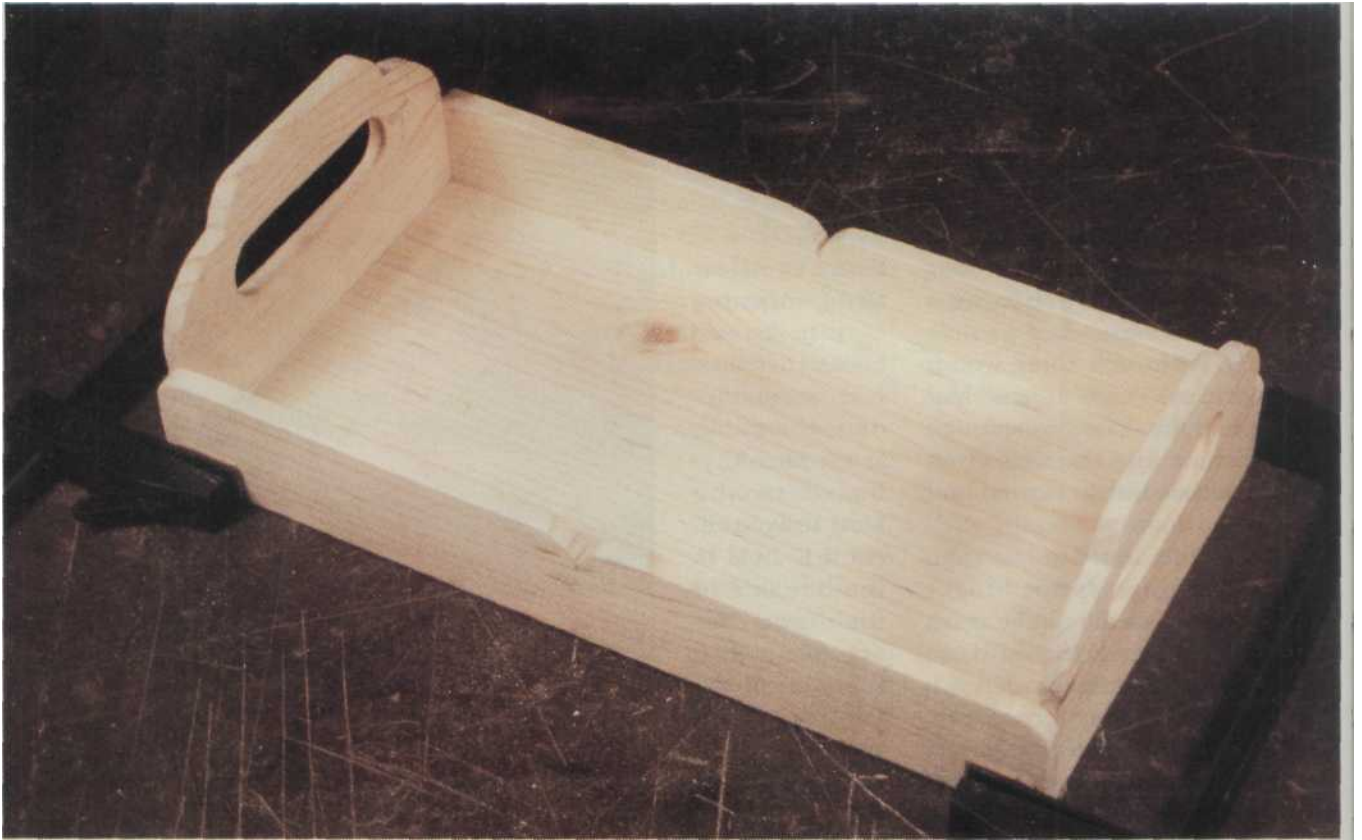


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SERVING TRAY



This is a great project for using up some of that leftover, common pine you've got lying around the shop. It won't take much material or time to build this tray once you get the stock to its proper thickness.

You also should enjoy both the easy construction methods and the results. Another interesting feature is the use of round pegs that give the piece an antique look. Once you see how it's done, you'll want to use this method on other projects to add both strength and beauty.

Start with 3/4"-thick common pine stock and resaw it so it can be finished to a 1/4" thickness.

