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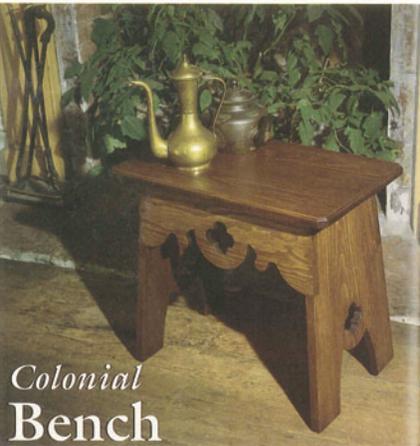
Classic Project

In this plan you'll find:

- Step-by-step construction instruction.
- A complete bill of materials.
- Construction drawings and related photos.
- Tips to help you complete the project and become a better woodworker.

Colonial Bench

PROJECTS



Colonial Bench

A sturdy bench was a commodity much valued in the American colonies. It provided a welcome place to rest weary legs after a long day of hard work. Most early homes enjoyed several benches.

Back then, country cabinetmakers found benches quick and easy to make, which probably explains a good deal of their popularity. Well, not much has changed in the last 250 years or so. Today, a bench like this can still be made with a minimum of time and effort. And while it may not be as comfortable as your favorite reading chair, it offers optional service as a plant stand or portable table.

We used pine for all the bench parts, but this piece will also look good made from oak or cherry. For maximum strength, be sure to use stock that is free from knots or other defects.

The Legs
Begin by making the two legs (A). Since 12-in. wide stock is not always easy to find these days, you'll probably need to edge-glue a couple of narrower boards in order to get enough width. Cut the stock so that the glued-up boards will be slightly wider and longer than necessary. To edge-glue, apply a thin coat of glue to the mating edges, then use three or four pipe clamps to apply pressure. When dry, remove the clamps and clean up any glue squeeze-out. A sharp chisel or scraper will come in handy here.

Note that the length of each leg is 17 1/8 in., and the leg ends are beveled at 5 degrees. To cut these bevels, set the table saw blade to make a 5-degree cut, then use the miter gauge to support the stock as it's passed over the blade. Make the cut on one end, then flip the stock over and turn it end for end before cutting it to length with the next cut.

The legs taper from a 9-in. width at the top to 12 in. at the bottom. Lay out and mark this taper on each leg, then use a hand saw to cut just slightly on the outside of the marked lines. Once cut, use a sharp hand plane to trim the sawn edge exactly to the line.

Next, you'll need to cut the two notches in each leg that accept the aprons (B). Lay out and mark the location of each notch, keeping in mind

that the bottom edge of the notch is angled at 90 degrees when viewed from the end, but when viewed from the front it is angled at 5 degrees (see end and side view illustrations). The band saw, with its table angled at 5 degrees, can be used to make the 3/4-in. deep cut. The lengthwise cut, to complete the notch, is made with the table flat.

Next, make the cutout that creates the two "feet" on each leg. First, transfer the grid pattern from the illustration (see end view) to the stock. Use the band saw to cut it out, then smooth the sawn edge with a file and sandpaper. The cloverleaf is cut out later on.

The Aprons
Cut the stock for the two aprons so that each one is wider and longer than needed. With the table saw blade angled at 5 degrees, use the rip fence to cut the bevel along the top edge of each apron. Now, with the table saw blade at 90

degrees, set the miter gauge to 5 degrees and cut the aprons to a 17 in. length.

Transfer the grid pattern (see side view) to the apron stock as shown. Note that the curve starts 6 in. from the top edge. Use the band saw to make the curved cuts. File and sand them smooth.

The cloverleaf can be cut with a saber saw, but we used a 1 1/4-in. diameter Forstner bit to drill four overlapping holes. Once set up, drill the cloverleaves in both the aprons and the legs.

The Top
You'll need to edge-glue stock for the top (C). Follow the same procedure used earlier to edge-glue the stock for the legs. After gluing, trim the stock to final length and width. The notch on each corner of the top is cut using the miter gauge set at 45 degrees. The chamfer all around the top and bottom edges is cut with a router and a 1/16-in. ball-bearing guided chamfering bit.

The Woodworker's Journal



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Published in *Woodworker's Journal* September/October 1991

