

HAND CABINET SCRAPERS

Prepared for BAWA Membership

by

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Cabinet scrapers have been used for centuries, predominantly on fine furniture. The finish obtained generally needs no sanding or further smoothing.

An equally fine surface can be obtained with a hand plane, provided the grain does not reverse direction, etc. Some surfaces are virtually impossible to hand plane; rogue grain, birds eye maple, etc., and must be scraped or sanded.

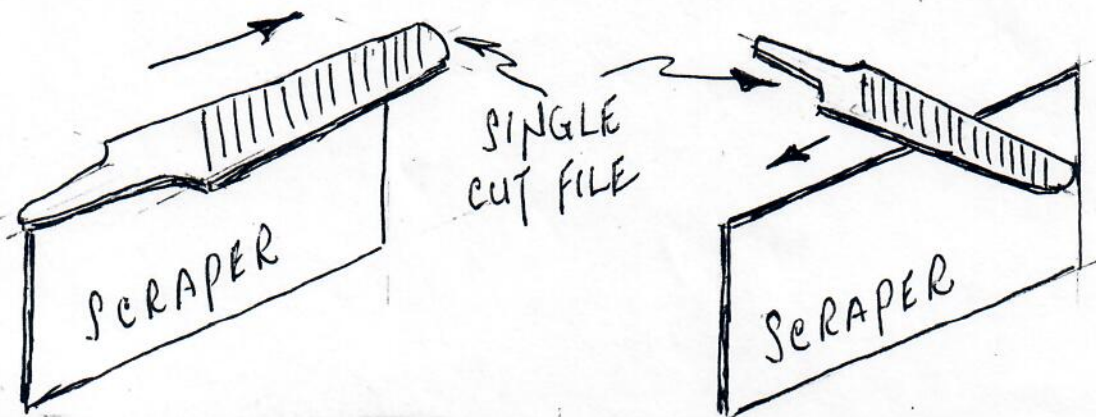
Scrapers are also useful for removing machine "burn" marks in woods like cherry, maple, etc. Ever try to sand out a burn mark on a complicated router profile? You generally wind up destroying the crispness of the routed surface! A hand scraper works wonders when used carefully and with patience.

When breaking in a hand scraper, the first thing to do is eliminate the sharp corners. Round them over with a hand file, sanding disc, etc. Your hands will appreciate this attention!

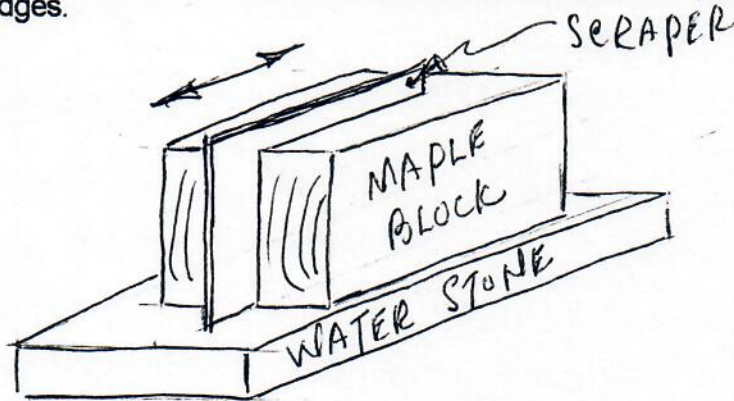
As with chisels and plane irons, the flat surfaces require as much attention as the cutting edge. It is imperative that these surfaces are free of gouges, score marks, scratches etc., and finished to a fine polish.

EXAMPLE: Start the polishing process with a coarse diamond plate, then a fine diamond plate, a 1200 grit water stone and finally a 7000 grit waterstone. Any combination of sharpening methods is acceptable; the results are what is important.

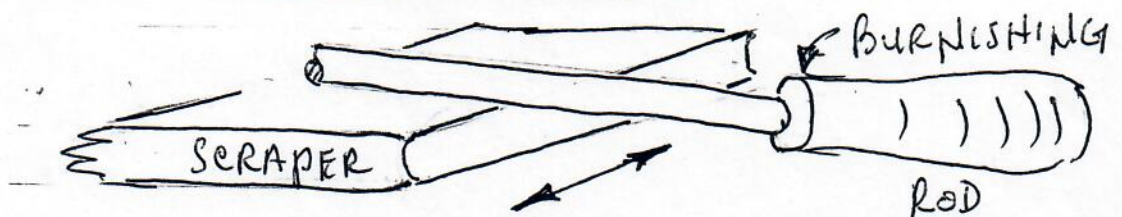
Next the scraping edges must be filed flat and square. Flatten the edges with a fine, single cut file, held square to the edge and in line with the scraper. Once the surfaces are flat, lightly "draw file" the edges.



Continue finishing the edges using the diamond plate and water stones. In order to assure a square edge, run a handsaw cut through a hardwood (maple) block to nest the scraper blade when polishing the edges.



**The edges are now ready for forming a burr. Use a burnishing rod held almost flat against the surface of the scraper to form a slight reverse burr. Do not forget to lubricate the burnishing rod.



Now it is time to form the scraping burrs: Hold the scraper blade at approximately 80-85 degrees to the burnishing rod and draw it across the rod several times, using medium pressure. The burr formed does not have to be very large to be effective; a shorter burr will last longer.



When scraping, flex the blade to a gentle arc with your thumbs. Angle the scraper to a negative angle and start your finishing.

It does not matter whether you push or pull the scraper - do whatever is most comfortable and convenient to the project. If the scraper is properly sharpened, a fine shaving should be the result. As the burr starts to dull, the shavings will deteriorate to powder. There is no need to redo the entire sharpening process. The burr can be remade 3 or 4 times, repeating the steps explained at the previous **.

