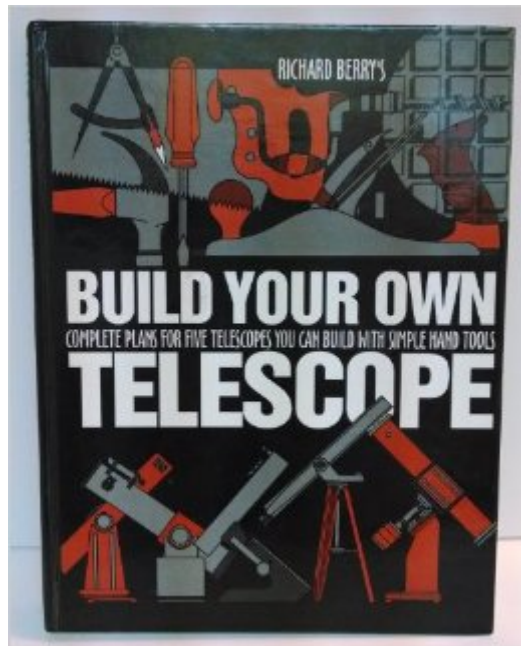


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Build Your Own Telescope: Complete Plans For Five Telescopes You Can Build With Simple Hand Tools



Synopsis

Book by Berry, Richard

Book Information

Hardcover: 276 pages

Publisher: Willmann-Bell, Inc.; 2nd edition (December 1993)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0943396425

ISBN-13: 978-0943396422

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 8.5 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (20 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #977,874 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in [Books > Science & Math > Astronomy & Space Science > Telescopes](#) #1618 in [Books > Science & Math > Experiments, Instruments & Measurement](#) #14555 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design](#)

Customer Reviews

If you can only have one first book on making your own telescope this is it! I have been an active amateur astronomer for almost 35 years and I wish this book had been out in 1965 at the time I first got interested in astronomy. Richard Berry when he was editor of "Astronomy", and "Telescope Making" (now sadly defunct), was the first to popularize John Dobson's Sidewalk Telescope design now simply known to amateur astronomers everywhere as the "Dobsonian". In this book he leads you in how to build several excellent telescopes from parts that are easily available from hardware/lumberyard sources everywhere. He shows and explains 5 different example projects, 4", 6", 10" Newtonians on Dobson mounts, how to mount a refractor on a Dobson type mount, and even one equatorial mount made of plywood and hardware parts. The projects are well illustrated and explained. He gives you a good overview of commercially available parts and commonly used eyepieces. But beyond being just a simple how-to project book he gives an explanation of telescope history and basic optical theory. I wish I had his well illustrated chapter on "Home Brewed Optics" when I made my first telescope mirror. While not a substitute for having a copy of Allyn Thompson's "Making Your Own Telescope", or Jean Texereau's "How to Make a Telescope" which deal mainly with the making of the primary mirror, it would have tied together concepts I did not understand well at the time. When I'm asked while doing public star parties (and you always will be

while doing that kind of thing)"what kind of telescope should I get" or "where can I find out how to build one these things (the telescope)", I always recommend this book. In fact I now always bring a copy to these occasions so they can get the title and author correct as well as browse thru it. You can light a number of fires that way.

I am no craftsman, but I used one of the plans in this book to build a telescope - not a toy, but a real astronomical telescope that I use frequently. Berry includes plans for 4.25", 6", and 10" reflectors and for a 6" refractor. The plans are quite complete, and the process of construction is given in detail. Berry devotes some space to mirror grinding, but I chose to buy my mirror, so I can't comment on his instructions. He also provides an introduction to astronomical observing, which I found helpful. Berry's writing is clear and his tone is encouraging and enthusiastic. I recommend the book highly.

This is the best book out there for the beginning telescope maker. It is the book I used to build my first 6"; without it I would probably not have built a telescope at all. Berry provides detailed and complete instructions for several telescopes. His writing is easy to understand and very clear, and he gives some very important practical advice about building and observing.

I first bought this book in 1989, and built the 10" Dobsonian described therein. Berry's talent lies in paring down a lot of the information available in other books, and telling you in clear, simple terms what you need to know. His directions for grinding a telescope mirror (I did this with a 6" mirror) are the clearest I've read. His technique for mirror grinding is clearly explained and easier to follow than many other books. There are also sections on testing mirrors, collimation, and other subjects helpful to amateur telescope makers. If you intend to build your own telescope, this book is a must. Even if you are a do-it-yourselfer who doesn't desire to build a telescope, or you have a general interest in astronomy, you'll find this book interesting. Fourteen years after I built the 10" Dobsonian described in this book, I would not change one single aspect of its design--thank you Richard Berry.

I am a skilled builder. I build boats, bows and guitars. There is very little that I find a challenge when it comes to construction. Although this book contains a lot of interesting material, it seems that Mr. Berry knows a lot more about telescopes and optics than about how to write a clear design for construction. In fact, some of his measurements will simply not work and need to be revised. If you choose to buy this book be prepared for some hard problem solving and be prepared to come up

with some of your own solutions. I think the book would have been better if Mr. Berry had collaborated with a draftsman and someone who actually builds for a living. He should have given his plans to a novice and let them build his projects. They would have pointed out the shortcomings of his instructions and then he could have revised his book. It would change it into a must have book. Now...the book is fun, but be prepared for some frustration and a real, unnecessary challenge.

This book is a great start on building your own telescope. Later I bought Richard Berry's book (Build your own telescope) which actually has more detail and beautiful illustrations but cost a lot more. I recommend both books.

I agree with Len Bast, the instructions are very poorly laid out and often contradict themselves. One of my biggest problems with this book was that for each telescope he suggests, he neglects to have a list of building materials and tools at the start of each chapter, which is a huge mistake. As mentioned previously, the plans quite often contradict themselves, or one of the accompanying photos or diagrams or else leave ambiguities that, to a novice builder, seem bewildering. Nevertheless, I did manage to build a working telescope from this book, so while it's not entirely useless, it could be much improved.

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