

# SLIVERIZATION

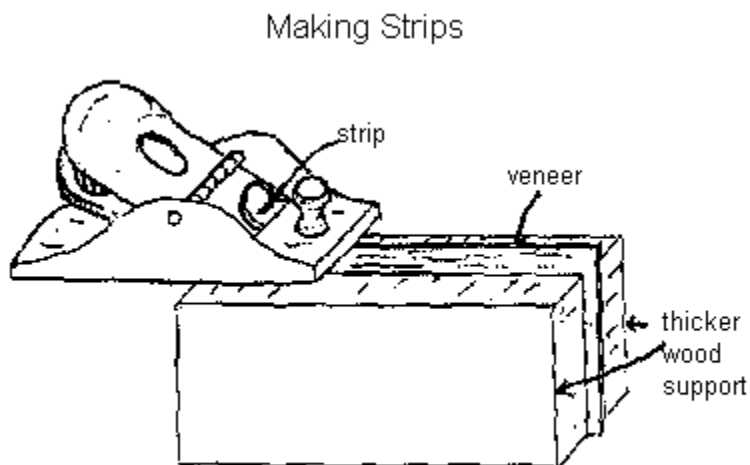
by Jim MacKeracher

Sliverization is a special technique in which a group of thin slivers of veneer are glued together to act collectively as a piece of veneer. One method is to press flat a pile of shavings mixed with white glue, to the thickness of standard veneer. This special veneer has randomly criss-crossing slivers, good for bushes, birds' nests, etc. A more refined and intricate method is to individually place the slivers, reminiscent of natural wood grain. The slivers are arranged parallel, in a smooth flowing pattern, effective for hair, grass, etc.

The following is a technique to produce a distinct piece of slivered veneer which is cut into the picture with a saw.

## MAKING SLIVERS

Select the veneers for the slivers. The best veneers to use are straight and fine-grained. Trim the edge of the veneer with a knife and straight edge, making sure the edge is parallel to the grain. Place the veneer between two pieces of wood, with protruding above these wood supports. Set the depth of the iron of a plane to produce the desired thickness of sliver. Draw the veneer across the plane, producing curled slivers. (**Diagram C1**).



**Diagram C1**

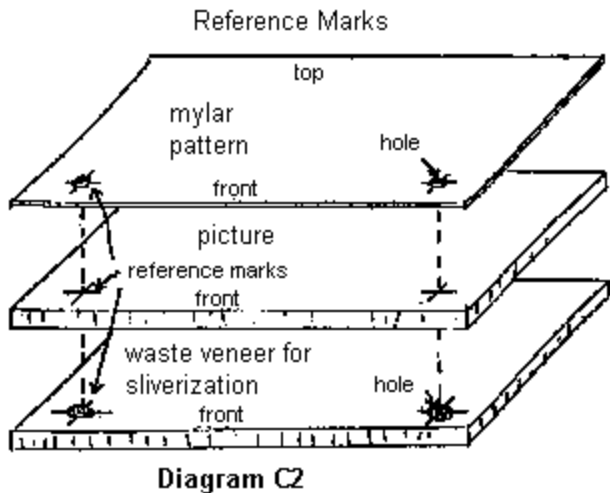
Generate a large enough quantity of shavings of the chosen veneers and store them in separate containers. Sometimes the shavings break up when planed, especially with brittle, dry, or coarse-grained veneer. One of the following remedies before planing may help to produce better shavings.

1. Lightly dampen the veneer with water. This seems to help when working with dry, brittle veneers.
2. Coat the front and back of the veneer with a mixture of glue and water, or the planned picture finish. Press the veneer flat until dry.

## WASTE VENEER PREPARATION

A waste piece of veneer with a window cut into it needs to be made. The window allows the pattern to show through while being filled with slivers and glue.

The waste veneer is oriented on the back of the picture with reference marks so that it can be later cut in with a fret saw. Draw several crosses on the pattern and matching crosses on the back of the picture. Punch holes through the waste veneer so that the crosses on the back of picture are



visible. Extend the crosses onto the waste veneer. (**Diagram C2**).

