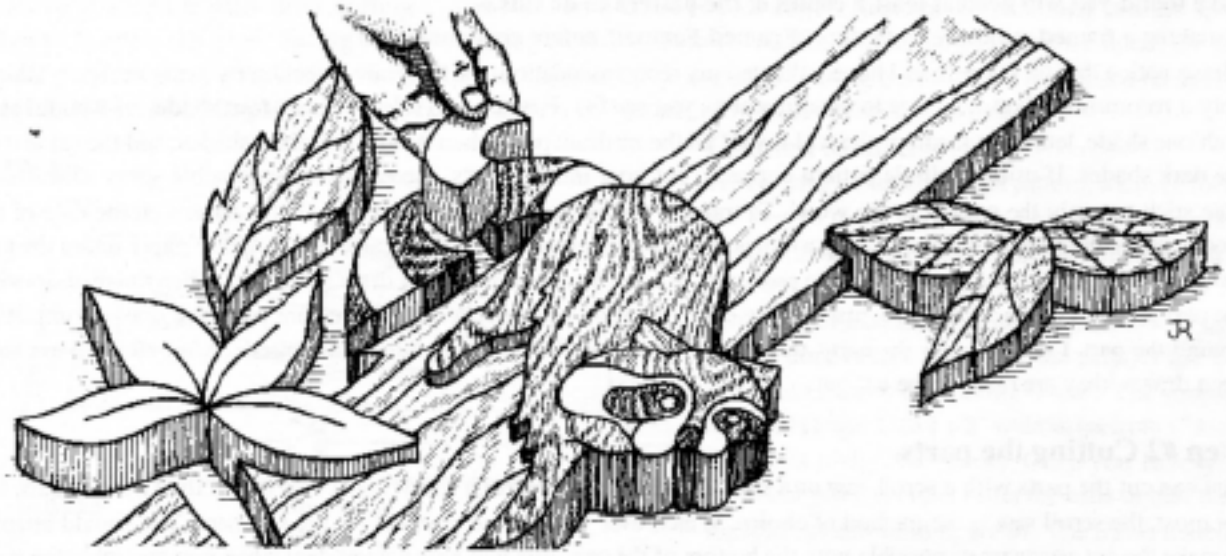
BASIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR CREATING

INTARSIA



WELCOME TO INTARSIA

INTARSIA: a mosaic of wood, fitted and glued into a wooden support. Popular in 15th century Italy for decoration. also: the art or process of making such work.

Our goal is to teach intarsia techniques by using these patterns. These instructions cover basics skills required for intarsia projects. There is additional information printed on most of the patterns we have available.

Our patterns are printed on a high quality tracing paper so you can lay it on the wood and see how the grains will best suit that part. I use red ink when making all my Intarsia patterns. One of the best things about the red ink is when you are sawing each part, the scroll saw blade does not get lost in a heavy black line. Also if you are using the hand tracing method you will be able to easily see where you have traced at all times when using a blue or black pen.

You will need:

- Pen & pencil carbon paper, or make multiple copies of the pattern (usually 5 or 6 will do).
- Push pins, or a temporary / repositionable spray adhesive, or a repositionable glue stick.
- **1/8" tempered hardboard or** 1/4" plywood for backing (or thin plywood).
- Yellow woodworkers glue.
- Clear finish. (we use a Clear Wiping Gel).
- At least four shades of Western Red Cedar (or any kind of wood).
- A Fine point, ball point pen (if tracing your patterns onto the wood).

Step #1 Layout . The preferred method for laying out would be to have multiple copies of the pattern and cut the actual paper pattern parts and use either spray adhesive or a glue stick to hold the pattern on the wood. I have found you will need at least 5 copies of the pattern to do this.

If making a framed project refer to step "**Framed Format**" before continuing.