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The Legs

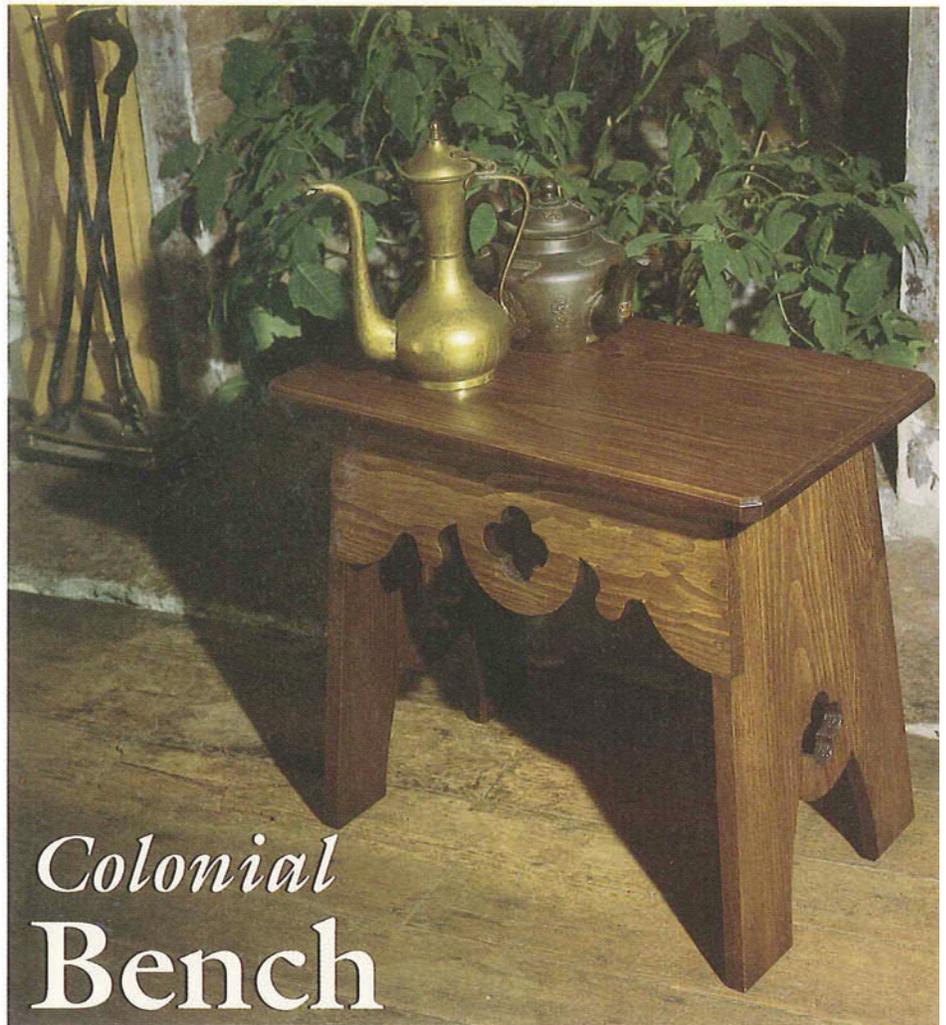
Begin by making the two legs (A). Since 12-in. wide stock is not always easy to find these days, you'll probably need to edge-glue a couple of narrower boards in order to get enough width. Cut the stock so that the glued-up boards will be slightly wider and longer than necessary.

To edge-glue, apply a thin coat of glue to the mating edges, then use three or four pipe clamps to apply pressure. When dry, remove the clamps and clean up any glue squeeze-out. A sharp chisel or scraper will come in handy here.

Note that the length of each leg is $17\frac{3}{8}$ in., and the leg ends are beveled at 5 degrees. To cut these bevels, set the table saw blade to make a 5-degree cut, then use the miter gauge to support the stock as it's passed over the blade. Make the cut on one end, then flip the stock over and turn it end for end before cutting it to length with the next cut.

The legs taper from a 9 in. width at the top to 12 in. at the bottom. Lay out and mark this taper on each leg, then use a band saw to cut just slightly on the outside of the marked lines. Once cut, use a sharp hand plane to trim the sawn edge exactly to the line.

Next, you'll need to cut the two notches in each leg that accept the aprons (B). Lay out and mark the location of each notch, keeping in mind



Colonial Bench

that the bottom edge of the notch is angled at 90 degrees when viewed from the end, but when viewed from the front it is angled at 5 degrees (see end and side view illustrations). The band saw, with its table angled at 5 degrees, can be used to make the $\frac{3}{4}$ in. deep cut. The lengthwise cut, to complete the notch, is made with the table flat.

Next, make the cutout that creates the two "feet" on each leg. First, transfer the grid pattern from the illustration (see end view) to the stock. Use the band saw to cut it out, then smooth the sawn edge with a file and sandpaper. The cloverleaf is cut out later on.

