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Bill Krier
Editor in Chief, WOOD magazine

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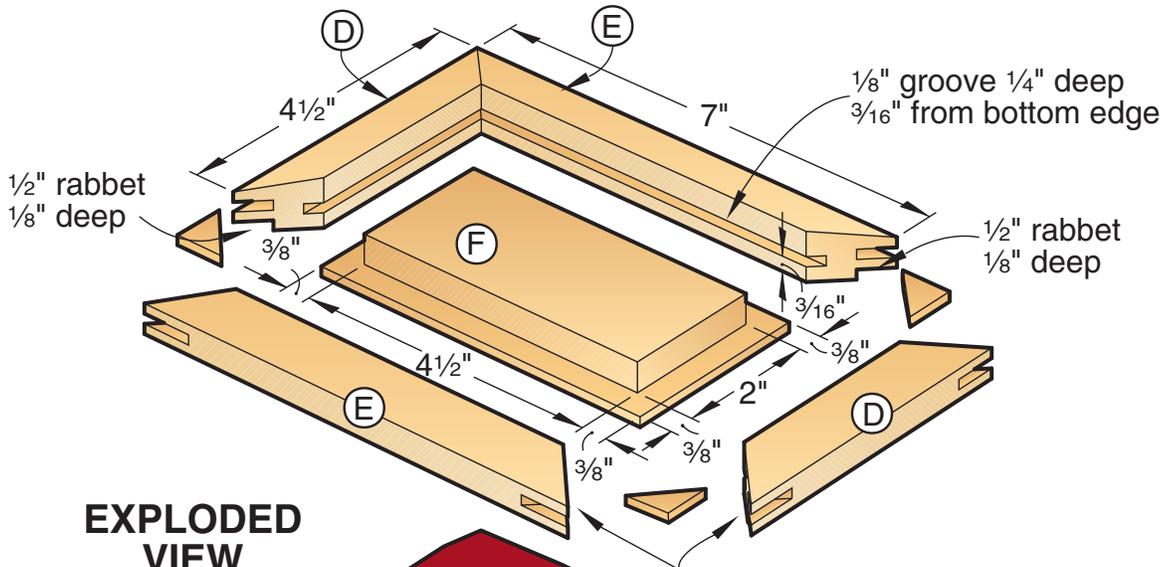


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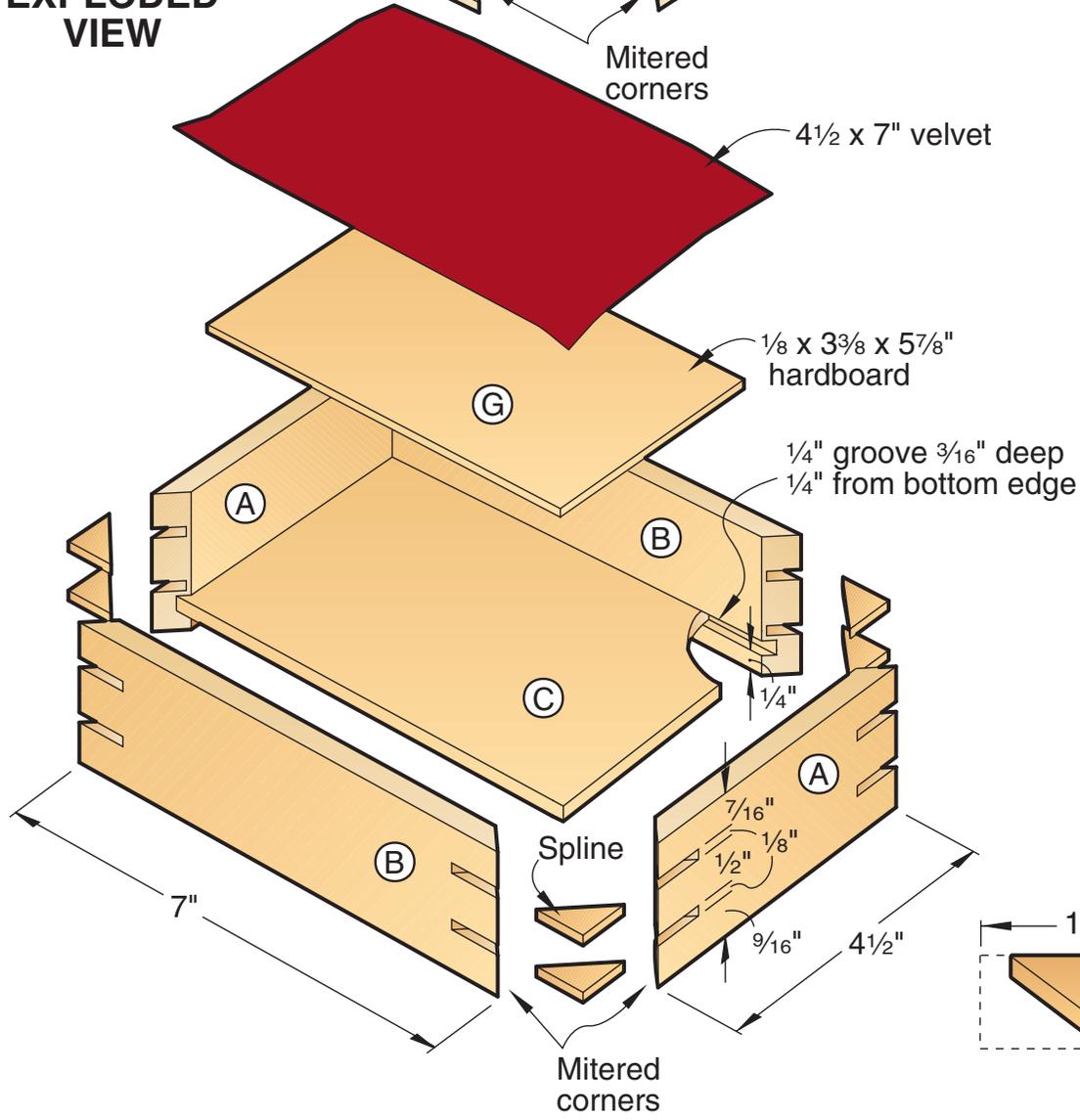