Please notice that on the pattern I have indicated my recommendation for the grain direction by using an arrow (this is only a recommendation, feel free to experiment as you see fit). First I try to select at least four shades of wood. I start with one shade, lets say a medium shade, I layout all the medium parts, then do all the lighter shades, and the same with the dark shades. If using multiple pattern copies to cut your intarsia parts, use either repostionalble spray adhesive or glue stick to apply the pattern to the wood. To transfer the pattern onto the wood I place the pattern on the face of the wood, get positioned, and place some push pins to keep it in place. I then slide carbon or graphite paper under the pattern, smooth the pattern out and put more push pins to keep from moving it as I draw around it. When finished drawing the part *do not* remove all the pins, just remove enough so that you can check to make sure you have drawn completely around the part. I also number the parts, this helps especially when they get into the hundreds. After all the parts have been drawn, they are ready to be cut out.

Step #2 Cutting the parts

You can cut the parts with a scroll saw or a band saw. Band saws have a much faster rate of cut than a scroll saw, but for most, the scroll saw is the method of choice. Which ever you choose, accuracy is the key here. You should attempt to make the cut as square as possible with the bottom of the part, this will help a great deal when you assemble the parts resulting in a better fit. When sawing, try to barely remove the line with your blade so a minimum of stock is removed from the part. After sawing the parts remove the "burr" or "tear out" on the bottom of the part which was caused by the saw blade passing through the top and out the bottom.

Step #3 Shaping the Parts

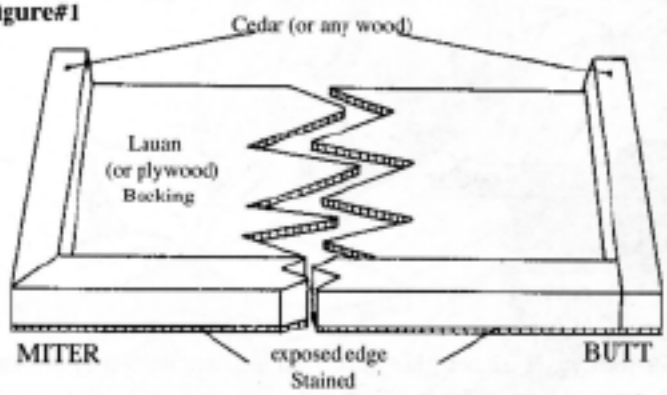
These patterns are designed in a way that they will look nice without any contouring. If you decide to leave them flat at first, just sand the face of the parts and hit the edges with sand paper to soften the hard corner. If you decide to contour the pieces, here is what I do: First I assemble the parts as pictured on the pattern. Next I check to make sure it fits, and trim areas that may need it. It is difficult for me to explain how to shape the parts. It would help for you to have a mental picture of the animal or scene as if it were a live project. For example; I will use the raccoon to explain. The body parts would be the thinnest, the arm would be the thicker. The raccoon is behind the tree, so the branches would be thicker than most of the raccoon (the exception being the arm and tail). When you want the appearance of parts over lapping (arm and tail) they would be closer to the viewer, therefor they would be the thickest. The tail is coming from behind the tree, so would be thinner behind the tree and thicker in front of the tree. As a rule of thumb, I start by sanding all the areas that will be the thinnest, and work my

up to the thicker parts. I use an inflatable drum sander for the rounded parts, and a belt sander for the flat parts. If you do not have a drum sander, you can use a disc sander to shape it. For the first ten years of doing this type of work, I had only a band saw and disc sander. The swirls left by the disc sander make an interesting texture. You can also carve parts, I use an X-ACTO knife for parts the sander cannot get. The cedar is soft enough, so it is not difficult to carve. Shaping is the fun part, just experiment with the tools you have on hand. After all the parts have been shaped, it is important to sand around all edges to knock off any burr that may be there, and to soften the sharp edges. Where color changes doesn't mean the contour changes. Areas like the tail and face are sanded as a unit. I use double sided light duty carpet tape to hold the parts onto a piece of plywood cut approximately the size of the sections to be sanded.