Take the pattern and orient it on top of the waste veneer, using the reference marks. Trace the shape of the piece to be filled with slivers onto the waste veneer with transfer paper. Roughly redraw the traced out shape on the waste veneer slightly larger by to . Cut out the new, larger shape with a fret saw held perpendicular, producing a window into which the slivers are to be placed. ( **Diagram C3**).

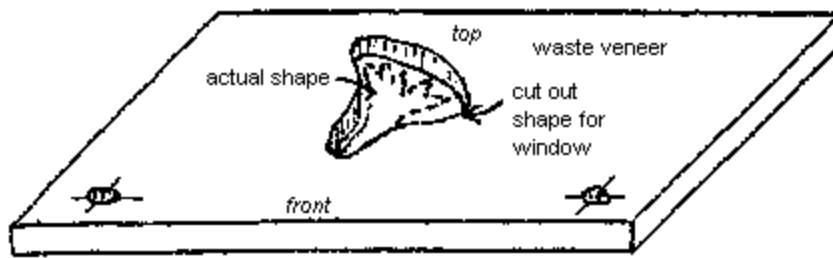


Diagram C3

Place cellophane tape over the back of the window, sticky side up. This will help keep the glue and slivers in the window yet allow a copy of the pattern to be visible through it.

Make a paper copy from the pattern of the piece to be filled with slivers, with the appropriate reference marks. To the copy add flow arrows to help orient the placement of the slivers in the window. Tape the copy onto the back of the waste veneer using the reference marks. The copy should be visible through the tape. The waste veneer is now ready for filling. (**Diagram C4**).

#### WASTE VENEER PREPARATION

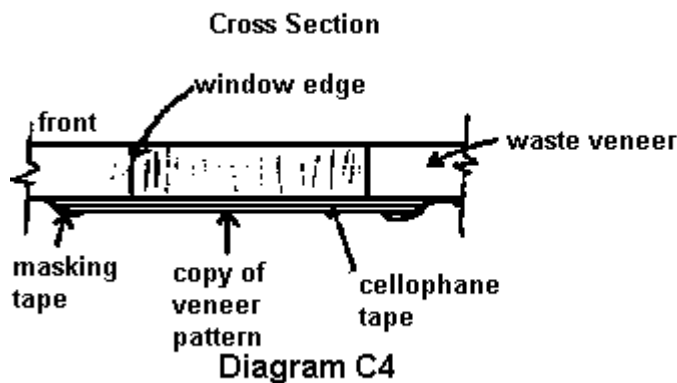
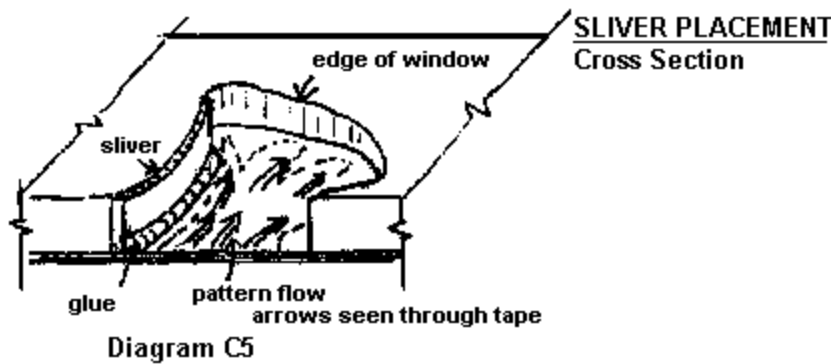


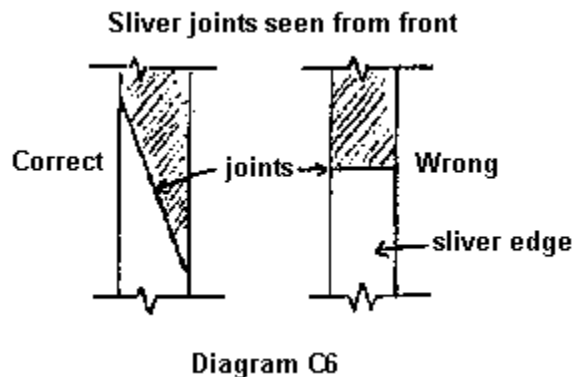
Diagram C4

#### SLIVER PLACEMENT

The slivers are individually glued in the window of the waste veneer. Start at one side of the window and spread a little white glue onto the cellophane tape with a syringe or brush. Take a sliver and flatten out its curl. Cut the sliver to length and place it on edge in the glue. Press it tight against the side of the window. Two sharp-tipped knives work well in placing the slivers. (**Diagram C5**).