Splined Box

A pretty fair number of ornamental box designs cross our desks, but this is one of the nicest. It's a simple project that doesn't require a lot of work, but the end result is solid construction and a rich-looking face with matching splines. The finished box is versatile enough to make a fine gift for anyone—man, woman, or child.



EXPLODED VIEW



Bill of Materials

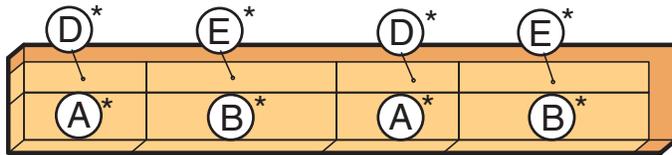
Part	Finished Size			Matl.	Qty.
	T	W	L		
A* box ends	1/2"	1 3/4"	4 1/2"	O	2
B* box sides	1/2"	1 3/4"	7"	O	2
C bottom panel	1/4"	3 7/8"	6 3/8"	OP	1
D* lid ends	5/8"	1 1/8"	4 1/2"	O	2
E* lid sides	5/8"	1 1/8"	7"	O	2
F face panel	1/2"	2 3/4"	5 1/4"	W	1
G liner panel	1/8"	3 3/8"	5 7/8"	H	1

*Initially cut part oversized. Please read all instructions before cutting.

Materials Key: O–oak; OP–oak plywood; W–walnut; H–hardboard.

Supplies: Oil finish, velvet, quick-set epoxy.

CUTTING DIAGRAM



3/4 x 3 1/2 x 24" Oak



1/2 x 2 3/4 x 5 1/4" Walnut crotch



1/4 x 3 7/8 x 6 3/8" Oak plywood

* Plane or resaw to thicknesses listed in the Bill of Materials.

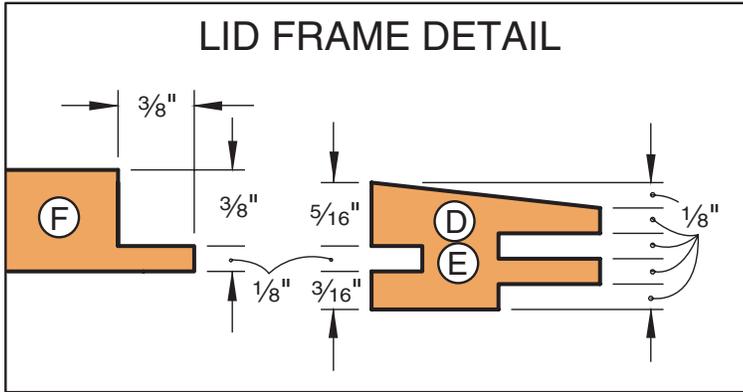


1 1/2 x 1 1/2 x 6" Walnut (for splines)