Step #4 The backing

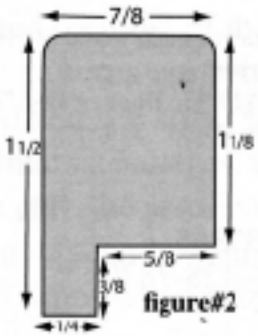
I trace around the project to make the backing. Assemble the parts on a sheet of white paper with a light coat of spray adhesive to keep the parts from shifting as you trace around the outside edges. Remove the parts then use the spray adhesive to apply the paper tracing onto the backing material. Then cut out the backing and remove the burrs. On this type of project we use a dark stain on the exposed edges of the plywood or if using the tempered hardboard no stain is needed. Re-assemble the parts on top of the backing, to make sure it fits (trim the backing if needed).

figure#1

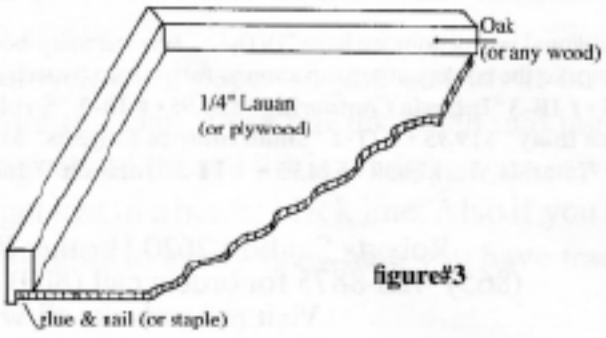


Framed format

When using a framed format pattern, we have found it's best to make the frame first. If choosing this method, measure the pattern first, then make the frame accordingly. After the frame is complete, measure the inside and adjust the pattern lines to that measurement (this is done before laying out the parts). I use two different methods for making frames. The simplest method is to cut 1" to 1 1/2" wide strips from 1" stock (which is really 3/4" thick). Once you have your strips cut you can either miter the ends or butt them together, as shown in figure #1. The frame material is glued directly on the (or plywood). The exposed areas of the look better stained dark. **Another** method which is more preferred is as follows: Select the wood that you want to use. We use oak because frames sometimes get more abuse. We start with 3/4" to 1" by 1 3/8" to 1 1/2" thick stock. Then a rabbit is cut on the bottom side. See figure #2. This can be done on a table saw or radial arm saw. After the frame is made, turn it over and measure the rabbit, then cut a piece of 1/4 plywood to fit. The backing is then glued and nailed in place. Turn the frame over and get a final inside measurement and adjust the pattern as mentioned above. We also apply our finish to the frame at this time.



figure#2



figure#3

Step # 5- The Finish

Feel free to use your own type of finish and finish technique. The method and the type finish we use work best for us, and is only a suggestion.

We use three coats of a Clear wiping gel. We also prefer to apply the finish to each individual part **before,** we glue the parts down. This method may be a little more time consuming but we feel it is well worth the extra time.

If you prefer, you may want to go thru step #6 (gluing down) before applying the finish. Applying the finish after you glue the pieces down is much faster. If you encounter difficulty with getting a high quality finish by using this method you may want to try our method as mentioned above.

Step # 6 Glue it down

When gluing an **un-framed** project we start with the outside parts first, and work our way around the project. This locks the other parts in place. We have found that it is best not to flood the entire part with glue. Depending on the size of the part a few dots will do fine. When gluing the parts around the outside, try using a couple dots of hot glue along with the dots of wood glue, the hot melt glue will act as a clamp and keep the parts from sliding around until the wood glue sets up. After the parts around the outside have been glued, continue with the interior parts.

We prefer to use a "Mirror Hanger" for hanging our projects however a saw tooth hanger will suffice. On larger framed pieces a picture hanging wire should be used.

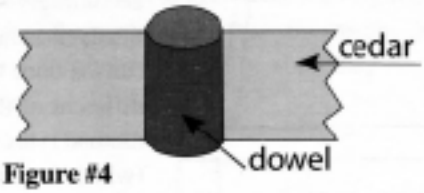


Figure #4

Another note: Many of the patterns call for dowels for the eyes. I do not glue the dowel in place until they are the sanded. I suggest lightly rounding the top of the dowel, stain or burn it if it is a light color. Then slide it into the pre-drilled hole. I then mark the length I need then cut it off the back, See figure #4.

Congratulations, if you have made some sense of these directions. We welcome any feedback or suggestions you may have. Most important, we hope you have as much fun and pleasure making Intarsia pieces as we do.

HAVE FUN ! ***Judy Gale Roberts***
