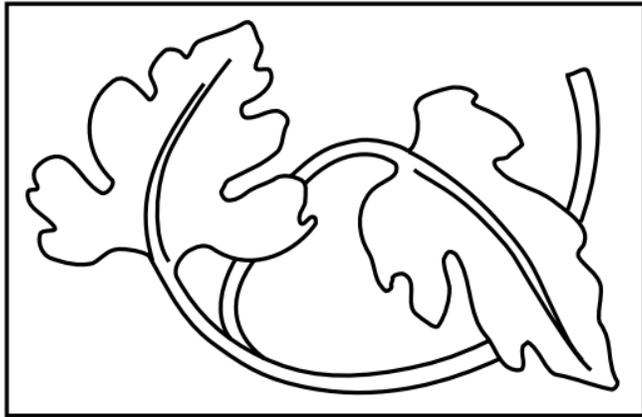


# Carving A Leaf Pattern

Working with this simple leaf pattern will help you understand the basic functions of your carving tools. Follow the instructions as shown. Remember to use all the safety instructions provided in this manual. This type of carving is referred to as relief carving in which the image is raised by “relieving” or removing the background.



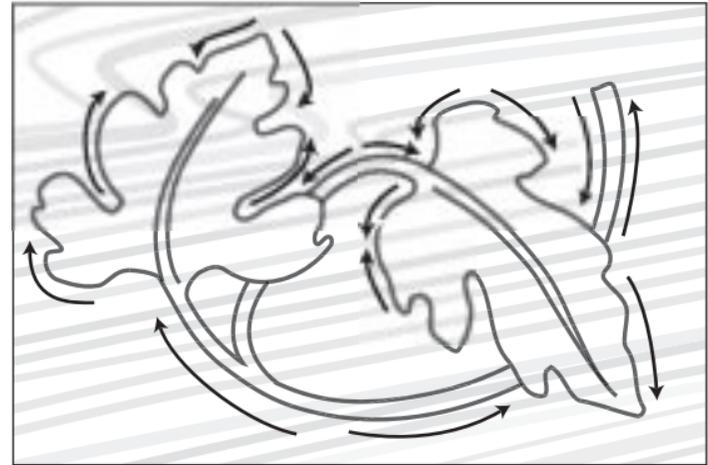
Before you begin carving, study the illustrations in fig. 9. They illustrate proper tool stroke direction in relation to the grain of the wood. As seen in the four smaller illustrations, the stroke should always go from the shortest grain line to the longest. Visualize the cut as the slope of a hill with the stroke always going downhill. Going against the grain (uphill) can tear the



# Carving A Leaf Pattern

wood or cause fragile areas to chip. Moreover, when using a gouge or a V-tool, it will produce both an uphill and downhill cut in a single stroke. To help visualize this, make a practice cut at 45 degrees to the grain of the wood in the background of your carving with the V-tool. Note how one side of the V-cut is going downhill (with the grain) and the other is going uphill (against the grain). This is unavoidable. It is important to remember to keep the downhill side of the stroke adjacent to the part of the carving you want left smooth. In this case, the leaves will receive the smooth downhill stroke and the background side (waste wood) will tear. Try to carve across the grain or at a slight angle to it as much as possible. This will give a smoother and more controlled cut than carving parallel with the grain.

f  
12



Direction of stroke in relation to grain.

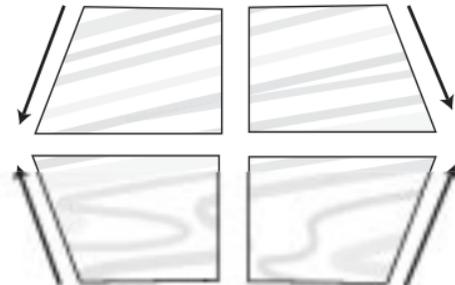


fig. 9

All initial cuts are made to remove the background wood. This will raise the leaves and make shaping them much easier. First, outline the leaves with the 70° V-tool. These cuts should remain outside the line to avoid removing any of the leaf itself. Before using the full depth of the tool, you might want to practice some cuts. Smaller cuts will give you more control over the tool because they require less effort. As you carve and gain more control you may want to try using deeper cuts. The first cuts do not have to be extremely accurate. Smaller, subsequent cuts, can be made up to the line.



