

Assembly and maintenance tips for wooden buildings

Common mistakes when building a garden house

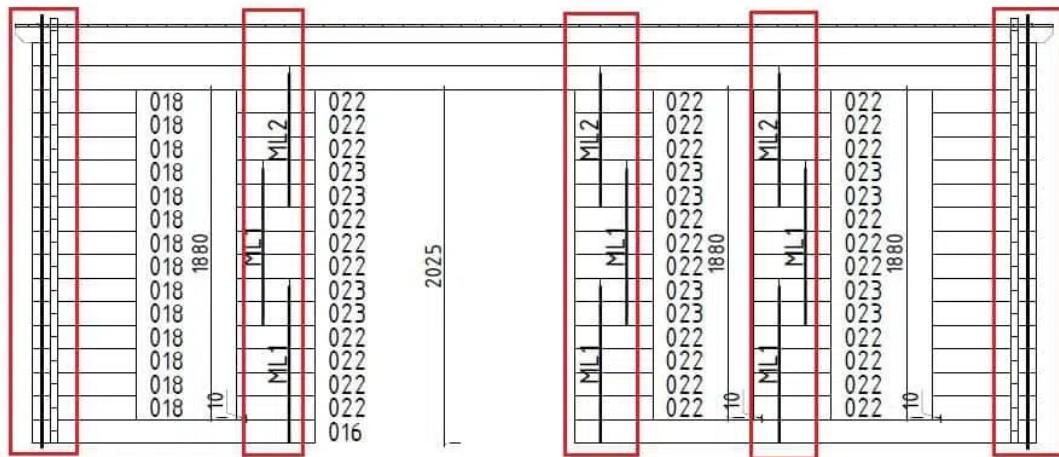
- Storing cabin packages on uneven ground or grass. House packages should be stored on even ground, otherwise the wooden components of the house will bend. Packages should not be stored for long periods of time (more than two weeks) on grass, even when covered with plastic wrap. The wrap only covers the packages' top side, so humidity can still reach the material underneath. The packages should not be stored in direct sunlight for long periods of time either, because warping can occur within several days.



- Starting the assembly without sorting the materials. Before starting the assembly, all components should be sorted and checked. The floorboards, wall planks, roof boards, moulds, foundation beams, windows, and doors should be separated; everything should correspond to the quantities detailed in the cabin plans and packing list.
- Not following the assembly plan. The cabin plan should be followed exactly and compared with the inventory to see exactly where each component belongs. The drilled holes in the wall planks which allow for the metal strengthening rods to be inserted are shown on the plans and must be positioned on top of each other.



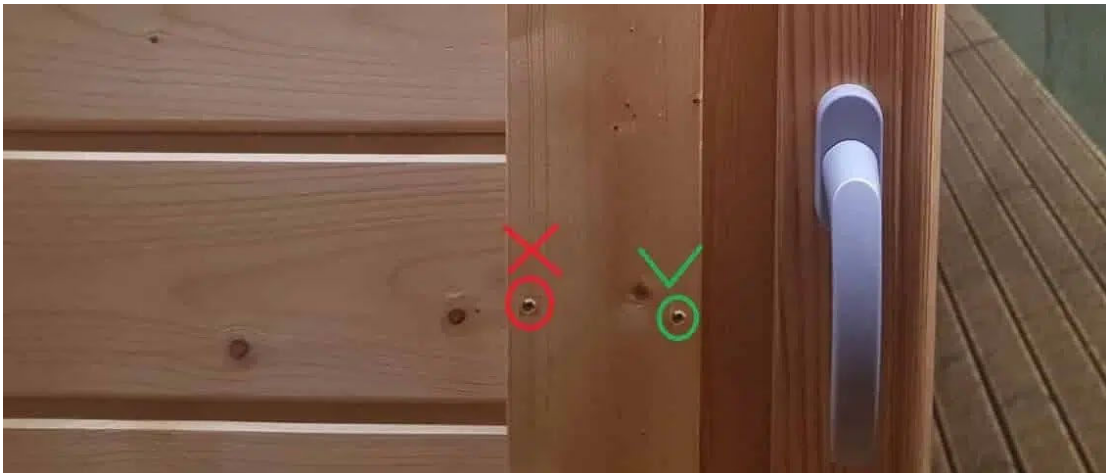
Failure to do this will result in you not being able to insert the strengthening rods or storm braces.



- Missing general knowledge and previous experience in assembling houses. In our cabin sets, all components are already measured and cut in the factory, with the exception of some floor and roof boards, support posts and other components (these are designed to be cut during the installation process). This makes the assembly of the house easy and uncomplicated, but still requires some knowledge and previous experience. If you are in doubt, we advise you to hire a local craftsman to help you or use our professional assembly service. Our YouTube video demonstrates the [installation of a garden house](#), giving a comprehensive overview of the assembly process.
- Wrong /poor quality foundations and base. Like any other building, a wooden building should always be placed/built on a proper foundation. A suitable foundation depends on location, soil, purpose of use, and the size of the cabin. The most preferable types of foundations are a concrete slab, pile foundation, strip foundation, and plastic pedestal risers. Regardless of the type of foundation, all foundations must be levelled, stable, and built according to the size of the house footing. Do not be tempted to put a fall on your base for water drainage. This is unnecessary and will cause issues with the operation and life span of the cabin. If necessary, we will send you the house plans before delivery. You can read our tips about suitable foundations by clicking here: <https://summerhouse24.co.uk/popular-base-types-garden-buildings/>

