

# A Straightforward Dayshade



Our previous modern 10x10 popup got eaten by the wind in the summer of 2021, and we'd wanted something more period-looking, so spring 2022 we decided to add a dayshade to our encampment.

Our criteria were simple: we were making it ourselves, it had to fit into our Toyota Matrix along with our existing SCA camping setup, and it couldn't cost a fortune in materials.

We don't live anywhere near any of the major Wars, so "has to be able to survive for two weeks in insane Pennsic/An Tir-West War/etc weather" or similar was not one of our considerations. This means our fabric is fairly light cotton canvas, our poles are just lumberyard softwood 2x2, and our ropes are ~100lbs test manila from the lumberyard.

Your Mileage, as the phrase goes, May Vary.

Original inspiration was a blog post from Honor Before Victory, a lovely SCA blog that is slowly bitrotting away. Currently their dayshade article is here: <http://honorbeforevictory.com/?s=dayshade> and the PDF version is here: <http://honorbeforevictory.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/canvas-dayshade.pdf>

They used only four verticals with an nine or ten foot ridgepole between the back two. The absolute length limit for carriage inside our car is 7 foot 4 inches, give or take an inch, so a ridgepole that long was right out. We went with more vertical poles instead - three across the front and three across the back, and more ropes.

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# Basic Dayshade Design - Fabric

## Parts List

~33 feet (11 yards/10 metres) of suitable fabric, cut into two equal lengths. See fabric diagram on the next page.

Six 8' 2x2 lengths of lumber, straight and free of warping or knots

120-150' of rope for guy lines (3 x 3/8th sisal rope, sold in 50' coils)

16-20 tent pegs - we use 10' roofing spikes with a fender washer added to widen the head.

## Sewing The Fabric Parts

Sew your two full width lengths of fabric together along the selvege edges using a strong seam - look up "felled seam" for extra details. Finish the front and back edges so they don't fray; the long outer edges will also be selvedge so can be left as is.

We did eventually put decorative dagging along the front and sides of the roof, but still haven't managed to take any photos of the dayshade since putting dagging on it, so for the purposes of this little handout we are going to ignore the dagging.

## Eyelets

The green squares mark locations of eyelets to hold the rod on the top of each pole.

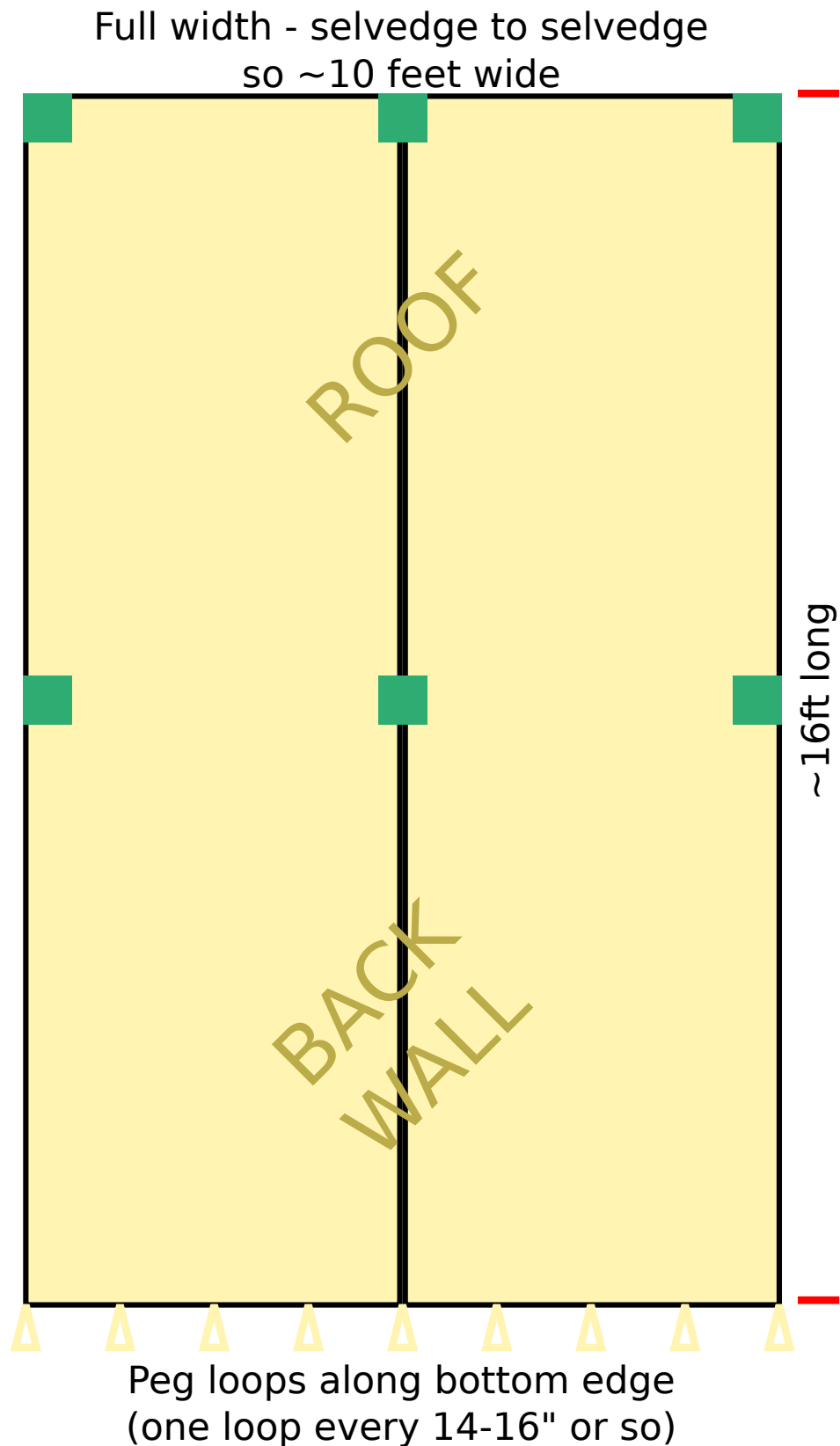
The centre back one needs to be an eyelet, because of it's location, but the five along the edges could also be loops - some people recommend those over eyelets.