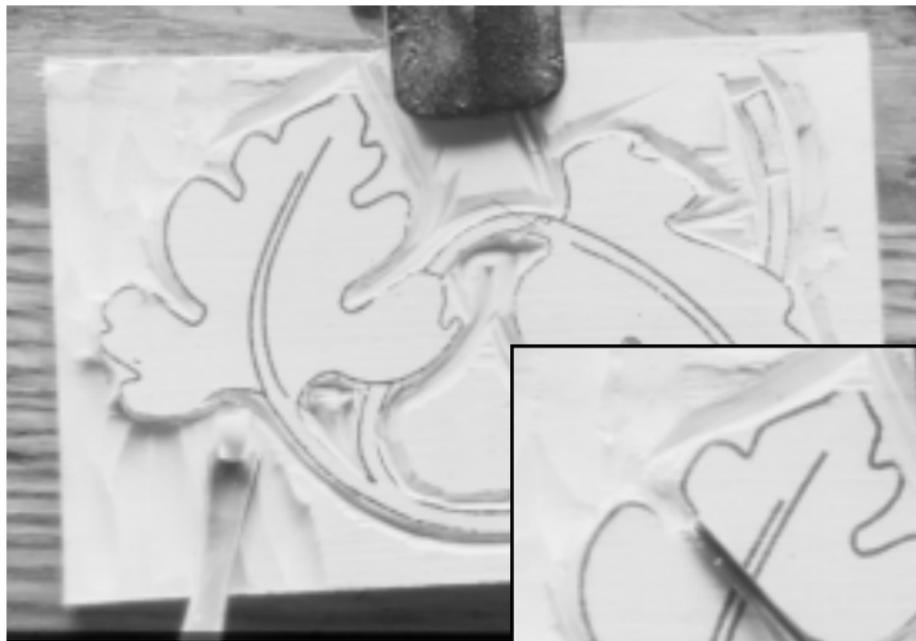
# Carving A Leaf Pattern

Once the leaves and stems have been fully outlined you can use the #6 X 3/8" gouge to remove the waste wood of the background. Due to the maximum cut-depth of the V-tool, the process of outlining and cutting away background will need to be repeated until you have removed approximately two thirds of the wood thickness. This will raise the outline of the image enough so that it can be shaped and shadowed properly. Use the small #9 X 1.5mm gouge to carve away the narrow spaces of the leaf edges.

SK801  
#9 X 1.5mm

SK306  
#6 X 3/8"

SK307  
1/4" X 70°

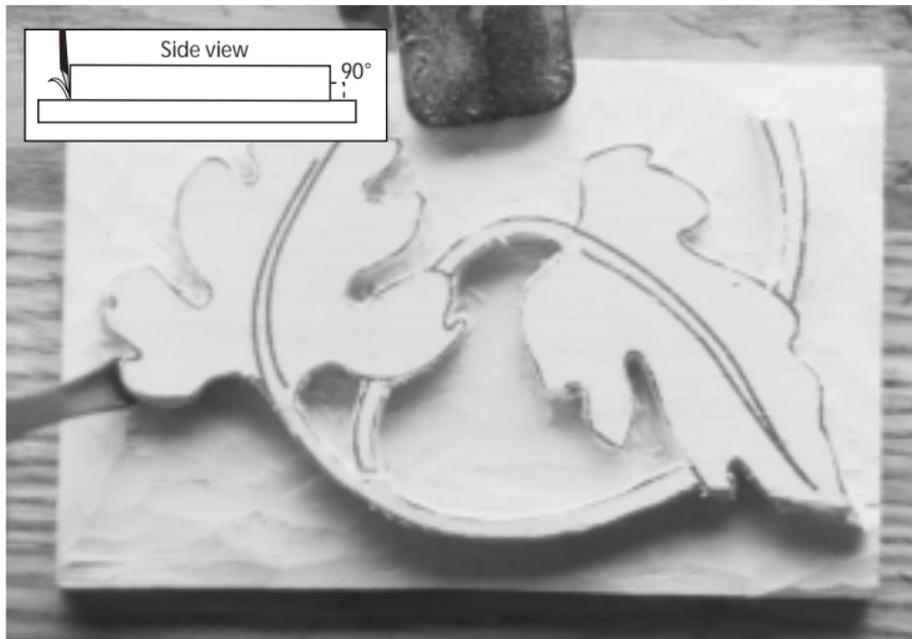


SK801  
#9 X 1.5mm

SK305  
#3 X 3/8"