- Not using the dowels/connectors/butterfly joints supplied for [houses with terraces](#). All the drill holes in components of the [garden houses](#) have a purpose, and every hole has a corresponding detail that fits into it.
- Leaving the roof without a roofing cover. All our [log cabins](#) need a suitable roofing cover, which will help protect your cabin from the elements. For a long-term solution, we strongly recommend using Icopal extra-strong felt (pent), roof shingle kit (apex), or an EPDM rubber roofing system.
- Our basic cabin packages do not include any roofing, so whether you source felt yourself or choose our recommended roofing upgrades, it is essential to protect your cabin with an appropriate roofing cover.
- Poor wood finishing. After finishing the assembly of the garden house, it should be treated immediately with a deep penetrating wood preservative, followed by a minimum of two topcoats using an appropriate wood protector. The usage and application instructions of your chosen product should always be followed. We recommend using Protek Wood Preserver Plus and Protek Royal Exterior Wood Finish to treat your garden building after assembly. The price for the supply of the relevant quantities can be found on each product page of our website. It is necessary to treat all external areas of your cabin, including under veranda roofs, eaves, and the inside of all doors and windows, as well as the frames, which must be treated too. The wood preservatives should only be applied on dry wood surfaces; no painting should be done in wet weather or when the cabin is wet. We do not advise using clear wood preservatives or stains for the topcoats. This is because they do not provide enough UV protection, and the cabin will develop dark patches that look like mould. This is where the UV rays have burned the lignin in the wood. Wood will absorb moisture from the atmosphere, as well as when it rains, which causes it to swell, which will then contract when the sun shines. This action can cause excessive movement in your cabin, which will mean doors and windows will not function correctly and require constant adjustment. Ensuring your cabin is fully treated within four weeks of assembly is a condition of the 5-year extended warranty. Failure to apply and maintain appropriate wood preservative will invalidate the warranty.

- Preventing the movement of the wall planks with cable conduit, cables, and furniture. Ideally, when fixing various items on the house walls, they should be mounted on only one wall plank, so the different wall parts are not mechanically fixed to each other. This allows the Cabin to settle freely and equally. In the event that mounting on different wall parts is unavoidable (for example, cable works), you may need to remove the fixing temporarily if gaps appear in the wall to allow the planks to settle. You can then refix the item once the wall plank has fallen back into line. You should always leave a minimum space of 7cm between the top of any wall-mounted furniture and the roof/joists.
- Fixing the window and door laths into the wall planks. Window and door trims should not be nailed/screwed into wall planks, but only to the corresponding door or window frames. In the event that they are fixed to the wall, the natural movement of the cabin is limited, which will result in gaps between the wall planks.



- Not installed or untightened storm braces. Houses with a wall thickness of at least 44mm are accompanied by metal rods, which must be inserted throughout the entire wall. They should be fixed from above with a washer and nut, inserted into the drilling holes on the wall details, and fixed from underneath with a washer and nut. Tighten manually with your fingers; do not overtighten these using a spanner.

The nut should be tightened from underneath during the first year, at intervals of 1 to 2 months, then periodically.



- If your garden house has a canopy with support post(s), it should be measured, cut to size, and positioned on the post footing so that the pillar is 8cm higher than the terrace. This secures access to the post footing for later adjustments. The post footing is adjusted with the nut attached to it, using a spanner.



Garden house maintenance – what should be considered:

- Applying a deep penetrating wood preservative, followed by a minimum of two topcoats using an appropriate wood protector, should happen as soon as possible after the cabin has been installed. Later, the house should be repainted according to the paint manufacturer's instructions, on average every 3-5 years. All external surfaces of the house, and the inner doors, window frames, and trims, should be treated with wood preservative and kept in good order.
- The storm braces should be tightened every 1 to 2 months throughout the first year, and periodically beyond that if necessary. Tightening should be done manually, and not with a spanner. In the event of rust, spray the area with WD40 oil and use a spanner to restore movement.
- Depending on the house, the roof purlins may be extended and fixed centrally with bolts. If this is the case with your cabin, they must be tightened using a socket wrench.



- Never mechanically fix the wall planks together with fixed laths for dry lining or wall insulation, for example. If you are installing either, you should always use floating laths with a minimum of 7cm tolerance to allow settlement.
- It is common that wood (especially solid wood) might have cracks and knots; this is a natural feature of wood, and does not affect the cabin's performance or constitute a defective or poor-quality product.

- If the floor of the house has no insulation and the cabin has no heating, small gaps between the floor boards can occur depending on the temperature and humidity level. They may require adjusting.
- The canopy support post(s) of the house should be adjusted down according to the settlement of the cabin using a spanner on the footing bolt. Support posts that are too high prevent the cabin from settling evenly, which will lead to gaps between the walls or where the veranda meets the main cabin room.
- Although the doors and windows are good garden-house quality, they are not residential doors and windows. In exposed areas, extreme weather conditions, such as horizontal driving rain, you may experience some leaking. You can prevent this by using silicone/rubber seals inserted behind the window/door architraves. This is general cabin maintenance and not something that Summerhouse24 will return to do, even if you have used our installation service.
- Doors and windows should occasionally be adjusted to make sure they are functioning correctly. Window and door frames are smaller than the corresponding openings, which is necessary due to the settling of the house. During the first 2 years, the openings should not be filled with any material like expanding foam to ensure the cabin can settle without restriction.