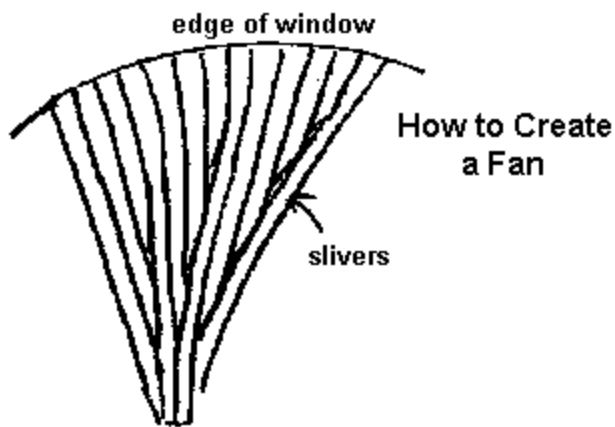


Cut the ends of a sliver on a bevel where it butts up against another sliver. This produces a gradual and much more natural transition than if the slivers are cut straight across. The ends of those slivers which butt against the window's edge may be cut straight across since they will be removed later when the piece is cut into the picture. (**Diagram C6**).



Add glue beside the slivers already in place. Position adjacent slivers of different veneer types for contrast and of different lengths for naturalism. Pack the slivers together as tight as possible, pushing the glue out between them. Wipe off any excess glue. Remember to follow the flow arrows of the pattern taped under the window.

A fan shape can be produced by varying the lengths of the slivers. (**Diagram C7**).



**Diagram C7**

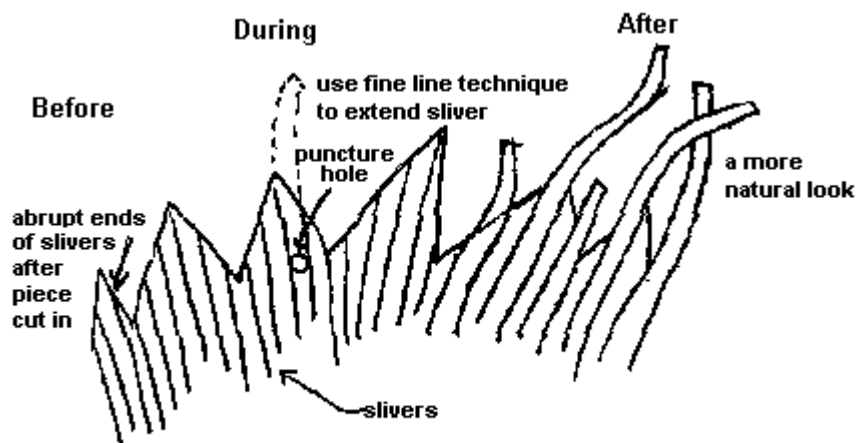
Once all the slivers are in place, spread glue over the top surface to fill in any gaps. Press the waste veneer and slivers flat and allow them to dry. Remove the pattern and tape from the back. Level the veneer with a cabinet scraper.

## CUTTING

In Sliverization orient the waste veneer on the back of the picture using the reference marks and tape it in place. Cut the actual piece shape from the pattern into the picture using conventional fret saw cutting techniques.

## FINAL TOUCHES

The abrupt ends of the slivers along the edge of the piece cut into the host veneer can be softened. Individually extend slivers into the veneer using the method of How to Inlay Fine Lines with Veneer discussed earlier in this newsletter. (**Diagram C8**).



**Diagram C8**

