However—if you plan to use your sled exclusively in the winter—remember that a horse can easily pull twice the weight on snow that it can manage over bare earth.

Our sled also includes a one-inch-thick board seat—set across the front of the box—to accommodate little passengers (after all, who can get the horse out of the barn without hearing at least one child’s plaintive “Can I come, too?”). The bench doubles as a support for the box’s sides, which tend to spread when loaded ... but it should be fastened in such a way as to allow for easy removal if you want to haul long items.

## **Harness Up!**

Finally—to connect our horse’s singletree to the sled—we use a 3” screw eye placed exactly in the center of the front crosspiece. If you

live in hilly country and plan to use your sled in winter, you'll probably need to make up some shafts or a tractor pole. (For summer use—or if you're blessed with a flat farm—such devices aren't necessary.)

Since the designs of poles and shaft attachments can vary a great deal, you can suit yourself in this department ... but remember that the hookups must be fastened to the **skids** rather than the center brace, as is a loose hitch. (As an added precaution, we built a board shelf across the sled-end of our shafts, so any youngster who might tumble forward would land safely on that platform. Instead of becoming entangled in the shaft braces and possibly getting run over.)

Once It's built—and the actual construction should take only one afternoon out of your busy life—this little skid along wagon will lighten the burdens of your workaday world. And, as our youngsters will attest, a horse-drawn sled is fun to have around too!

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