

Wooden Banding

The addition of banding can really make your work stand out. Not just for decoration, it can serve to accentuate the design, directing the eye toward construction details that might otherwise escape notice. Ours is produced in Spain by a second-generation family-run firm that specializes in banding made from European and exotic woods. Composed entirely of face grain or laminated veneers (depending on the pattern) with crisply defined detail, it is available in a variety of patterns, from simple to intricate, to suit a range of furniture styles.

Preparing Banding for Use

Applying banding is a straightforward process – essentially just routing a groove and gluing the banding in place. As with anything made of wood, temperature and humidity changes can cause it to expand or contract, so the actual dimensions of the banding may vary slightly from the nominal size. Always measure the banding carefully before cutting the groove.

In general principle, it is desirable to completely flatten banding before using it. Thoroughly moisten (not soak!) the banding using equal parts of water and glycerine (available at craft stores and drugstores), then place it between two flat boards with a layer of clean, absorbent paper between the boards and the banding. After an initial pressing of 15 or 20 minutes, the damp paper should be changed for dry. Left clamped like this for a day or two, the banding will flatten nicely. If you are not going to use it right away, store it flat with weight on it to keep it from curling.

Gluing Banding in Place

Fish glue, hide glue and PVA glue all work well. Banding should be secured with clamps while the glue dries. Since glue is applied to one side only, the banding absorbs moisture unevenly, causing the wood to curl and lift if not clamped in place. To distribute force evenly over the length of the banding, the clamps should be used with a caul. Line the caul with wax paper, packing tape or similar material to ensure it releases neatly from the work.

If using banding in a veneered piece, prepare it and glue it down much as you would any strip of veneer. When banding is inset into solid wood, more care may be necessary. First, the banding must run parallel to the grain. Banding installed across the grain can be damaged as the wood reacts to humidity changes. You can use a router plane, a power router, an inlay tool or a Japanese-style double-cutting gauge to prepare a groove in the wood to accept the banding.

Where two pieces of banding intersect, glue one line in at a time, allowing it to dry before laying the next piece down. When two ends meet at a corner, take care to match the pattern. When the ends have been adjusted, miter the pieces of banding into the corner.

Finishing the Banding

To ensure a smooth finish, first install your banding slightly higher than the surrounding wood. To level it, we recommend using a scraper rather than sandpaper. With sanding, wood dust can be transferred between adjacent parts of the pattern, often standing out visibly against woods of contrasting color. Dress the banding smooth with square-edged scrapers (not hooked), scraping at alternating skew angles to achieve a smooth surface with no chatter marks. Once installed and dressed, the banding can be finished with the same sealers and topcoats as the rest of the piece.

Tips on Using Banding

1. Banding is fragile. By its very nature, it is subject to breakage. Any broken pieces may be spliced in during installation.
2. Always run banding with the grain, unless it is being applied to a plywood back. You can then run it cross-grain as well.
3. To dress banding to size before inserting it in a groove, you may want to use a shooting board adjusted to the width of your band so that you guarantee parallelism and constant width.
4. When applying banding to wood that will later be glued into a piece, clamp it up the same as you would for edge-gluing boards, but put plastic between the face of the banding and your caul. Lay it up on a solid, flat surface and gently press the banding into place before tightening your clamps, ensuring that the banding is squarely on the face of the wood. Very little clamping pressure is necessary but the pressure should be applied equally along the banding to ensure there are no gluing voids.

Note: *If, for any reason, you decide to return the banding, we ask you to package it just as you received it.*



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