1/4 x 3 3/8 x 5 7/8" Hardboard

LID FRAME DETAIL



Power Tools Needed

- tablesaw
- planer or jointer
- palm sander
- stationary belt sander

Start with the basic box

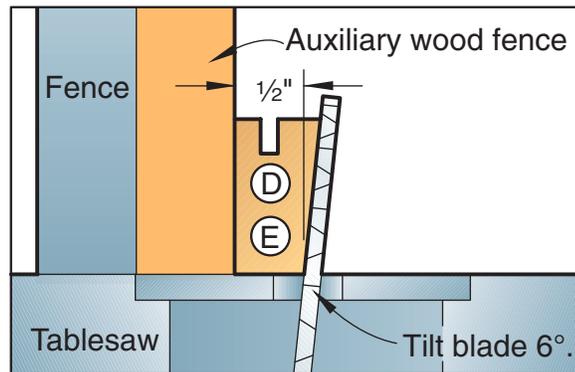
1 Plane one edge of a 3½×24" piece of ¾"-thick stock on your jointer. (We selected red oak.) Rip a 1¾"-wide strip from this edge, then plane or resaw it to ½" thick.

2 To cut a groove for the bottom panel, first check the actual thickness of your ¼"-thick plywood stock. If the stock measures exactly or slightly less than ¼" thick, fit your tablesaw with a ¼" dado set elevated to 3/16". If the stock measures closer to 3/16", use your regular ⅛"-thick blade, and adjust your fence slightly before making a second pass. Cut a full-length groove ¼" from the edge of one face.

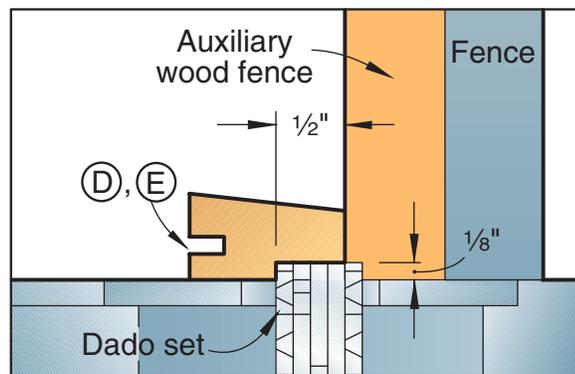
3 Crosscut the box ends (A) and sides (B) to ⅛" longer than the lengths listed in the Bill of Materials. (We cut our parts in A-B-A-B order so the grain would run continuously around the box.) Next, tilt the blade to 45°. Check the angle using your combination square, then miter-cut both ends of each part to finished length. (We attached an extension to our miter gauge and clamped a stopblock to it to ensure accurate cuts.)

4 From ¼"-thick oak plywood, cut the bottom panel (C) to the dimensions listed on the Bill of Materials. Now, dry-assemble the ends, sides, and bottom panel, and sand as necessary until everything fits. Then, glue the two sides to one end. Apply glue to the edges of the bottom panel, and slide it into its groove. Glue the other end in position, then clamp the box. Check for square, and allow the glue to dry.

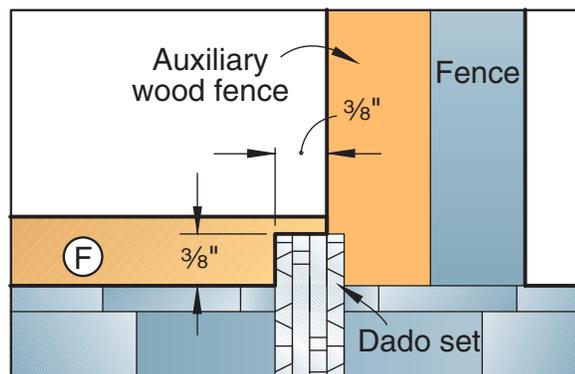
LID-CUTTING SEQUENCE



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3

Machine the lid and face panel next

1 To make the lid ends (D) and sides (E), first rip a 1½×24" strip from the same stock you had used for A and B. Next, cut a full-length groove on one edge to receive the face panel. To do this, elevate your tablesaw blade to ¼", set your rip fence ⅜" from the blade, and use a pushstick.

