

A Small, Stylish Shed

Durable materials make this toolshed as long-lasting as it is attractive

BY JOHN MICHAEL DAVIS

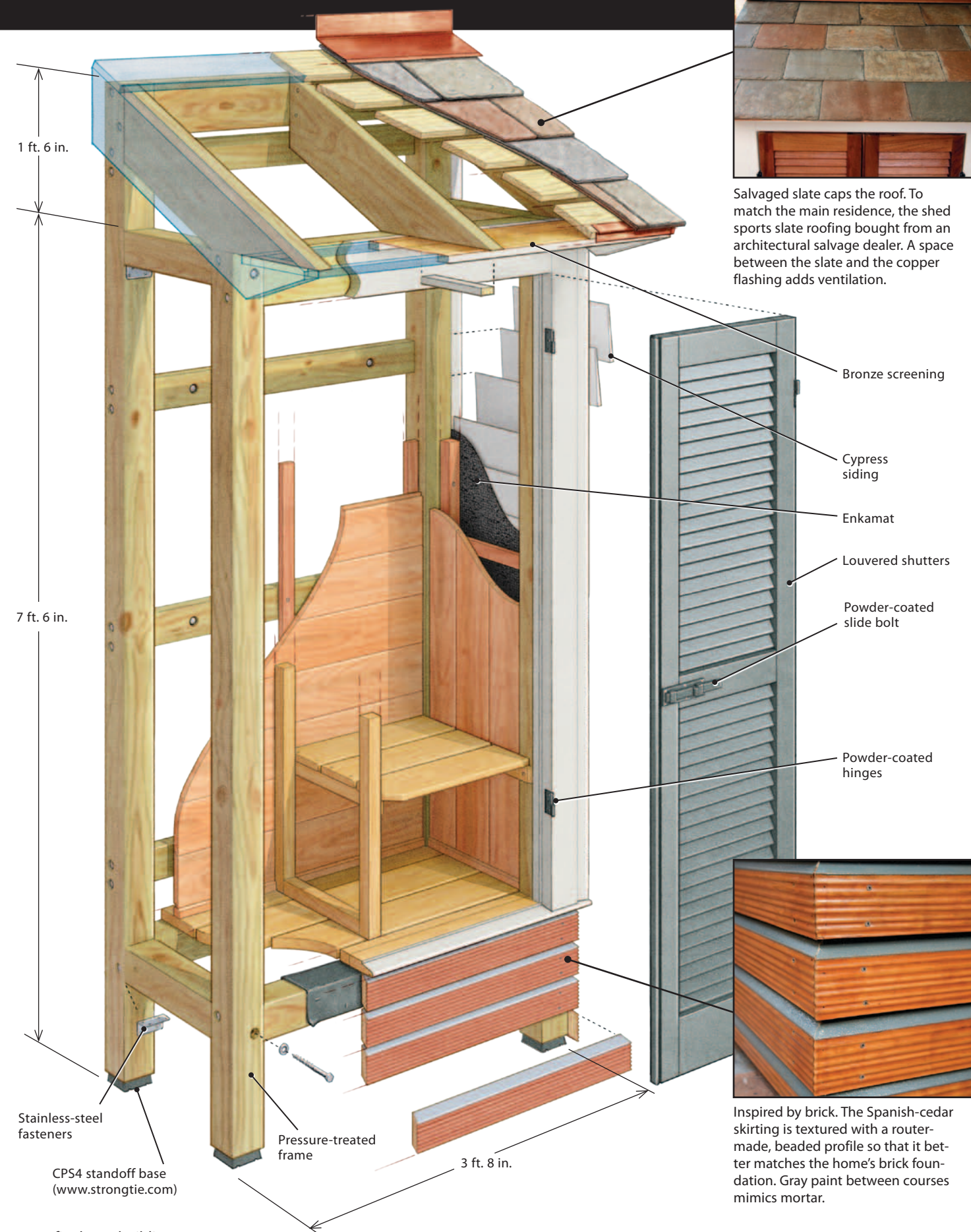
When my clients asked me to design a small outdoor storage shed for their potting equipment, I saw it as a fun project that would be complicated only by New Orleans's balmy, wood-attacking climate. To keep their little shed from succumbing to the elements, I used a series of techniques I've developed in my 30 years as a New Orleans restoration carpenter.

The first line of defense is a sturdy frame built with ACQ pressure-treated stock that has a 0.60 retention level. Most folks don't realize it, but pressure-treated lumber is available in treatment levels from 0.15 to 0.60. The numbers translate to the amount of treatment chemical (in pounds) per cubic foot of lumber. Higher numbers mean more resistance to insects and decay.

Stainless-steel fasteners are used throughout, and Enkamat (www.colbond-usa.com) drainage mats between the frame and the siding prevent rot and mold from getting a foothold. I capped the little structure with slate roofing I bought from a salvage dealer. Louvered doors and bronze screening over a pair of soffit vents provide lots of ventilation, which prevents the objects inside from mildewing.

My clients wanted a small shed, but you could easily adapt the design to match the scale of your outdoor living space. Unless you're willing to spend several hundred dollars for custom shutters, I'd start the design process with stock shutters or louvered doors.

John Michael Davis is a restoration carpenter in New Orleans. Photos by the author.



Salvaged slate caps the roof. To match the main residence, the shed sports slate roofing bought from an architectural salvage dealer. A space between the slate and the copper flashing adds ventilation.

Inspired by brick. The Spanish-cedar skirting is textured with a router-made, beaded profile so that it better matches the home's brick foundation. Gray paint between courses mimics mortar.