

ASK SMITTY

No woodworker (except *SMITTY*, of course) has ALL the answers. From time-to-time, everyone hits a snag, trying to figure out some sort of in-shop problem. Don't worry. *SMITTY* can help. Just use the special e-mail link directly below to send your questions to *SMITTY*. He'll do his best to get back to you soon, with the answers to those questions.

Here are the questions...and *SMITTY*'s answers for this issue...

Resurrecting old Shopsmith Way Tubes

From Chester Lambert
(e-mail question — city/state unknown)

I have four old Shopsmith's that I have never used (got them from my Dad). The parallel Way Tubes are rusted with no chrome on any part. Any chance of resurrecting them, or will they need to be replaced ?

First of all, the Way Tubes are not chrome plated. You can probably save them by cleaning them up with emery cloth followed by steel wool. Once you get them clean, coat them with two or three layers of furniture paste wax to protect them. This waxing procedure should be repeated at least once a year...more if your machines are stored in a garage or out-building.

If you have trouble getting them reconditioned properly, new MARK V Tubes are not that expensive – top tubes are \$49.99 a pair – bottom tubes \$33.99 a pair. Good luck.

Bandsaw blades dull quickly when sawing cedar

(e-mail question – name, city & state unknown)

When cutting cedar, my bandsaw blades dull surprisingly fast. With the limb tapering from 5" dia. to 3" and running Cool Blocks and lube, I've found no metal to dull the blade before or after cutting.. As I progress from sapwood to heartwood, the dulling seems to start. After cleaning pitch from the blade and providing wedges to prevent blade binding, dulling seems to progress extremely fast. Is it possible that the change in wood is dulling my blade ?

Sounds like it's in the wood. Two things could be happening. First, cedar will extract minerals from the earth and deposit them in the sapwood. This mineral deposit is in liquid form and "soft" while still in the sapwood. As the wood transforms from sapwood to heartwood, it no longer has all the moisture of the sap running through it and is quite a bit drier, so the minerals crystallize. This can make the heartwood very abrasive.

Second, cedar has a fine, rough, flaky bark with lots of small recesses for dirt to hide. If this tree grew in or near a field that's dusty even part of the year (as many are), the tree will pick up the dust blown by the wind and capture it in the bark. Then, as the tree transforms the bark to sapwood, the dust becomes "soft" from all the moisture of the sapwood. During the subsequent transformation of this sapwood to heartwood, as described above, it no longer has the sap running through it and is drier. As a result, the dust becomes hard again and could be the cause of your dulling problem.

Model 500 MARK V owner needs more support for crosscutting

From Dave Hill
(e-mail question – city & state unknown)

I own a Model 500 MARK V and need to cut a board to 16” wide by 42” long. Making the rip cut is easy, but how can I make the crosscut with my machine?

You’ll need a Front Table Extension for your Model 500 machine to handle these wide crosscuts. This accessory (Part # 505625) will extend the Miter Gauge slot in the front of your machine by a full 7”, giving you plenty of support for making your 16” wide cut. This item is available in Shopsmith’s on-line catalog.

Turning a continuous taper on a 7-foot bed post

From Rich Felstead
(e-mail question – city & state unknown)

What’s the best way to turn a continuous taper on a #’ x 3” x 7’ bed post ?

If you’re using a MARK V, the simple answer is in 30” sections that you dowel together. The trick, as you probably know, is to get your tapers to continue at the identical radio from piece-to-piece. If it’s to be a straight taper with no additional features (such as beads, coves, etc.), it can be difficult to achieve smooth, continual tapers of such lengths.

If you have limited experience, my best recommendation is that you incorporate a number of such features in your design (however slight), to “break-up” the transitions from section-to-section and hide any slight imperfections which could show up.

Achieving a straight, ripped edge on rough-sawn lumber

From James Rudecki
(e-mail question – city & state unknown)

I have some rough sawn ash and am having difficulty getting straight edges. All the boards are 8’ to 9’ long and I’ve been using my Model 510 MARK V to rip the boards square before finishing them on my Jointer. The edges are slightly curved and I can’t seem to get them straight on the saw or Jointer. These boards are 1-3/8” thick and quite heavy. I’ve been using roller stands to support them, but they’re still hard to handle. Any suggestions or techniques you could offer will be appreciated.

I would suggest that you temporarily tack nail or screw a “known” straight-edged board to the top surface of your subject board near its edge...so the straight-edged board protrudes ½” or so beyond the edge of your subject board. Then, guide the straight-edged board against your Rip Fence, straightening the opposing edge of your subject board. Once you’ve done this, remove your tacked-

on “guide board”, flip your subject board over and guide its straightened edge against your Fence, straightening the opposing edge.

Roller stands are a great help. If you do a lot of ripping on heavy stock by yourself (without the aid of a helper), you might also consider getting one of Shopsmith’s Support Tables (Part # 555307). They attach to the outfeed side of your MARK V’s Worktable and will even tilt with the table, if you’re making beveled rip cuts. These tables can be very helpful to the “lone woodworker” (not to be confused with “The Lone Ranger”). Good luck, Kemasabe !

Screw pockets versus mortise-and-tenon joinery

From Gary (last name unknown)
(e-mail question – city & state unknown)

Have you found that screw pocket joinery is an acceptable replacement for mortise-and-tenons in most applications ? They sure are faster and less troublesome !

The answer depends on whether you want the appearance of mortise-and-tenon joinery (in keeping with the design of your project)...and on whether or not you need the strength of such joints. Mortise-and-tenon joints are, of course, much stronger than screw pocket joints and can be much more attractive in their appearance.

If you’re planning to use these joints to connect the stiles and rails of a cabinet carcass, screw pockets are a perfectly acceptable alternative...since these joints are seldom visible...and you really don’t need the strength to support normal-sized cabinet doors.