

Cherry Dresser

How to build a classic 5-drawer dresser.

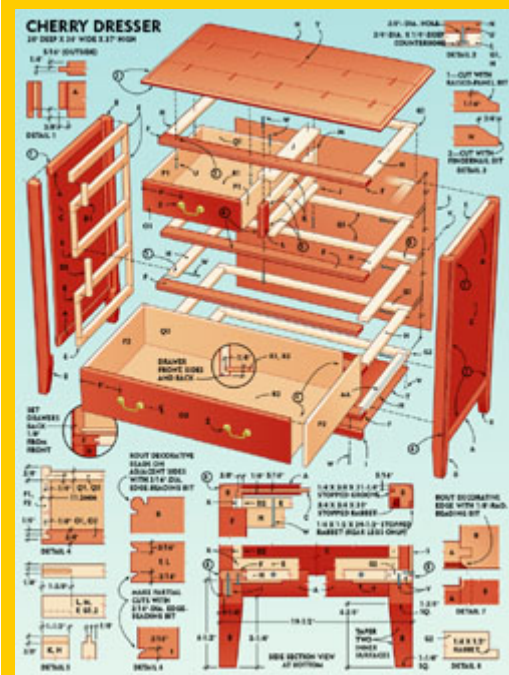


These days when you have a storage problem, the solution is usually a bigger hard drive or maybe a new CD burner. Personal space is defined in megabytes, and when you run short, you can't simply grab the nearest shoebox. Not so with the more tangible features in our lives. Things can and do get left piled on the sofa or stuffed into an already crowded closet. Our solution doesn't require a plug to play, is guaranteed to work 50 years from now--and is fully compatible with anything you'd care to stow away. It's a classic 5-drawer cherry dresser.

Equally at home in a bedroom, living room or hallway, our traditional design combines a pair of small accessory drawers with three full-width ones for ample storage capacity. It features simple joinery and a unique spacer-

block system that makes installing the drawer guides accurate and painless.

In addition to solid cherry, we used 1/4-in. cherry plywood for the end panels. With a 4 x 8 sheet you'll also have enough for the case back, bottom and the drawer bottoms. We chose poplar for the hidden interior pieces and stable, uniform 11.5mm Baltic Birch plywood for the drawer sides and backs.



Materials List

Key	No.	Size and description (use)
A	4	3/4 x 2 x 16-3/4" cherry (side rail)
B	4	1-3/4 x 1-3/4 x 36-1/4" cherry (leg)
C*	2	1/4 x 16-11/16 x 27-11/16" plywood (side)
D1	4	3/4 x 3/4 x 3-1/2" poplar (spacer)
D2	12	3/4 x 3/4 x 6-1/4" poplar (spacer)
E	10	3/4 x 1-1/2 x 17-1/2" poplar (guide)
F	5	3/4 x 2 x 31-1/2" cherry (front rail)
G1	4	3/4 x 1-1/4 x 31-1/2" poplar (rear rail)
G2	1	3/4 x 1-1/2 x 31-1/2" poplar (rear rail)
H	10	3/4 x 1-1/2 x 16-3/4" poplar (runner)
I	1	3/4 x 1-1/4 x 31-1/2" cherry (trim rail)
J	2	3/4 x 2-1/2 x 16" poplar (runner)
K	2	3/4 x 1-1/2 x 16-3/4" poplar (guide)
L	1	3/4 x 2 x 5" cherry (divider)
M	1	3/4 x 1-1/4 x 5" poplar (divider)
N	1	3/4 x 20 x 36" cherry (top)
O1	2	3/4 x 4-7/8 x 15-9/32" cherry

		(drawer front)
O2	3	3/4 x 6-7/8 x 31-13/32" cherry (drawer front)
P1	4	11.5mm x 4-7/8 x 18-7/8" Baltic Birch (side)
P2	6	11.5mm x 6-7/8 x 18-7/8" Baltic Birch (side)
Q1	2	11.5mm x 4-7/8 x 14-7/8" Baltic Birch (back)
Q2	3	11.5mm x 6-7/8 x 31" Baltic Birch (back)
R1*	2	1/4 x 14-3/4 x 18" plywood (bottom)
R2*	3	1/4 x 18 x 30-7/8" plywood (bottom)
S*	1	1/4 x 29-1/2 x 32-1/2" plywood (case back)
T*	1	1/4 x 18-1/2 x 31-1/2" plywood (case bottom)
U	10	1" No. 10 panhead screw and washer
V	14	3/4" No. 6 panhead screw
W	as reqd.	2" No. 8 fh woodscrew
X	as reqd.	1-1/4" finishing nail
Y	10	3/8"-dia. x 2" dowel
Z**	8	drawer pull, Constantines No. SBH35
AA***	10	1/2" 10-mil nylon tape, Rockler No. 70615

Misc: No. 5530 3/16" beading bit, No. 6583 5/8" fingernail bit and No. 6390 2" raised-panel bit available from MLCS, P.O. Box 4053, Rydal, PA 19046; www.mlcswoodworking.com; glue; sandpaper; Behlen medium brown mahogany Solar-Lux stain; Minwax Polyurethane Clear Satin Finish.

