Cemetery Fence

Once again, another great idea comes from the Halloween-L Archives. I can't remember who suggested this idea; it's buried somewhere in the 1997 Halloween-L E-mails.

For those outside of the USA: (") = Inches, (') = Feet.

Materials (per fence section):

- 2 - 8' lengths of 1x2 lumber
- 4 - 10' lengths of 1/2" PVC pipe
- A box of 1" wood screws or finishing nails
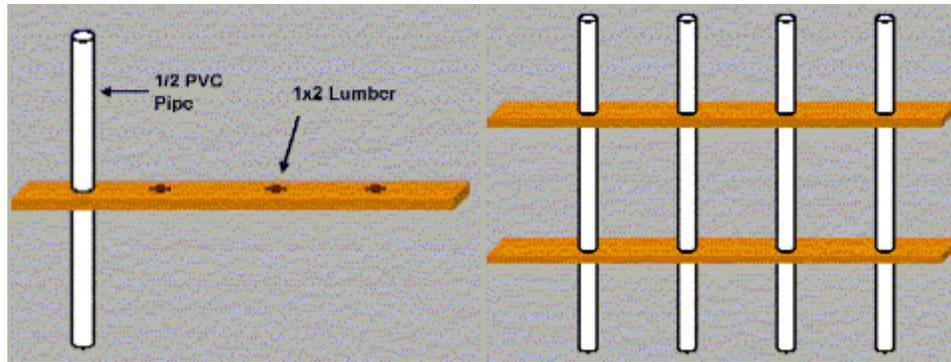- 1-2 cans of flat black spray paint.

Tools:

- Electric Drill
- 7/8" spade drill bit
- Assorted drill bits if you are using screws
- Hacksaw or pipe cutter

With the 7/8" spade drill bit, drill holes in the 1x2 lumber, 8" apart (measuring from the center of the hole). The length and spacing of fence bars can be altered to suit your taste, or lack thereof.

With the hacksaw or pipe cutter, cut each 10' length of PVC pipe into 3 lengths. Each pipe length will be 3'4" long. The original pipe length is rarely exactly 10' long, so you may have to cut off an extra 1/2 inch or so. You should end up with 12 lengths of pipe. I used 11 of these for each fence section.

Set the pipe into the holes in the lumber, as shown in the pictures below.

I spaced the 1x2 lumber so it was 5 inches from the top and bottom of the pipe. Experiment with the arrangement and use what looks good to you.

Now you will need to fasten the pipe and lumber in place. The easiest method is to pound a finishing nail though the wood into the pipe. A sturdier method is to drill a hole though the wood and pipe, and use a wood screw to fasten the pipe in place as shown on the right below.

Finials (the decorations at the top of the bars) can be made in a number of ways. You can mold your own custom finials in plastic or plaster, or cut simple ones out of some other material. I used a type of corrugated plastic board I found at MJDesigns. You could also use foamcore board, or some other type of thin plastic. Cardboard is also fine, if your fence will not be exposed to water.

I used 2 sizes of finials, and alternated them across the fence (This only works if you have an odd number of fence bars). I cut slots in the finials to slide them over the ends of the pipe. A quick dab of hot glue held them in place.

Paint the fence section with flat black paint. Pay particular attention to the lumber, to seal it well.

Tip: The more expensive brands of spray paint (Krylon) give better coverage and more resistance to peeling and chipping.

To mount the fence, you can simply pound some rebar into the ground and slide the PVC pipe over it. However, I decided to make fence posts out of 2-inch PVC pipe. I cut them to the same length as the fence bars. Then I inserted a length of 1/2-inch pipe inside. I used screws (one at the top, one at the bottom) to attach the 1/2-inch pipe to the inside wall of the 2-inch pipe.

The screw at the bottom was very short, and only extended into the 1/2-inch pipe a very short distance. This was needed to allow the rebar to slide into the 1/2-inch pipe. A side benefit of this method was that I could tighten the bottom screw up against the rebar, making it difficult to pull the fence off the rebar.

I attached some skulls to the top of the fence post. These skulls were made from some skull-shaped drink containers I found at Party City. I cut off the screw-top lid, and glued a piece of Dow foam in its place.

After shaping the foam to blend in with the top of the skull, I hot-glued it to the top of the PVC fence post.

Then I painted the whole thing black.

Tip: remember that any kind of Styrofoam needs to be sealed with latex paint first.

Here are some pictures of the fence in my front yard.

Tip: If you are supporting your fence section from fence posts, be sure that at least some of the fence bars touch the ground. Otherwise, the 1x2 lumber will eventually bend and warp under it's own weight and the weight of the PVC.