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Sunday, Feb 13, 2022

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Wing wall fix

Lawn sprinklers soaking decorative wing walls caused wood rot. Pressure-treated lumber will fix.



My house has three decorative wing walls in the front. The previous owner did not trim the bushes for 28 years. To allow the lawn sprinklers to spray over the bushes, a contractor raised the spray heads above the level of the wall. The walls would get sprinkled over-spray twice a week. This is in addition to the plentiful Florida rains. This end cap just fell off one day, very ugly.

The builder put a 45-degree cut at this end, so that there was a continuous surface to fit the end cap. I decided to eliminate this 45-degree cut and just have the top board go all the way to the end. This does leave a little empty triangle at the corner. A small plug and some wood filler will fix this. Meanwhile, there is one less cut in the top board, where all the wood rot seemed to have started.



A trip to Lowes provided the raw materials. Note the concrete screws on the boards. The bags of mulch are for another project.



This wall needed three pieces of 10-foot long 2 x 10 inch lumber. The cost was about 37 dollars each, if memory serves. I bought pressure-treated, ground contact lumber.



There are three decorative wing walls on the house. They are all suffering from wood rot.



The corner of the wall had damage both from the top joint, and the vertical joint.



Here is a detail of the end of the wall. You can see putting in that 45-degree cut on the top allowed a continuous vertical scarf on the front edge of the lumber. A really complex cut on the top piece might eliminate the hollow spot that I ended up with, but I cared more about the top.



The wall served as a workbench to cut the new lumber. There was plenty of scrap left over.



The lumber checks out for size, though pressure-treated lumber is wet and you can't paint it right away. Wait until it is dried out.



The wood strip had a factory edge and a cut edge. I marked it so I would use the right edge.



Check the saw angle with a 45-angle square.



The corner needs a 45-degree cut.



The setup for the angle-cut on the top piece. The left over piece will be the end cap.



The cut marked for about where it will go.



The setup for the angle cut.



The short side top pulled off.



The square markings are not from this edge.



The corner view of the top demo.



Go slow and support the cut piece and it will give a nice accurate 45-degree cut.



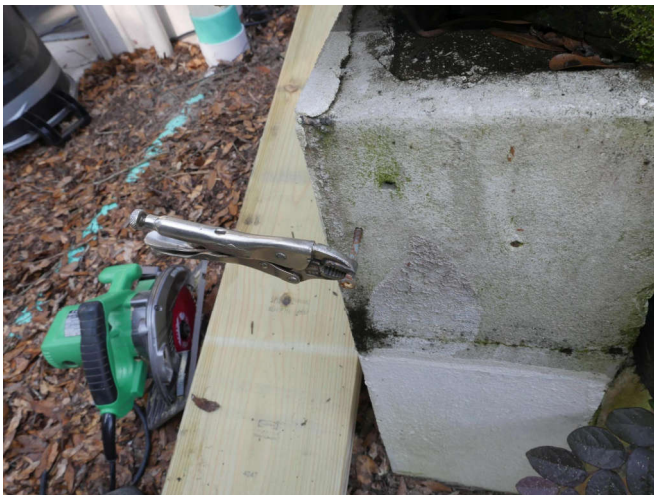
The short top piece is rotted at both ends. Using the pressure-treated wood solves this.



The front piece of the short side is off.



The cut marked, and the 3-inch exterior screws I used to hold the top and front piece together.



