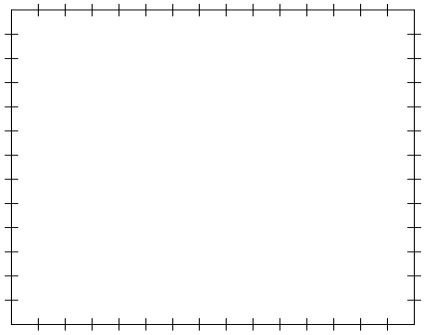
BASKET WEAVE

Chip carving can take many forms. Most people think of it as geometrical, and indeed geometrical patterns provide hours of pleasure to produce and years of enjoyment to look at. Positive imaging provides great beauty from easy techniques. One of the most interesting patterns is the basket weave. It is a very practical chip carved pattern, which is great for filling the background on boxes, quilts, or many other chip carvings. The pattern has a very nice appearance and never fails to bring lots of "oohs and ahs".

At first glance, it appears to be difficult, but really isn't. It can be a little complicated for newcomers, because it is easy to get confused and make cuts in the wrong place. The confusion is overcome by carefully marking the pattern, examing it for accuracy, and only then proceeding with the knife.

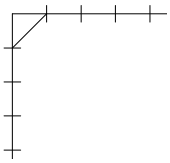
On the following pages, I will try to lead you through the creation of the basket weave. Go slowly at first. Study what you are doing, and do not get discouraged. Mistakes will be made. As soon as you discover a mistake, study it and determine the cause. This will help prevent making it again. If you are working on a real project rather than a practice board, usually it is best to iqnore the mistake and proceed as if it was not there. You will always know it is there, but few, if any, other people will ever notice.

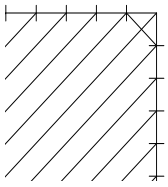
To get started, define the area in which the basket weave pattern will be carved. Marking the area can proceed in several ways. In most cases, it is best to determine the center point of the area, measure an equal number of 1/4" spaces horizontally and vertically from that point and draw a rectangle with the sides through the found points. Sometimes it is be easier to find one corner and proceed from there. Regardless of the start point, the object is to draw a box with sides that are multiples of 1/4" spaces, and are marked at 1/4" intervals. Even an irregularly shaped area must be outlined with either a rectangle, or a series of connected rectangles with the sides marked in 1/4" increments. The more accurate that this is accomplished, the better the final carving will appear. Strive for accuracy and consistency.

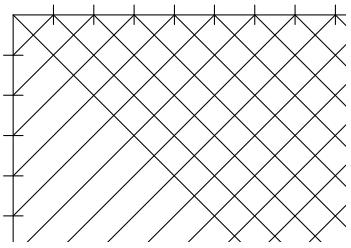


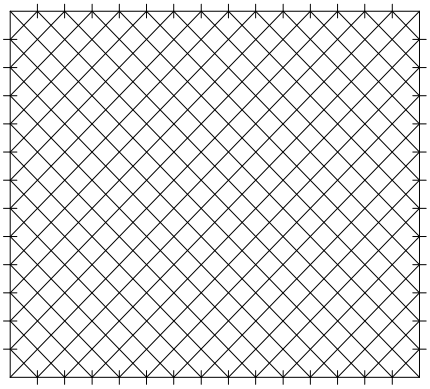
When the boxes are drawn, connect the ¼" marks on the diagonal. Start at one corner to make the first diagonal. Continue to draw diagonnaly until all are completed in one direction. Remember to use the corners when drawing the diagonals. Try to make the diagonal lines lineup exactly with the increment marks. The more accurate the initial grid, the better the final carving will be.

After completing all diagonals in one direction, start at one corner and draw the diagonal lines in the other direction. Be sure to use the corners when drawing these diagonals, they are part of the quarter inch measurements. If you have used more than one rectangle to cover the selected carving area, insure that the diagonals are continuous from one rectangle to another.

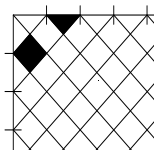


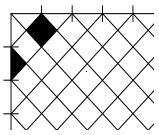


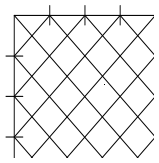


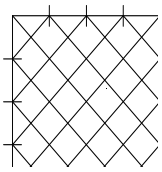


The first four-sided chip can be placed in any of four positions. These are shown at the right. Placing the cut in position one will cause the half-squares (three-sided) chips to be along the top. Starting at position two will cause the half-squares to be along the side. Either way is acceptable, it depends on what will look best for the rest of the carving. Positions 3 and 4 could be chosen if there is some reason for the pattern to match other carved patterns on the carving. The direction of the grain may affect the choice, or there may be no compelling reason to select one starting place over the others.





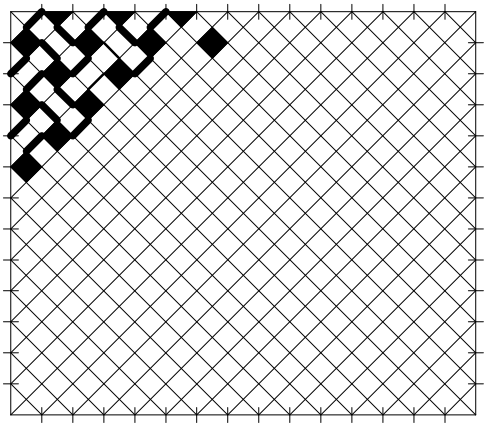




Cutting the four-sided chips may take some practice. The technique is the same as cutting the first two cuts of a three-sided chip. Make a cut with the knife in position one, and then the adjacent cut with the knife in position two. Instead of finishing the cut with a sliding cut with the knife in position two, repeat the first two cuts to complete the four-sided chip. It is also perfectly acceptable to use position one all four sides. Since the pattern is drawn on the diagonal, no side will be with the grain. One rule of chip carving is to always make the next cut away from the last to keep from breaking the wood. These squares are probably far enough apart that that is not necessary. If, however, some wood is breaking out or corners are breaking off, start your four-sided chip from a different corner. Experimenting will provide the best solution. One or two corners will not be noticeable, but if many corners are breaking off, change something.

It is a good idea to use a pencil to mark at least the first two or three rows of four sided chips before cutting them. After marking with the pencil, examine the potential cuts to insure that all are in the proper place before carving.

After cutting two or three rows of four-sided chips, mark a good portion of the crosscuts, examine them, and then cut only after being sure they are in the correct place. Pencil marks can be repositioned, but carved areas cannot easily be repositioned.



There are several places for starting the crosscuts. These will become clear after an understanding is gained as to how the crosscut pattern is formed.

There are three rules to follow to form the crosscut pattern: 1) Always make opposite cuts, 2) Always cut adjacent squares in the opposite direction, and 3) Sections are three squares long.

Make a mark between two four-sided chips. Now make a mark exactly opposite that mark (Rule 1). Move to the next set of four-sided chips and make a mark in the opposite direction as the first set (Rule 2). Mark exactly opposite that mark (Rule 1). As you proceed, the sections will be four squares long (Rule 3). If they aren't, the first marks are wrong. When the first two or three rows are marked, carve on the marks.