

How to Build a Garden Railroad Crossbuck

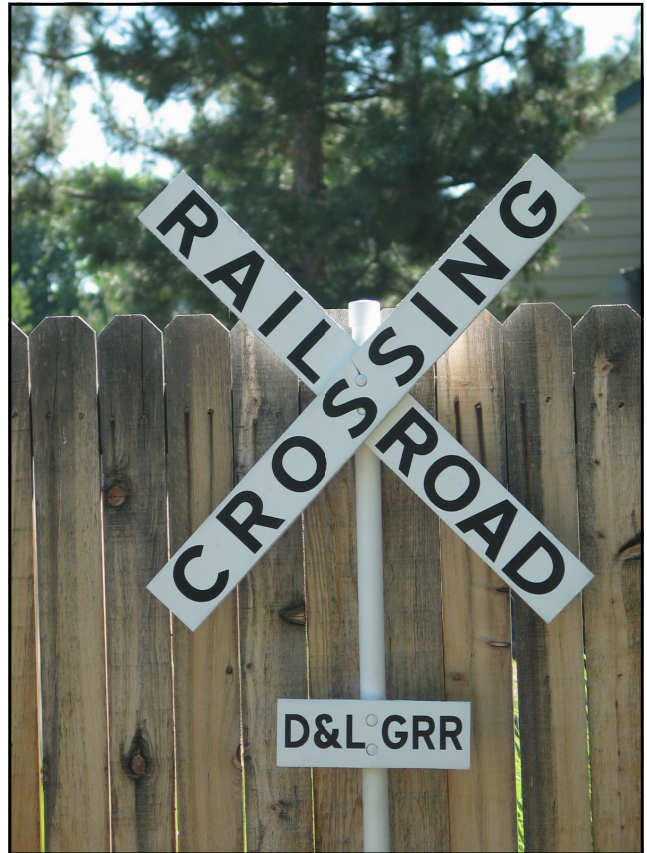
Using G-Scale Graphics

“RAILROAD CROSSING” Vinyl Transfers

Many garden railroaders display railroad crossbucks in front of their home on tour days to assist visitors in easily locating their home. It's a great idea! After navigating to within a block of the home, you can quickly spot the crossbuck and zero in on a parking space without first doing a drive-by to verify the street address. Or you can just use a crossbuck to add railroad atmosphere to your layout.

An official R15-1 railroad crossbuck has two 9" X 48" arms crossed at 90 degrees. A nameplate below the cross buck (an R15-2 sign) usually indicates the number of tracks to be crossed. For this project, the crossbuck arms are scaled down to 30", and the R15-2 sign can be used to display the name of your railroad. You will need to consider where you are going to display the crossbuck and how you are going to support it.

The method shown here assumes the crossbuck will always be displayed in the same place, in the front yard, but only on tour days. So, the crossbuck post (round) slips into a mating pipe buried in the ground about 11". When not in use, the mounting pipe is capped off at ground level. To install the sign, the cap is removed, and the post is inserted into the mounting pipe, which keeps it nice and vertical (plumb). A horizontal hole drilled through both the signpost and the mounting pipe accepts an alignment bolt to keep the signpost from rotating, hence it is always facing the same direction, regardless of wind, etc. It also provides some protection from a passerby easily walking off with your sign.



This crossbuck can be built from one 6' cedar fence slat, some PVC pipe, and a few carriage bolts. All materials should be available at your home improvement store.

Bill of Materials

- 2 - Cross Buck slats, 30" x 3 1/2" x 1/2" cedar (cut from 6' cedar fence slat)
- 1 - Name Plate slat, 10" x 3 1/2" x 1/2" cedar (cut from remainder of fence slat)
- 2 - 3" x 1/4" carriage bolts and nuts
- 3 - 2 1/2" x 1/4" carriage bolts and nuts
- 1 - Signpost, 6' x 1" PVC pipe
- 1 - Signpost Cap, 1" PVC cap
- 1 - Mounting Pipe, 11" x 1 1/4" PVC pipe
- 1 - Mounting Pipe Cap, 1 1/4" PVC cap
- 1 Set - "Rail Road Crossing" vinyl transfers
- White paint (any kind)

Clear acrylic sealer – spray can

Crossbuck Arms

Sand the face of each arm to achieve a smooth mounting surface for the vinyl transfers. Paint white. Sand lightly and cover with a coat of clear acrylic sealer. On the face of the "Rail Road" arm, and the back of the "Crossing" arm, place light pencil marks where the arms will overlap. For a 3 ½" x 30" arm, this will be 13 ¼" from each end.

Mount Crossbuck to Post

Mount the crossbuck arms at 90-degree angles to the post using two 3-inch carriage bolts. This can be a little tricky. Use clamps to hold everything in alignment prior to drilling. Mount the nameplate to the post using two 2- ½" carriage bolts. Install the post cap. Paint the whole thing white.

Apply the Vinyl Transfers

The transfers are supplied in four pieces - RAIL, ROAD, CROSSING, and your custom nameplate. Apply the transfers to the arms and nameplate using the "hinge" method to align the lettering with the arm. RAIL and ROAD should be butted up fairly close to the lines where the "Crossing" arm will go. After thoroughly pressing the transfers in place, remove the transfer tape. Seal the edges of the lettering by spraying the signs with clear acrylic sealer.

Refer to *"How to Apply Your Vinyl Transfers"* instruction sheet for details.



When not in use, the mounting pipe is covered at ground level with a PVC cap.



To install the sign post, remove the cap and pull up the pipe a few inches.



Slip the post in the mounting pipe and then insert the mounting bolt through the post and mounting pipe.



You are now ready to display your crossbuck for club meetings and garden railroad tours. Or, just use it to let the neighborhood know when you are open for visitation. Whether you use this design, or your own variation, a crossbuck will add just one more aspect of fun to your railroad.