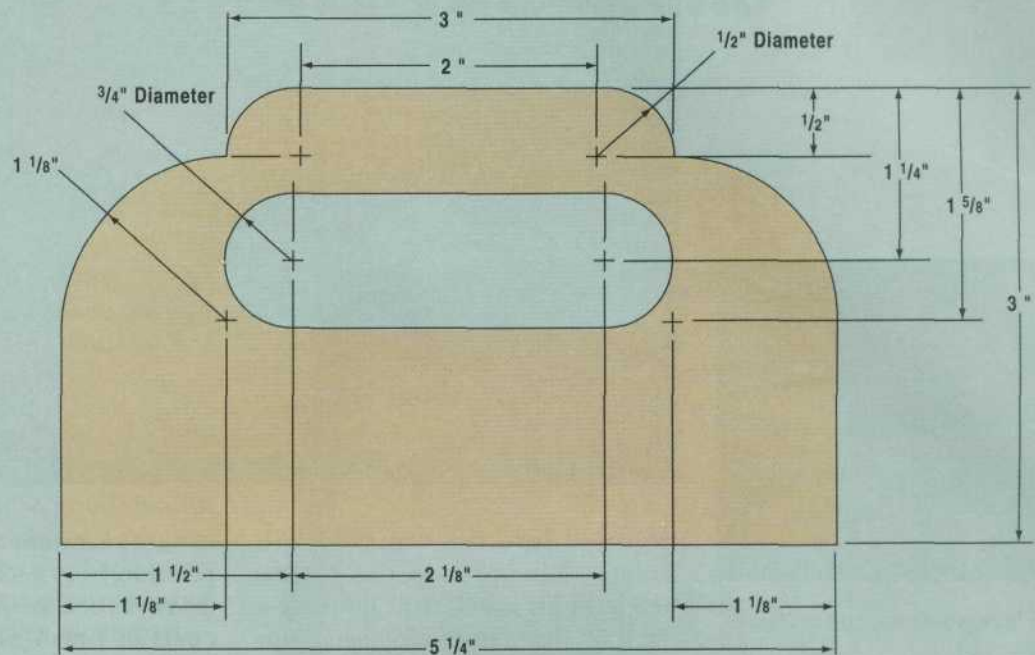
Resawing

the lumber is easily done on a band saw, but this material is so easy to work that you can probably hand plane it to thickness without too much trouble.

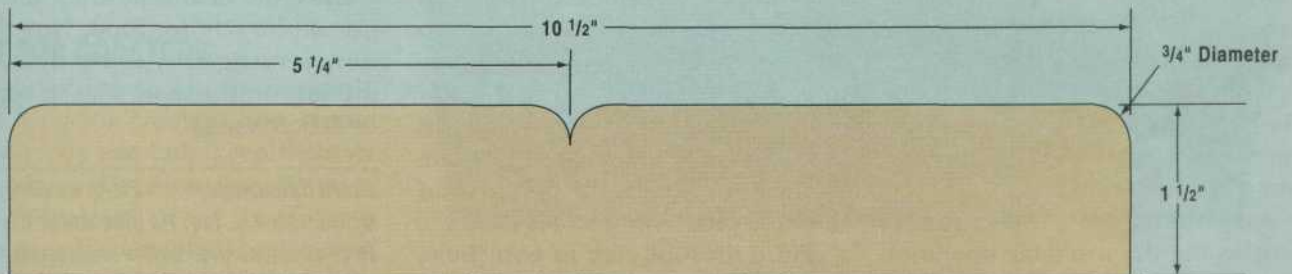
In either case, you should make sure all the cutting tools you're using are at their sharpest state because the fibers of softwoods, like pine, tend to compress rather than cut when worked with dull tools. This compression leads to crushed **edges** instead of the sharp edges that are formed when sharp tools are used.

If you elected to resaw the **boards**, you'll have to either finish plane or power sand the boards to

DIAGRAM 1



End piece with dimensions for handle cut outs.



Front and back pieces with dimensions for decorative saw work.

their final thickness. I used a belt sander for this operation. The job went so quickly that the boards were down to their finished size almost before I realized it.