We used two layers of heavy cotton canvas, one either side of the canvas of the dayshade itself, to form each eyelet, and hand-stitched each with heavy thread. Our squares actually are green, which turns out to be very handy when folding and unfolding the cloth - easy landmarks for figuring out which bit of the canvas mass you're looking at.

## Peg Loops

Along the bottom edge of the back wall, install peg loops every 12-16 inches or thereabouts. We sewed our loops from offcuts of the same light canvas the main dayshade is made of, folded into long canvas strips, sewn up, then cut to length and hand-sewn along the bottom hem at regular intervals.

# Basic Dayshade Design - Fabric



# Basic Dayshade Design - Poles,etc

**Poles** - 2x2 8 foot lumberyard stock, cut 7 feet tall.

Make six.

At the tops, mount a length of quarter-inch threaded rod, cut-down roofing nail, or similar. Drill and glue the rod into the top of each 2x2. I cut my rods from quarter inch threaded steel rod, made each 5" long, drilled a quarter inch hole 2.5" deep into the top of each pole, and tapped each length of rod in with a smear of Weld Bond glue to make sure it was never, ever coming out.

VERY OPTIONAL (but it looks pretty) use a hand or powered plane to cut down the corners of each 2x2 to make them octagonal in cross section.

Finish the poles as desired. We used a couple layers of reddish-orange wood stain then two coats of clear varnish. Put an extra coat or two of varnish on the top and bottom ends of the poles, because end grain is prone to absorbing moisture.

Also optional - add short ground spikes to the bottom of each pole. We haven't bothered, but it would help stabilize everything.

## **Guy Ropes**

We used very ordinary 3/8th sisal rope from the hardware store for guy ropes. It's got an advertised 100lbs breaking strength, which really should be enough for our purposes. If your setup is likely to involve Pennsic drenchero windstorms or Gulf Wars tornadoes, you might need to make different rope choices.

A lot of the stability of this design comes from the back wall being staked down, though, so it'll need fewer ropes than a completely freestanding shade would.

I got nine guy ropes out of three 50' coils, enough for two ropes off each corner pole, one on the other three outer poles, plus two spares. These are very long and I could probably have gotten four guy ropes from each 50' coil and still had ample length.

## **Rope Tensioners**

The tension blocks are hardwood 1x2 stock cut about 4" long with a pair of half inch holes drilled through them. The rope goes through one hole, comes back up the second, and gets a stopper knot in it. The other end gets a small bowline to loop over the rod at the top of the pole.

## **Stakes/Tent Pegs**

We use 10" nails (usually sold as framing spikes, far as I can tell) for tent pegs, and add a 1.25" fender washer to each spike to give it a nice wide head. Both the framing spikes and the fender washers are cheap and easy to find. I did up a set of 20 for the dayshade; minimum setup would need about 12-14. More is never a bad idea.

# Dayshade Setup & Misc Notes

## Setup

Lay the bottom edge of the wall out, stake it down, then fold the roof back so you can get to the centre pole grommet. For the initial lift it really helps to have three or four people - one per pole and one to set and stake down a guy rope from each rear side pole. Once the three rear poles are stable two people can do the lifting and guy line staking for the front poles fairly easily.

You wind up with about 3-4 feet of space between the back of the rear poles and the staked down bottom edge of the rear wall - useful storage space out of the walking/sitting main area of the dayshade.

## Finials

I used the offcuts of 2x2 to make my current finials for the tops of the poles. I handplaned each 1 foot offcut into an octagonal cross section, cut them 4" long, then used a chisel and the handplane to make the top edge sort of polygonal and pointed. Each got a quarter inch hole in the bottom, drilled about 3" deep, to slot over the steel rod in the top of each pole.

Currently two of my finials have 17" lengths of 7/8ths inch dowel embedded into the top ends to fly silk banners from. They have about 16" of usable flagstaff.

I was going to use screw-threaded nuts or fasteners embedded into the bottoms of the finials to screw onto the threaded rod on the tops of the poles, but didn't get to it before we started using the whole setup. Gravity has held the finials in place just fine so far, even with silk banners tugging on them, so I'm not going to bother installing the threaded fasteners.

I am planning on replacing all six of my current finials as I did not drill the mounting holes in the bottom edges all that square and they all sit crooked on the tops of the poles. It's especially noticable on the two I currently have made with the banner staffs on them... I'll use a friend's drillpress to do the mounting holes on that second generation of finial so everything is as square as possible!







First setup from the back rear corner. Back wall staked down, ropes in place and tented up, and finally up with silk banners flying.



The bottom edge of the back wall. Yes, we'd missed two stakes as we'd laid it out, but everything works anyway.