

Preparing for Wood Finishing

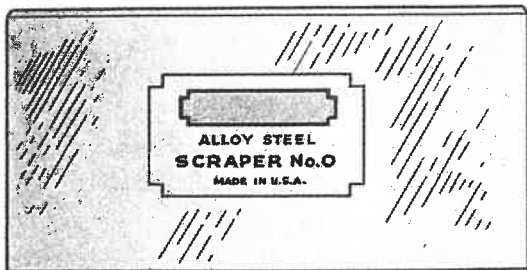
Before applying a finish, make sure your project is really ready for it. A finish will not cover up mistakes. In fact, it tends to show them up! Time spent in preparing the project for finishing is well worth it.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

Shellac sticks are hard, colored pieces of shellac that become soft when heated. They come in these colors: oak tones of natural, light, medium, golden, and dark; walnut tones of light and dark; mahogany tones of light, medium, and dark. Other colors are transparent (clear), old ivory, white, and cedar. Shellac sticks are used to repair cracks and dents.

Plastic wood is a wood paste that comes in such colors as natural, light mahogany, oak, walnut, and mahogany. It is used to fill holes and cracks.

Wood patch is a synthetic (artificial) wood that also can be used for filling holes and cracks. It comes in cedar, walnut, pine, mahogany, fir, and oak as well as a neutral color.



37-1. A hand scraper.



37-2. A cabinet scraper.

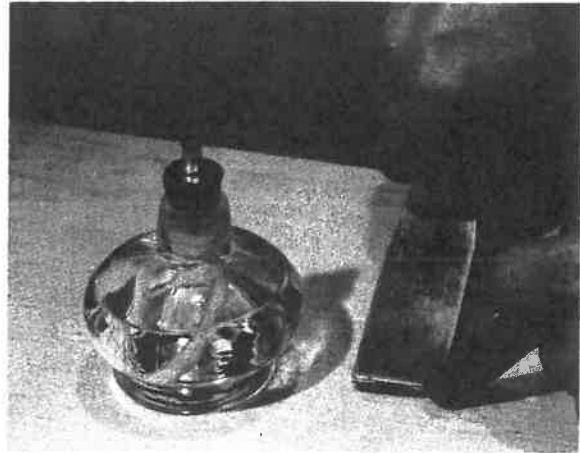
Wood sawdust mixed with powdered resin glue makes a good crack filler. Don't use sawdust from the power sander because this contains abrasive grains that would darken the mixture. Use sawdust from white pine or basswood for lighter wood filler. Mix the sawdust half and half with glue and then add water to make a thick paste.

A *hand or cabinet scraper* is sometimes used on open-grained wood to get a fine finish. Figs. 37-1 and 37-2.



37-3(a). Using wood patch to fill cracks. This is a neutral color that takes stain easily.

37-3(b). *Filling a crack with stick shellac. The alcohol burner is used to heat the end of the stick shellac and the blade of the putty knife. This is a good way to repair dents. It is easy to match the color of the wood.*



Oxalic acid crystals for bleaching can be purchased in any drugstore.

Commercial acid bleaches come from paint or hardware stores.

You will also need a putty knife, Bunsen or alcohol burner, chisel, and scraper.

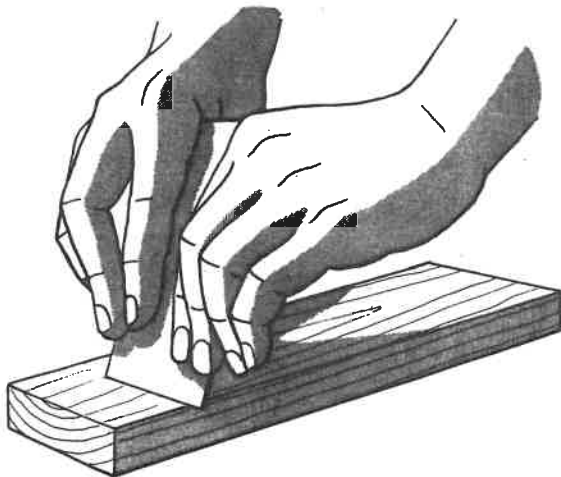
REPAIRING DENTS, CRACKS, AND HOLES

1. If there is a small dent in the wood, allow a wet cloth to cover it for several hours. This will raise the grain. Then sand the surface.

