

Feathered Companions Aviary Indoor/Outdoor Aviary Setup (Austin, TX, 2003)

By Marcy Covault

This is an outside “catch-pen” to keep out big critters and to keep in escapees from flights. It’s 40’L x 8’ to 21’ to 18’ x 7’+ H, with wood frame and enclosed in 1”x2” welded wire. The peace of mind once it was finished that raccoons, opossums, cats, hawks, etc., couldn’t get to the birds in the flights was wonderful and that if I needed to catch a bird in an outside flight, they would not escape totally—and I could walk outside with my pet birds (that are flighted) to enjoy the outdoors.

Inside views



Outside views



Flights into this outer enclosure were connected under the eaves via portals (usually 18" long by 6" inside diameter tubes) into inside cages for servicing food/water and on which hung nestboxes.

Inside bird porch views



FCA Outside Aviary Construction

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*I built this outer aviary enclosure *by myself* over a summer. My back yard was park-like with large deciduous and live oak trees, though only one was next to the house. The enclosure was attached to the back of the house and was 40' long and varied in width from 8' at the narrowest near patio to 21' wide in the middle to 18' wide at the end near flights.*

Main materials: Treated lumber (landscape timbers, 2"x4"s, 4"x4"s), metal "L" braces, wooden trellis, 1"x2" galv wire, nails and staples.

- (1) Dug 1' deep trench for footer (deep enough for that area, where rock was close to surface).
- (2) Set 8' 4"x4" posts on 8' centers about 1' in the ground (so height was 7' on outside long edge).
- (3) Put landscape timbers in trench between posts [had to trim ends off since this was less than 8'], and nailed 2"x4"s to tops of timbers and toenailed into upright posts
- (4) Attached 2"x4" top studs around the perimeter (on top of uprights).
- (5) Inserted 2"x4" upright studs centered between the 4"x4" posts.
- (6) Attached 1"x4" stabilizing/trim boards around outside top of perimeter.
- (7) Built top frame on 4' centers (as possible), connecting to house and patio.
- (8) Using 2"x2" lumber and "L" metal reinforcing brackets, built two 2' wide wire-clad doors, hinged on each side of 4' opening with center latch and installed opposite patio (towards back yard). Installed slip bolts top and bottom on one of the doors, so it would be stationary, while the other was the primary in and out door (except when wider items, e.g., lawnmower and flight cages, needed to be moved in or out of the enclosure).
- (8) Used 1"x 2" galv wire 4' wide, to cover externally, sides and top. [note: As there was a large tree by the patio, used a strip of 1"x2" wire, snipped to curve and nestled around the trunk loosely, with hog rings holding to main top wire]
- (9) Installed trellis at each end of enclosure (for additional privacy) as well as next to house over flights for additional sun-dappling.

What would I do differently?

- (1) Use metal top framing and plastic privacy panels (at least over flights), so there would be no chance of toxins leeching with rain from treated lumber (although I didn't have any problems).
- (2) Reinforce corners and other right angles of frame with metal "L" braces, at least periodically along 40' side to strengthen frame (although I didn't have any problems).
- (3) Insert interior post supports, if necessary (as the top framing was sagging slightly with time).
- (3) Either pour cement footing or use cement blocks beneath and just to above grade under wood framing (for longer-lasting footing without wood being buried in soil).