



The Quad Square

by Neil Momb

At first glance it looks like a combination square on steroids, but further examination shows that the *Douglas Quad Square* is much more. I think it's one of the most useful layout tools I've used in more than 40 years of work as a builder.

The 16-inch-long blade will square across a 2x12, and the 1 1/2-inch-wide blade is excellent for plate layout. The handle (the short legs of the combination square) are a full one inch thick, leaving 7/16 inch on each side to hook over the edge of a board. This means on lumber with wane, you're more likely to get an accurate line.

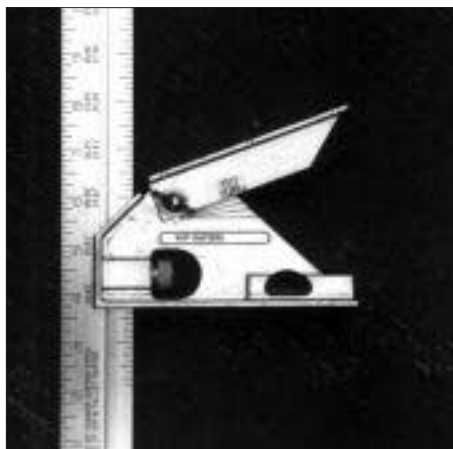
For its size, the Quad Square is surprisingly light, too, so carrying it around all day won't drag you down. The blade is a thick aluminum extrusion and the handle is made of a durable aluminum-zinc alloy.

Both sides of the blade are marked in inches, divided into eighths. One side is marked with degree angles for common and hip-valley rafters from 4/12 to 12/12. On the other side are length-per-foot-of-run markings for common, hip/valley, and jack rafters on both 16- and 24-inch centers, which makes calculating rafter

lengths easy. As if this wasn't enough to please any framer, the Quad Square also has decimal equivalents of fractions from 1/16 to 1 inch. All the etched markings are silkscreened in black, then electroplated, so they're easy to see, even in bright sunlight, and won't rust over or wear off. The numbers are also large and well spaced to avoid confusion when reading them.

Now it starts to get interesting: The 45-degree leg of the tool pivots, and a wing nut locks it in place for roof pitch lines from 4/12 to 12/12 — commons marked on one side and hip/valleys on the other. Thus, the Quad Square is an excellent tool for laying out all angled rafter cuts. In addition, you can place the pivoting leg against the underside of an existing rafter, swing the tool until the built-in vial reads level, and read the pitch of the roof. This feature has been particularly useful to me when tying an addition into an existing roof.

The Quad Square was invented by framing contractor Doug Myall, of Woodinville, Wash. Myall has been framing houses for about 24 years, and had the idea for the Quad Square some years back. He admits it's not a substitute for a framing square — nothing is. But in addition to a framing square, he wanted something he could set at a specific roof pitch for fast layout, had a 1 1/2-inch blade for wall layout, and was small enough to carry in his bags. So a couple of years ago, Myall set out to have the Quad Square made to his specifications. At this point, the Quad Square is only available in some lumberyards and contractor supply houses in the Northwest at a retail price of about \$25. At least one of those distributors, Builder's Hardware, in Seattle, Wash., is set up to fill orders by mail. For more information, contact Builder's Hardware, 1516 15th Ave. W., Seattle, WA 98119; 206/281-3700. ■



Framer's layout tool. The *Douglas Quad Square* features a pivoting leg that locks in place for roof pitch angles from 4/12 to 12/12. The square's 16-inch-long blade will reach across a 2x12 and the 1 1/2-inch-wide blade is ideal for plate layout.

Guest columnist Neil Momb is a builder in Issaquah, Wash.