2. For deeper dents, put a heavy, wet cloth over the dent and apply a hot soldering copper or iron to the cloth.

3. Fill all cracks, dents, and nail and screw holes with plastic wood, wood patch, or stick shellac. Fig. 37-3. Clean out the crack or hole carefully. Make sure the wood is dry. To use stick shellac, heat the end over a Bunsen or alcohol burner until it is soft. Also heat the blade of a putty knife. Then press the shellac into the dent or crack with the knife.

Apply enough filler to make it slightly higher than the surface. Sand off when dry until it is smooth and level.



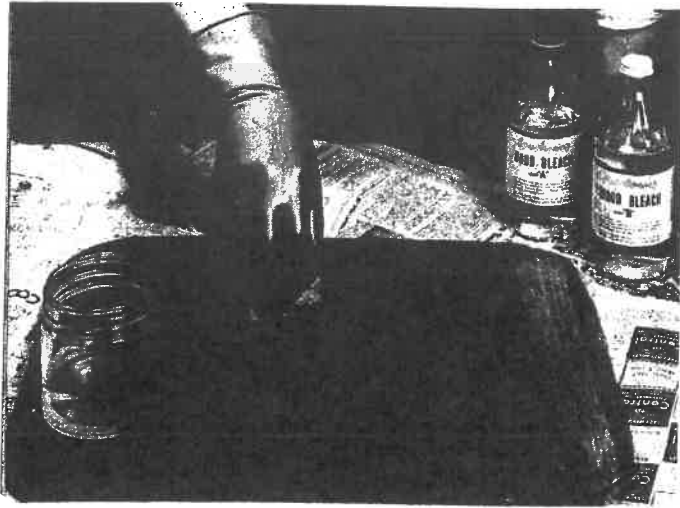
37-4. *Scraping the surface of wood with a hand scraper. This is usually done on open-grained woods such as oak, mahogany, or walnut. Hold the scraper with both hands, at an angle of 50 to 60 degrees to the surface. Turn the blade a little toward the direction of the stroke. Then push or pull the blade.*

SCRAPING AND/OR SANDING THE SURFACE

1. Use a chisel to remove excess glue that has squeezed out around joints. This must be done because glue will not take stain.

2. On a large piece of furniture made of open-grained wood, scrape the surface with a hand or cabinet scraper. Fig. 37-4. This must be done before any sanding.

3. Finish sand your project with 3/0 to 6/0 garnet paper. The finer the grit you finish up with, the more prominent the grain pattern and glossier the final finish will be. Check for any rough areas that may need further sanding by running a nylon stocking over the wood. If it snags, you've got some more sanding to do. Soften all sharp edges and corners by lightly sanding them.



37-5. *Using a two-step commercial bleach. Rubber gloves must be worn to protect the hands.*

4. Remove most of the sawdust from the project with a bench brush or shop vacuum. Then give it a thorough rubdown with a tack cloth to remove any dirt, dust, or abrasive particles and leave a perfectly clean, smooth surface.

BLEACHING WOOD

To get a very light finish, wood must first be bleached. For small projects, use a solution of oxalic acid crystals mixed in hot water. For larger projects, apply a commercial acid bleach. Always follow the directions given on the container. Fig. 37-5. Bleaching raises wood grain. You must sand again after the wood has dried.

QUESTIONS

1. Will a finish cover up any mistakes made in cutting and sanding? What does it do?
2. What can you use to fill holes?
3. How can you raise a small dent in wood?
4. Why is stick shellac good for filling dents, nail holes, and screw holes?
5. How should you remove excess glue around joints?
6. How is bleaching done?