

BUILD A BUSTER KITE

Courtesy of Boy Scout Troop 18, Stephenville, Tex., and *Boys' Lifemagazine*
For more on kites, including plans to build a simple "tetrahedral" kite, see the March 2000 issue of *Boys' Life*

In 1932, two boys in central Texas created a rare kite that could fly better than any known to the boys at that time. The unusual three-stick kite design had a 25-foot tail and flew well at 800 feet. The boys were shocked when they discovered their kites could fly all day and night, crashing only once, when the wind died completely. In later years one crashed when a low-flying airplane collided with the string.

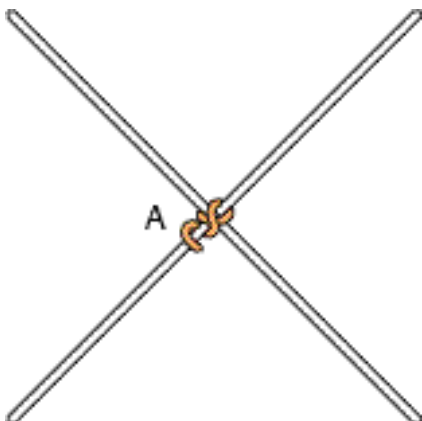
One of the boys, William "Buster" Robertson, added a parachute drop to the kite, making it his favorite hobby. Over the years, Buster made it his personal quest to teach as many boys as possible how to make the entertaining kite. He wanted boys to stay out of trouble and have fun. Today Buster's relatives still honor his wishes by sharing plans for these unusual kites.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

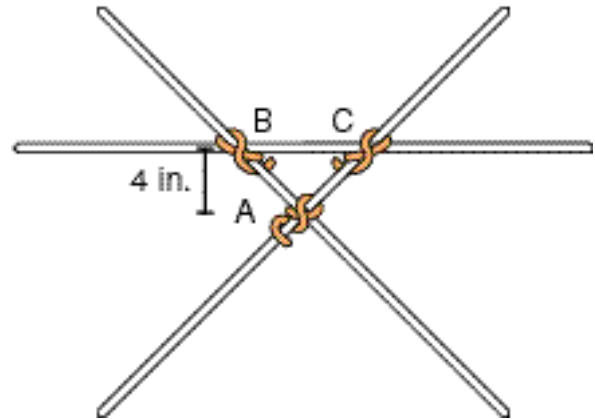
- Three 3-foot dowels, 1/4 inch diameter
- Sheet of butcher paper
- 25 feet of medium-weight fabric for tail
- Handkerchief or other small fabric for parachute
- Small fish hook, swivel and weight
- Glue
- Scissors
- Nylon kite string
- Light string for parachute
- Pocketknife

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

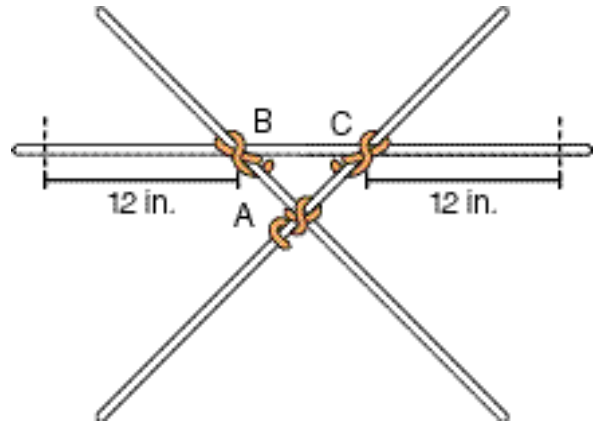
1. On two dowels, measure 18 inches from the end and mark the spot.
2. Lay the two marked dowels over each other to form an X. Lash together at the location of the marks as shown.



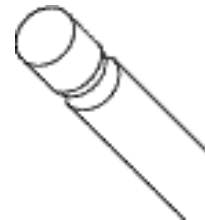
3. Place the third dowel 4 inches up from the point of intersection of the first two dowels. Place this dowel in between the first two dowels and lash at points B and C.



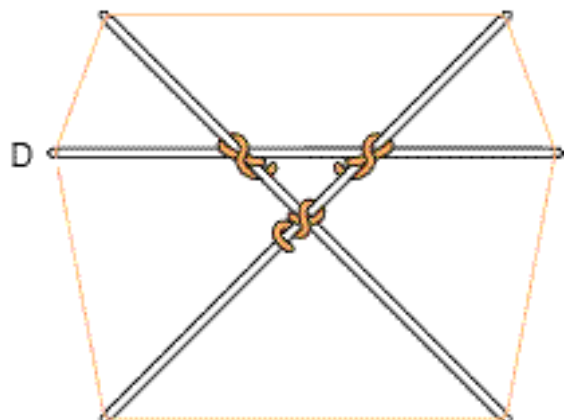
4. Cover all three lash points with glue. Let dry completely.
5. Cut the ends off the third dowel so it measures 12 inches out from both points B and C.