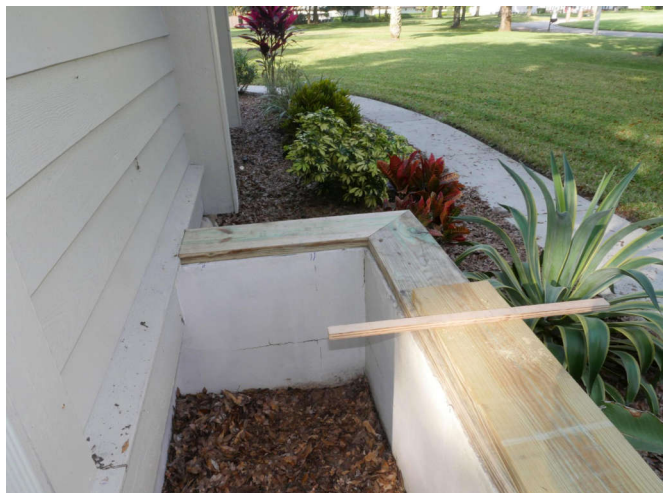
Most of the screws broke off. I used a right-angle grinder to grind them flush, as well as clean up the top surface of stucco excess.



The front piece cut and in place.



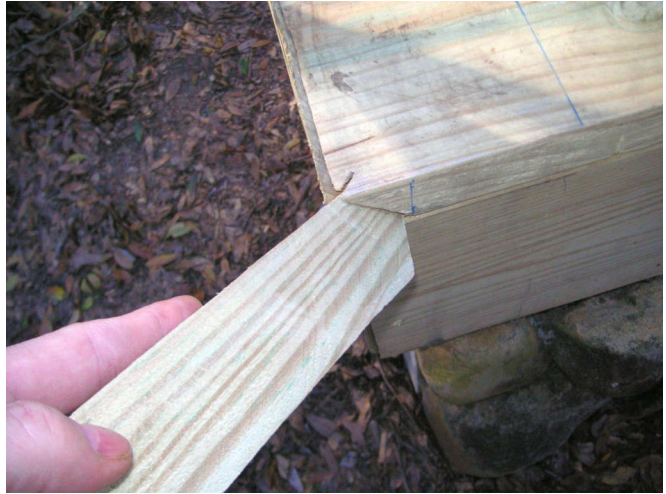
Setup for the short side angle cut.



The short piece on the top fitted.



Getting ready to drill and screw the parts.



A piece of scrap will fill the hole pretty well.



The wall screwed together, but just setting on the concrete. I will anchor it after paint.



Ta dah, the wall roughed in ready for paint.



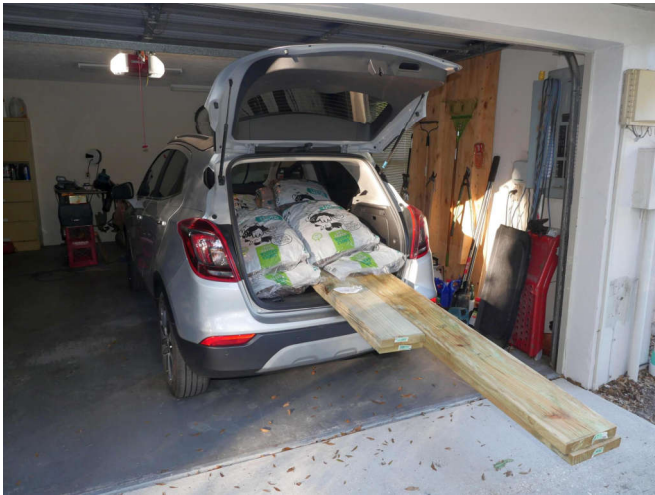
There is a little triangular hole in the corner. I prefer this to cutting a diagonal across the top where water can enter and rot the wood.



The old lumber was in very bad shape. Thankfully, it was not structural.



I gut the old lumber small so it would fit in garbage bags.



The success of this wall project led to greater ambition, replacing the long 12.5-foot wall lumber. I had to buy 16-foot lumber, and have Lowes cut it to 13-feet so it would fit in the car. I also bought two more 10-footers for a short wall at the entryway of the house.

Pressure-treated lumber is wet and you can't paint it right away. Various sources say to wait two weeks to two months. The key test seems to be to sprinkle water on the lumber. If it beads up, it is too wet to paint. If it soaks into the wood, the wood will also accept latex exterior paint. Don't use oil-based paint, the wood is still too wet for oil-based paints.