

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...

Cutting cove moldings

From Charles Hofele (e-mail question — city/state unknown)

I'm trying to cut some cove moldings at a 45 degree angle without success. I've tried laying it flat on my saw table with my miter set at 45 degrees — upside down at 45 degrees, all with no success. How can it be done?

Cove molding is made with "flats" on the back...on both sides of the board's width. One of these flats should rest against the ceiling...and the other against the wall (both) to hold your molding at a 45-degree angle when installed.

If you want it to fit properly when you place it in position, you'll have to CUT it when it's sitting at that same 45-degree angle on your table saw, power miter saw or cut-off saw.

Therefore, when you make your cuts, you'll have one of these flats resting on your saw's table surface...and the other against the face of your miter gauge (or power miter box's back fence)...holding it at a 45-degree slant as you pass it through the blade. If your miter gauge's face isn't high enough to allow this, attach an auxiliary wooden face to it before making your cut.

Hopefully your molding isn't so wide that your table saw doesn't have sufficient depth-of-cut to do the job. If it is, you may have to purchase a large, manual miter box to make these cuts.

This should solve your problem.

Repairing Sanding Belts

From Herb Foster (e-mail question — city/state unknown)

I have several sanding 6" wide Shopsmith belts that I've had for several months due to overbuying. The seams have come apart due to moisture, which had rendered them useless. How can I glue these back together so they can be used?

For safety reasons, I cannot recommend that you attempt to glue these belts back together. The seams on Shopsmith Belts have been "taped" seams for many years...fused together under a special process (that you will be unable to duplicate) at the abrasive manufacturer.

As you probably realize, it is imperative that these seams remain flexible while being EXTREMELY strong. If you tried to use epoxy glue for its strength, it would not be sufficiently flexible. If you tried to use rubber cement for its flexibility, it would not be sufficiently strong.

Since your safety should be far more important to you than saving money, our best recommendation is that you tear (or cut) your damaged belts into strips or pads and use them for sanding lathe turnings...or with your orbital or pad sander.

Any new replacement belts you may purchase should be hung vertically on your shop wall, over a protruding dowel and away from any moisture. Don't lay them flat, as they could crease.

Birdhouse entrance sizes

From "Gary" (e-mail question — city/state unknown)

Can you provide me with a listing of what size entrance hole is recommended on bird houses for the different groupings of birds?

Yep. Here are the sizes for the most common birds:

Bluebirds: 1-1/2"

Chickadees: 1-1/8"

Doves: Leave one or more sides open

Finches: 2"

Martins: 2-2/2"

Robins: 2-1/2"

Sparrows: Leave all sides open

Starlings: 2" (I can't imagine inviting starlings to the yard!)

Swallows: 1-1/2" to 2-1/2"

Woodpeckers: 1-1/4" to 4" (depending on how hungry they are, I assume)

Wrens: 1"

Dust collector doesn't work properly on Shopsmith MARK V Table Saw setup

From Roy Gunter-Smith (e-mail question — city/state unknown)

I have a Shopsmith Dust Collector but cannot get to work properly with the table saw. A large portion of the sawdust ends up on the floor regardless of what I do. I would like to correct this.

If your Dust Collector is working properly with your other tools, the problem is obviously with the Table Saw dust-collection set-up.

If you have a later model 510 or 520 MARK V.....

First, be sure your Tie-Bar Guard (Item # 155 on Table exploded view in your MARK V manual) is in position. Some folks remove this for drum sanding and forget to replace it.

Second, open-up the width of your lower guard until it touches the inside of the tie bar and tighten it down.

Third, be sure there are no obstructions in the saw guard dust collection port.

Finally, be sure to use the upper guard

If you have a Model 500 MARK V with a metal lower saw guard.....

Call 1-800-762-7555 and request a FREE Saw Guard adapter. This will allow you to widen the opening for improved dust collection.

If you have a Model 500 MARK V with a plastic lower saw guard.....

We suggest that you add a Model 500 Lower Saw Guard upgrade kit — part number 555294 — to improve your dust collection.

Owner has problem with drill bit burning

From Mike Binnings (e-mail question — city/state unknown)

I recently inherited a Shopsmith MARK V and have been going thru each tool to learn how to use it properly. A problem I am encountering:

I have some "General" dowel hole plug bits that appeared very dull. However, even after having them sharpened, I still am experiencing severe burning of the wood. I have tried combinations of rpms from 1100 and up with no luck, either on pine or oak. Any tips?

Three things.

First, I would suggest that you invest in the Basic Shopsmith Brad Point Bit Set (1/4", 3/8", 1/2", 5/8" & 3/4") ...it will solve most of your needs and will perform exceptionally well.

Second, I would also suggest that you run your bits at the slowest MARK V setting....feeding them into your work slowly & withdrawing frequently to clear the chips. This is much more important with hard woods such as ash, oak, hickory, hard maple & cherry. You can run a bit faster with soft woods such as pine, mahogany, fir, poplar, etc.

Third, the larger the bit diameter, the more important it is that you run at slow speeds...again, this is especially true with hard woods.