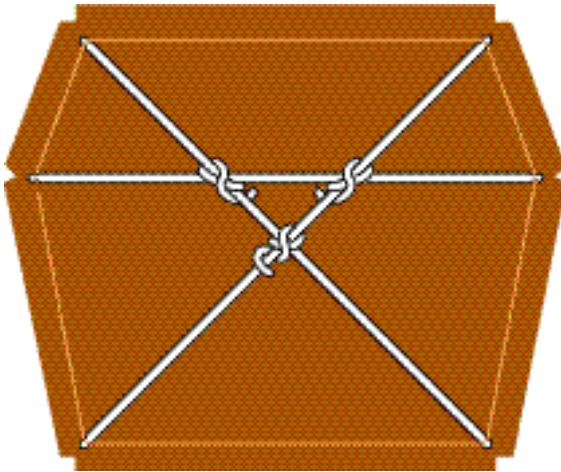
6. Using a knife, gently cut a notch around the entire tip of each end of the three dowels.



7. Using nylon string, outline the frame, starting and ending at point D.



8. Lay the frame on the butcher paper and cut a pattern the same shape as the kite. Cut the edges two inches larger than the frame so it can fold over and cover the kite string. Cut a V in the paper at the tip of each end of dowel. (Note: You may need to glue to pieces of butcher paper together to make it large enough to cover the frame.)

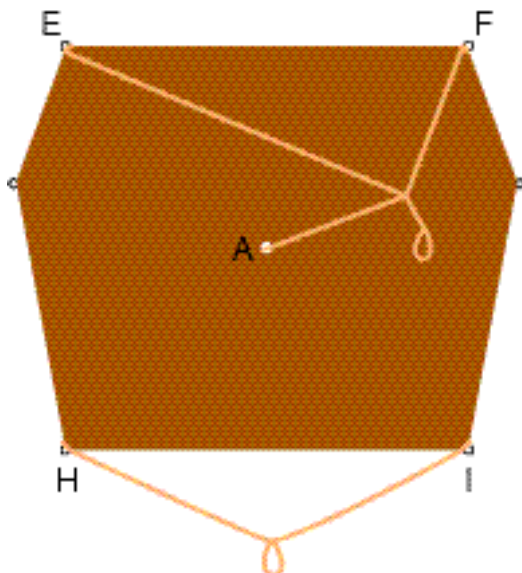


9. Fold the edges of the paper over the string and glue in place. Your butcher paper should now be attached to the kite.

10. Tie a 4-foot piece of nylon string from point E to point F, in the notched ends of the dowels. Let it hang across the surface of the kite on the side opposite the sticks.

11. Punch a tiny hole through the covering over point A (where the sticks were first lashed together). Tie a 4-foot piece of string at point A and run it through the hole to the side of the kite opposite the sticks. Tie it around the string going from E to F. Tie it in a manner that will produce three equal lengths of string coming out of points E, F and A. This will make the shape of a triangle when you look at the face of the kite. This triangle is the flying bridle. Tie a loop in the end of the excess string that comes up from point A.

12. Tie a 4-foot piece of string from point H to point I. Tie a loop in the middle of the string for connecting the tail.



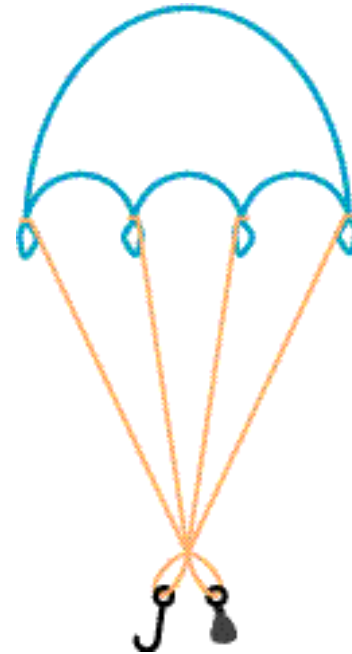
13. Attach a 25-foot tail made of medium-weight cloth. This will vary from kite to kite and can only be made more accurate during flight. Lengthening or shortening the tail will adjust the

kite's flyability. A darting or diving kite needs more tail.

14. Using about 2 feet of lightweight string, tie two opposite corners of handkerchief together. The string should hang like a loop between the corners. Repeat this on the two remaining corners.

15. Hook the two strings over your finger and gently pull on the handkerchief corners until they are all hanging evenly. Tie one knot in the two strings close to your hand. This will leave 2 small string loops.

16. Cut the barb off a fish hook and connect the hook to one of the loops. Tie a fishing weight to the other loop. The amount of weight may vary, but usually one small weight is O.K.



17. To fly the parachute place the hook on the kite flight line. The wind will open the parachute and blow it up the string toward the kite in the sky. When the parachute gets close to the kite, flip the string with a simple wrist action to release the parachute into free flight.

- **Buster kites are very stable fliers. Adjusting the tail length or bridle knot position will produce good results.**
- **No need to run to get this kite off the ground. If the wind is blowing it will rise from your hand.**
- **Be sure the tail isn't dragging during takeoff.**
- **These kites fly very high, so be sure to stay away from power lines, trees and other obstacles.**

**Buster Kites
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