

Build a rural grade crossing



A simple project in wood by Marty Cozad | Nebraska City, Nebraska Photo by the author

Here's a plan for making a simple grade crossing. When I build projects like this, I make a prototype, then mass-produce the quantity I need.

Start with $\frac{3}{8}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x 48" strips of

cedar, sold at lumber yards for tomato stakes. Using a table saw or router, cut a notch in the sides that will be sitting on the tie plates (see the drawing). Then cut the lumber to the desired length. I use 12".

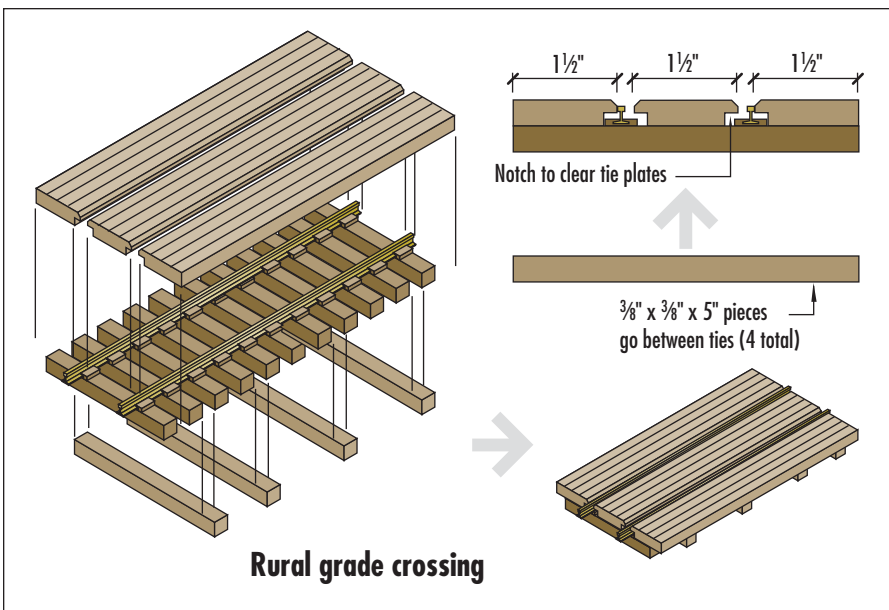
This rural grade crossing can be easily made from tomato stakes.

Using the back of a #11 blade in an X-acto knife handle, scribe grooves in the planking to represent boards. I don't use individual lengths of lumber for this to avoid problems with thin boards bowing or coming loose.

Cut four strips of cedar, each $\frac{3}{8}$ " x $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 5", to go between the ties, under the rails. The surface wood will be nailed to these. At this point, you can use some dark walnut stain to color the wood, if you like, or you can just let them weather naturally.

Nail or spike the surface boards to the wooden ties using a small hobby hammer. Use about eight nails per surface board. If you don't have concrete roadbed like I do, you may need to place a board under the track to make it more stable while hammering.

Once that's done, the project is finished. Resettle the track, if necessary, and start running trains. II



Rural grade crossing