Cut the base to its finished length of 10", then set the rip fence on your table saw for the 5 1/4" width. Without changing the saw setting, rip another piece at least 7" long to the same 5 1/4" dimension. Cut this board into two pieces, each measuring 3 1/2" long x 5 1/4" wide. These two pieces will be used as the tray's ends.

Rip a pair of boards measuring at least 11" long into 1/4" widths to become the sides of the tray. Don't

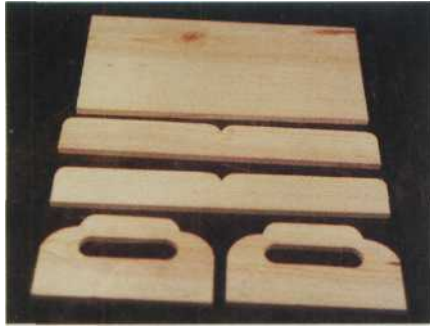
cut these sides to length at this time.

Before you go any further, you need to lightly touch up all the cut edges of the parts with some fine sandpaper. Be careful not to round any edges, just take off the fuzzies that formed when the cuts took place. Once this is done, your parts will be as clean as possible and ready for dry assembly.

Dry assembly is the act of putting the pieces together without any glue or fasteners to ensure everything is of the proper size. If you've never done this operation before, you should find this project to be a good opportunity to test it out.

Dry assemble the tray by butting one end panel against each end of the base board. Make sure the end panels are square to the base, and set a single side panel in position. Mark that panel for length, and cut both of the 1 1/2"-wide side panels to the same length. Touch up the cut edges with fine sandpaper, being careful not to round the edges.

Referring to the sketches, lay out the curved areas on the two end panels and two side panels. Instead of using a compass for the layout work, I found a drafting circle template works well and doesn't leave any holes from the compass pin. Cut the curves to shape, ~~254~~ drill a



The parts for the tray are completed and laid out prior to assembly.

pair of 3/4"-diameter holes in each of the end panels for the finger cutouts. Use a coping saw, scroll saw, or jigsaw to cut out the finger openings in these two panels.

Lightly sand all pieces in preparation for final assembly, then dress up the cuts just made. Don't round any edges at this time.

Assembling the parts is just as easy as the dry assembly operation because you're doing the same steps, with the exception that this time you'll be using glue to hold the parts together. Set up for the assembly operation by getting your clamps set to the approximate openings and preparing your clamp blocks for use. Clear your work area, and have a container of water and a rag available for wiping up any excess glue.

Now you're ready to start. Apply some yellow woodworker's glue to the edges to be joined and butt all the parts together. A few light-duty clamps are all that are needed to hold the details in place.

Once the glue has completely dried, it's time to install the round pegs that help make this project unique. The pegs are nothing more than round wooden toothpicks that have had the tapered ends cut off,

then cut into two equal length pieces. The toothpicks I used needed only a #40 drill hole for a good fit, but you should check your toothpicks before drilling.

The holes should be drilled about 5/8" deep at the locations shown in the drawing. The pegs' exact locations aren't important. You also can create any pattern you choose to get the effect you want. I used only five pegs per side because the tray will be subjected to very light duty, but you could easily adjust the number to suit your own opinion on how the piece should look.

Put a drop of glue in each hole, then push the peg into place. Allow the glue to cure completely before trimming the pegs to length.

Trimming can be done with a sharp knife, a "setless" saw (like a backsaw), a chisel, or a belt sander. I chose a sharp chisel to get the pegs to the proper length, then touched up their ends with fine sandpaper.

At this time, you should dress up all the exposed edges on the assembly with sandpaper to remove the sharp areas. Pay particular attention to the end panels that will receive the most handling. It won't take too much effort to complete this step. Before you know it, you'll be ready to apply the finish.

I used a clear, water-soluble finish that's environmentally safe. Regardless of what you select for this job, you should follow the manufac-

turer's recommended application procedures to get the best results.

My directions called for three coats of finish with light sanding between coats. It definitely took more time for the coats to dry than it did to apply them, but the results were worth it.

Once the final coat dries, the finish will be safe for food. Now your new serving tray is ready to sit proudly on the table with its supply of delicacies.

DIAGRAM 2