SK306  
#6 X 3/8"

SK307  
1/4" X 70°



After removing all the background wood, it is best to go around the image with the V-tool again to make sure the sides of the leaves are 90° to the background. Other gouges can also be used to make finish

cuts up to the image edge by pushing the tool in perpendicular to the surface of the carving (see inset). Choose the tool by fitting the radius of the gouge with the outside shape of the leaf. The 90° angle is important so that when the leaves are shaped they maintain their original outline. If the angle is larger, the leaf will grow in size as wood is removed. If the leaf is undercut it will become smaller as it is carved. Once the outline is finished, use the #3 X 3/8" gouge to smooth the background. Be careful not to allow the corners of the gouge to go below the surface of the wood. This will keep tearing to a minimum.



# Carving A Leaf Pattern

Now that the outside shapes of the leaves and stems have been fully defined and raised from the background, their surfaces can be shaped.

Use the V-tool once again to outline the veins in the leaves with shallow cuts approximately  $1/16$ " deep on either side of them. Once this is done, the stems can be cut away so they appear to go under the leaf itself. This is done with a cut that starts shallow on the surface of the wood and progressively gets deeper. Using the #3 X  $3/8$ " gouge, make this cut from the middle of the stem (shallow) to where it goes under the leaf (approximately  $3/16$ " deep). Here it is advisable to make a "stop-cut". This is a cut, made in advance, as a cut perpendicular to your next stroke. It severs the fibers

SK305  
#3 X  $3/8$ "

SK307  
 $1/4$ " X  $70^\circ$



on the line where the stem joins the leaf. This will keep the cut from going too far. The #3 X  $3/8$ " gouge can then, also be used to slightly round off the corner of the stems.

SK305  
#3 X 3/8"

SK306  
#6 X 3/8"



the work surface, in order to have it shine its light across your work at an acute angle. This type of lighting will make the shape of the leaf much more apparent by creating more contrast (darker shadows and lighter highlights) on the wood. Note that in the photograph some parts of the leaves are carved to be concave and others convex. Using both types of relief will make the carving more interesting to look at. The photograph can be used as a pattern to follow or you can try rolling and twisting the leaf surfaces to your own liking. Use the #6 X 3/8 gouge to remove most of the wood and then smooth it with the #3 X 3/8" gouge as described earlier.

The body of the leaf can now be carved. At this point it is very helpful to use a portable swing-arm lamp to aid in seeing the shadows you create on the image. Position the light to the side and slightly above



# Carving A Leaf Pattern



18

The bodies of the leaves are now shaped and the background can be textured with the #9 X 1.5mm gouge. This background texture will contrast with the smoother surface of the leaves and let them stand out. Cutting at a 45° angle to the grain will allow for a smoother cut. This also will provide an opportunity to clean up all the small splinters and tears left from roughing-out the shapes. You might find that undercutting the leaf *slightly* with the V-tool will help to clean up the corners where the leaves and background meet. Once the carving is cleaned of splinters and fuzz, medium to fine sandpaper can be used to further smooth out any imperfections. Some carvers do not like to use

○ SK801  
#9 X 1.5mm



sandpaper because it removes carving marks and thus some of the handmade quality of the work. Beginners may find it easier to use sandpaper until their skills improve.



Finishing can be done with a dark stain and clear satin lacquer in a spray can. The dark stain can be applied very lightly. Once it has dried, use the fine sandpaper to remove the color from the high spots of the relief. This will leave the darker color in the lower areas much the same way the work light did as the leaves were being carved. Clean any sanding dust away from the work and apply three coats of the clear satin lacquer.