The Aprons

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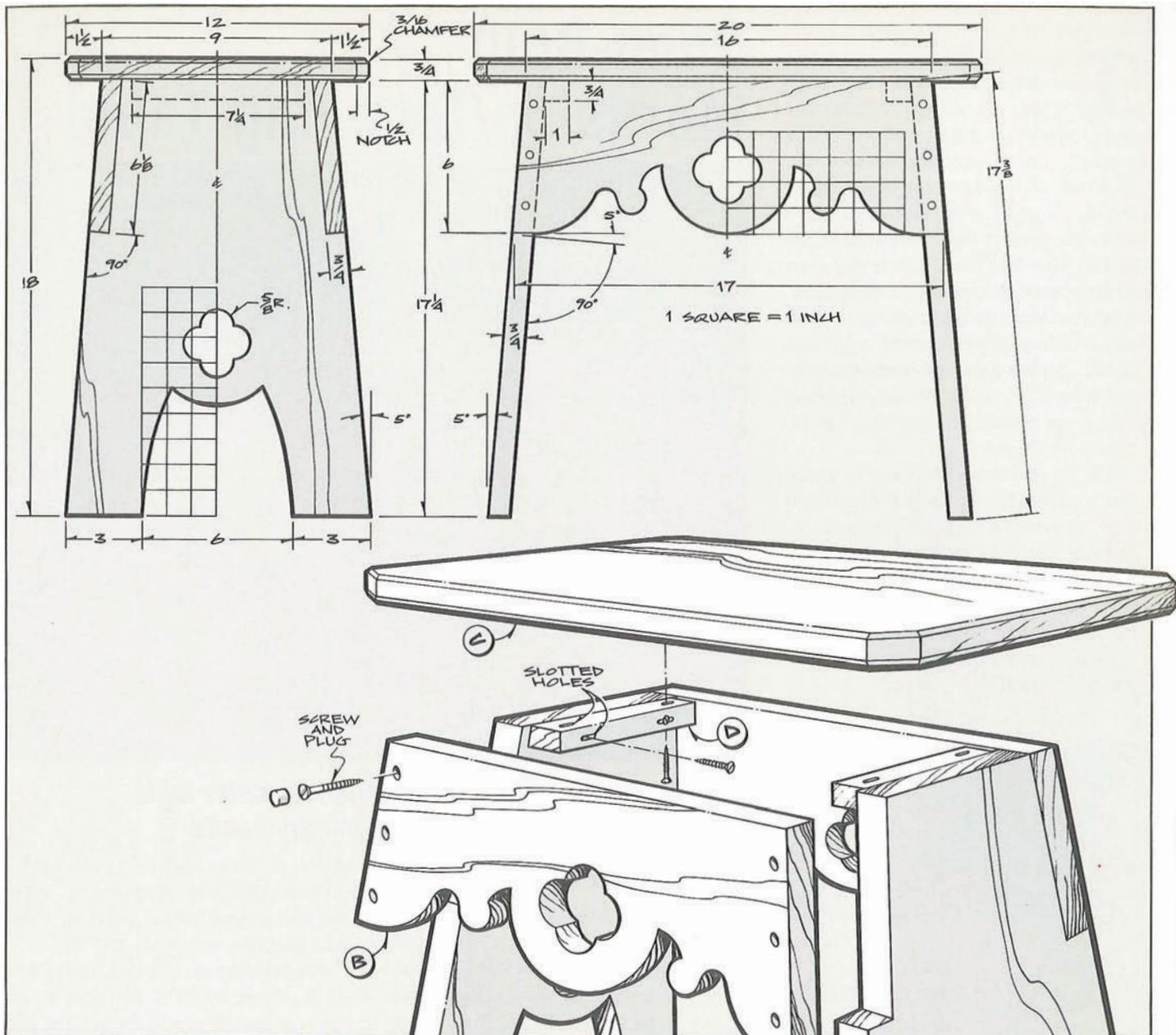
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The cloverleaf can be cut with a saber saw, but we used a $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. diameter Forstner bit to drill four overlapping holes. Once set up, drill the cloverleaves in both the aprons and the legs.

The Top

You'll need to edge-glue stock for the top (C). Follow the same procedure used earlier to edge-glue the stock for the legs. After gluing, trim the stock to final length and width. The notch on each corner of the top is cut using the miter gauge set at 45 degrees. The chamfer all around the top and bottom edges is cut with a router and a $\frac{3}{16}$ in. ball-bearing guided chamfering bit.



The Cleats

You'll need to rip one edge of each cleat (D) to 5 degrees. Note that the ends of the cleats do not butt up against the inside of the aprons. Instead, they are cut slightly short on each end to allow for any shrinkage in the width of the legs. For the same reason, the holes in the cleats are slotted, as shown.

Assembly

Final sand all parts, finishing with 220-grit sandpaper. The aprons are joined to the legs with glue and 1 1/2 in. long by no. 10 flathead wood screws countersunk to a depth of 1/4 in. The plugs are glued in place and sanded flush with the surface.

The cleat is screwed to the leg with 1 1/2 in. long by no. 10 flathead wood

Bill of Materials (all dimensions actual)			
Part	Description	Size	No. Req'd.
A	Leg	3/4 x 12 x 17 3/8	2
B	Apron	3/4 x 6 1/8 x 17	2
C	Top	3/4 x 12 x 20	1
D	Cleat	3/4 x 1 x 7 1/4	2

screws, then the top is secured with 1 1/4 long in. by no. 10 screws. Don't use glue on either of these joints, as the legs and top must be able to expand and contract with changes in moisture content.

For a finish, we applied two coats of walnut stain, followed by three coats of penetrating oil. A light rubdown with 0000 grade steel wool completed the project.

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Internet Production Coordinator