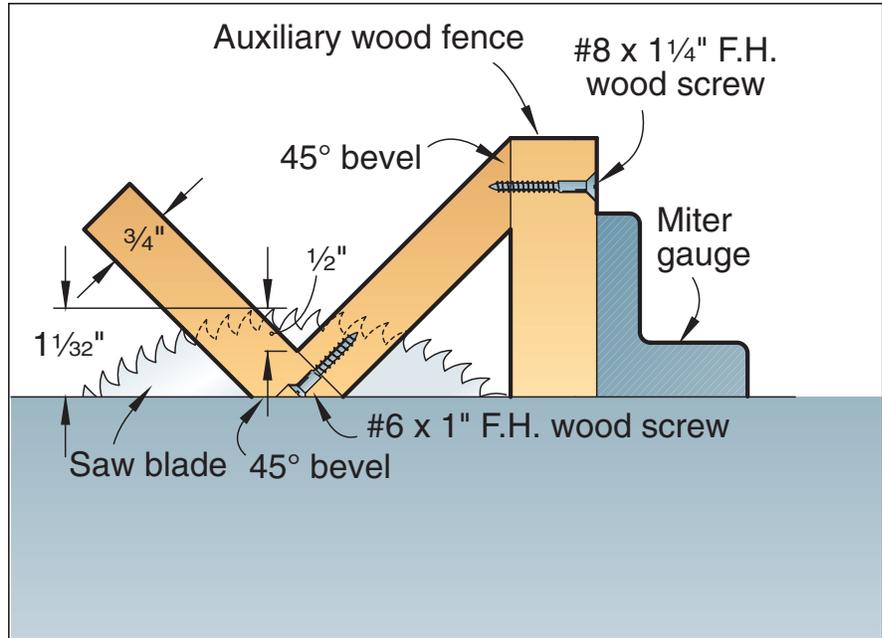
2 To bevel-cut the lid stock to thickness, first move your rip fence to the side of the blade opposite its direction of tilt, then tilt the blade to 6° from square. (See Step 1 of the Lid-Cutting Sequence drawing, on page 4.) Now, bevel-cut the stock using a pushstick.

3 Next, cut a rabbet on the bottom face of your lid stock, where shown in Step 2 of the Lid-Cutting Sequence. To do this, fit your tablesaw with a ⅝" dado set elevated to ⅛". Set your rip fence ½" from the blade, and attach a notched, ¾"-thick wooden auxiliary fence at least 24" long. Set the fence, where shown in the drawing, and rabbet the bottom face of your lid stock along the outside edge.

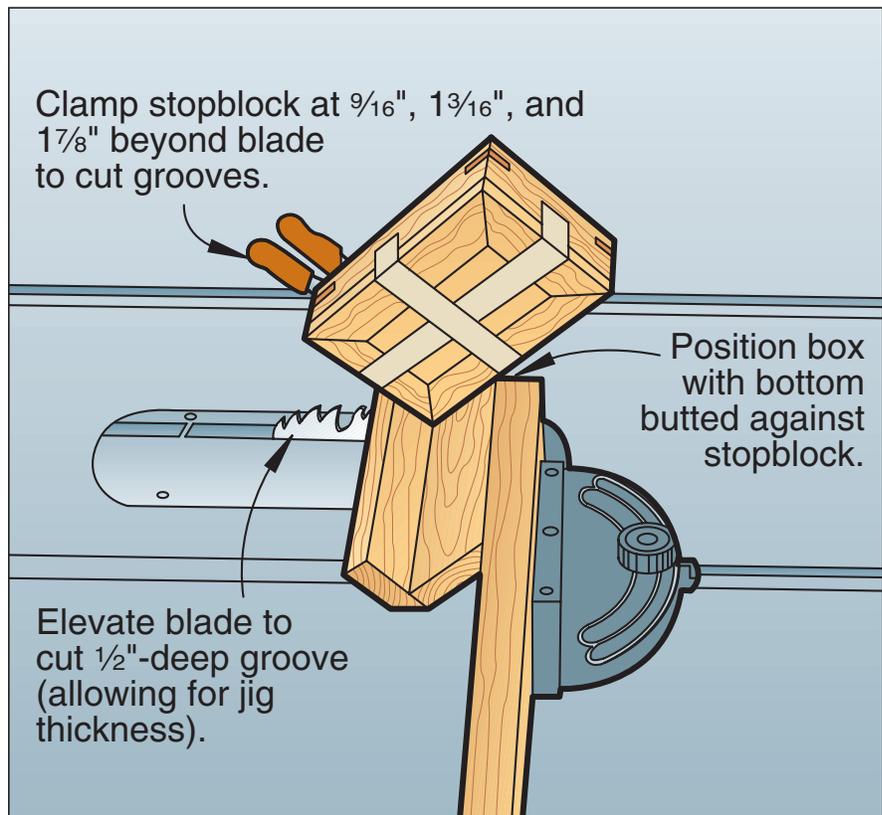
4 Crosscut the lid ends (D) and sides (E) as you did the corresponding box parts, cutting them in D-E-D-E order to finished length plus ⅛". Then, elevate your table-saw blade to 1¾", and tilt it to 45°, again checking the angle. Using your miter gauge, extension, and stopblock, stand the ends and sides on edge, and proceed to miter-cut them to finished length.

