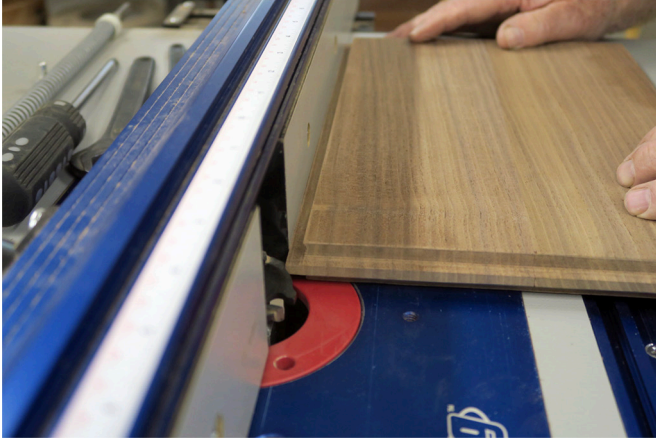


How to build a bonsai show table for a particular tree and pot

Alan Magruder

Many of the show tables that we can buy are generic, not built for any particular tree and pot. Frequently these show tables are well built and attractive. They, however, do not necessarily fit the tree and pot. Many of them are too short or the pot is crowding the top of the stand or is lost in it.

It helps if one draws, to scale, the pot and the tree and then adds to the drawing the shape and size of the show table. After doing this, I have changed my original idea and was glad I did this and had not wasted my time and material on a show table that would not have worked.

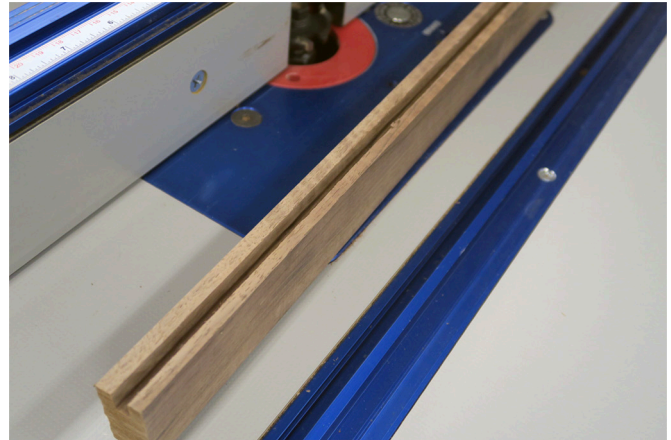


Most show tables have a two part top. A center portion that is a panel that frequently has two or more pieces of wood glued together with a tongue routed around it.

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The next part is a frame around the center panel. This is usually about 1 to 1 1/2 inches wide with a groove routed into the edge.

This frame is mitered to 45 degrees and glued at the corners around the center panel. This allows the center panel to float inside the frame so that it does not warp or bend the panel.



After the top is glued and assembled it is passed through a drum sander or sanded by hand.



Legs for the table are an important consideration. The length of the leg is vital to showing the tree properly. The viewer should be able to look directly into the tree, not down or up into the tree. Many of the generic show tables have legs that are too short. Most of the furniture that bonsai displays are shown on are about 30 inches tall. Short legs on a show table may not be tall enough for the viewer to look into the tree. The shape of the leg is important so that it works with the shape of the tree. It is also important to use a joinery consistent with the weight and artistic design of the show table. The legs need to be strong enough to not only support the tree but also look like they will support the tree. A large tree and pot need heavier legs.



Legs can be round, straight, have a pattern, tall, short, bold and light.



Before assembling and glueing the table sand all of the parts to 220 grit. It is easier to sand the parts now. Be careful when glueing the parts together to keep the glue from oozing out of the joints. If there is some glue that oozes out it must be sanded off before finishing the stand.



Now that the stand has been sanded and glued together it is time to have a finish applied.

Find a stain that works with the pot and the tree by testing it out on a scrap piece of wood. After the stain is dry rub, brush or spray a water or oil based finish on the stand following the directions that come with the finish. The finish can be gloss, semi- gloss or satin as long as it works with the pot and the tree. It usually takes at least two coats of finish.