5 Next, rip and crosscut the face panel (F) to size from ½"-thick stock. (We chose an ornately grained piece of walnut crotch. See our Buying Guide for a mail-order source.) To rabbet the sides, fit your tablesaw with a ½" dado set elevated to cut ⅜" deep, as shown in Step 3 of the Lid-Cutting Sequence. Then, adjust the notch depth on your wooden auxiliary fence, and cut the rab-

JIG



CUTTING THE SPLINE GROOVES



bet. Go ahead now and sand the face panel smooth.

6 Dry-assemble the lid ends and sides around the face panel, and adjust the fit as necessary. Next, glue and clamp the lid at the corners, allowing the face panel to float without glue.

Build our simple jig, then add corner splines

1 To cut the spline grooves, first build the jig shown on *page 5* in the Jig drawing. To do this, cut two 3½×12" pieces of ¾"-thick scrap stock. Tilt your tablesaw blade to 45°, and bevel-rip one edge of each piece. Glue and screw the two pieces, where shown in the drawing, then remove the screws after the glue has dried. Position and screw the jig to your miter-gauge extension so that it extends 4" beyond the blade path.

2 Sand the top edges of the box until they're smooth and level. Then, place the lid on the box, and sand the lid flush with the box sides. (We used a stationary belt sander for both operations.)

3 Elevate your blade enough to cut ½" above the inside corner of the jig. (We tested our depth of cut using scrap stock.) Next, measure ⅙" beyond the kerf in the jig, and clamp on a stopblock at this point. Secure the lid to the box using masking tape, and place the box in the jig, as shown on *page 5*. Cut a groove in the box corner, then rotate the box to groove all four corners.

4 Reclamp the stopblock 1⅓/16" beyond the kerf, and again groove all four corners. To groove the lid, reset the stopblock at 1⅞" beyond the kerf. (This should center the cut on the edge of the lid.)

5 Resaw your walnut spline stock to a rough thickness of ¾". (We used a pushstick.) Then, rip several ⅛"-thick strips from the edge, and crosscut twelve 2"-long splines. Glue the splines into the grooves, and allow the glue to dry. Then, sand the splines flush with

the lid and box sides. (We used our stationary belt sander.)

Finish the box, and spruce up the inside

1 Finish-sand the box and lid (including the interior) using 120-then 180-grit sandpaper. Next, apply your choice of finish. (We brushed on two coats of Watco Natural Danish Oil Finish. After allowing each coat to penetrate for 30 minutes, we rubbed it with 0000 synthetic steel wool before wiping off the excess. We let the finish dry overnight, then rubbed it out with a clean cotton cloth to achieve a luster.)

2 Finally, cut and upholster the liner panel (G). To do this, measure the interior dimensions of the box, and cut a piece of ⅛"-thick hardboard that is ⅙" smaller in both width and length. (Ours measured 3⅜×5⅞".) Cover one face with a 4½×7" piece of burgundy velvet, then epoxy and clamp the edges to the back face. (We used quick-set epoxy.) When the epoxy has cured, epoxy and clamp the liner into the bottom of the box. ♣

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Buying Guide

Face Panel and Spline Stock. Includes ½×3×5½" fancy walnut-crotch face panel and 1½×1½×6" spline stock. Stock no. WWP1, Johnson Wood Products, 34897 Crystal Rd., Strawberry Point, IA 52076. Phone 563-933-6504 for current prices.

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