* Cherry-veneer plywood.

** Constantines Wood Center, 1040 E. Oakland Park Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33334; www.constantines.com.

*** Rockler Woodworking and Hardware, 4365 Willow Dr., Medina, MN 55340; www.rockler.com.

Making The End Panels

Begin construction by cutting 3/4-in. cherry to length and width for the four side rails. Make the rail tenon shoulder cuts on your table saw, using a miter gauge and stopblock for uniformity. Note that the cuts are 5/16 in. deep on the outside faces and 3/16 in. deep on the inside faces (Photo 1). We used a shopmade tenoning jig that slides along the table saw fence to make the tenon cheek cuts (Photo 2).

To make the legs, rip four 1-3/4-in.-square pieces and crosscut each to exact length. Mark the positions of the stopped rabbets and grooves on the legs. Set up your router table to cut the 1/4-in. panel groove spaced 5/16 in. in from the outer faces of the legs and side rails. Then cut the grooves in the rails. To cut the stopped grooves in the legs, first mark the exact position of the bit on the router table fence. Start with the front left and rear right legs. Lower each leg onto the bit at the marked groove end and feed the work to the left to finish each cut (Photo 3). To cut the opposite front right and rear left legs, feed the open top end of each leg into the bit and toward the left, lifting the legs off the bit at the groove ends.

To rout the rabbets, switch to a larger bit and, again, proceed in diagonal pairs. However, instead of pivoting the work down from the top, simply pivot each piece toward or away from the fence at the rabbet ends (Photo 4). After the main rabbets have been cut, rout the case-back rabbets in the rear legs.

Use a taper jig on the table saw or the band saw to cut the leg tapers, and smooth the sawn surfaces with a hand plane.

Finish the legs by routing the corner bead. Set up an edge-beading bit in your router table so when the half-round cut is made from two adjacent faces of a leg corner, a three-quarter-round bead is produced (Photo 5).

Temporarily clamp the rails and leg assemblies. Hold the parts in alignment with two 3/4-in. brads at each joint, using pilot holes to prevent splitting the wood. Then, rout the decorative bead around the inside edge of the frame (Photo 6). Finally, cut



Use a stopblock clamped to an auxiliary miter gauge fence to accurately position the tenon shoulder cuts.



Make the tenon cheek cuts with a tenoning jig. This shopmade version slides along the table saw fence.



To begin a stopped groove at the blind end, lower the leg onto the bit. Then, slide the work toward the left.

the plywood panels to size, sand, apply glue to the joints and assemble the case ends.



Use the same process for the stopped rabbets. Arrow marked on table fence indicates the exact location of the cut.



Shape the three-quarter-round corner bead by making two half-round passes from adjacent leg surfaces.



Temporarily assemble the legs and rails. Then, rout the decorative bead around the inside edge.

Case Assembly

Cut the poplar spacers and drawer guides to size, and attach them to the end assemblies with 1-1/4-in. finishing nails and glue (Photo 7). Then cut the drawer runners, rails and center divider pieces to their finished sizes. Use your router table and 1/4-in. straight bit to cut the centered, stopped grooves in the ends of the front and rear members. Then, use the table saw's miter gauge and the tenoning jig to shape the tenons in the front-to-rear members. Run the outer edges of the cherry pieces over the edge-beading bit to produce the twin half beads as shown in the drawing (Photo 8). Assemble each frame with glue and clamp. When the glue has set, bore the screwholes in the top frame for attaching the case top and add the holes for securing the small-drawer partition frame. Rout the rabbet for the case back in the bottom frame.

Use partially driven 2-in. finishing nails to temporarily secure each drawer frame to a side drawer guide. Then, bore the screwholes for permanently attaching the frames (Photo 9). Dry assemble the case to check for fit. Then, disassemble, apply glue and reassemble the components. Screw the small-drawer partition frame between the two top horizontal frames and add the runners to the frame top and bottom.

Use a doweling jig to bore dowel holes for joining the case-top boards (Photo 10). To ensure a flat assembly, use pairs of cauls clamped across the boards. Wax the cauls so they won't become glued to the workpiece. Then, apply glue to the mating surfaces and clamp (Photo 11).

Smooth the top with a cabinet scraper (Photo 12). Then, cut it to exact size and rout the top edge with an ogee raised-panel bit. Lay the top upside down and round the edge with a fingernail bit, using a straightedge to guide the router (Photo 13).

The Drawers

We built the drawers with a drawer lock joint as shown in Detail 4 of the drawing on page 89. After cutting the pieces to exact size, use the tenoning jig to cut the grooves in the ends of the drawer fronts. Use the miter gauge and repeated cuts to



After assembling the case ends, glue and nail the drawer guides in place. Spacers ensure accurate positioning.



Set the height of the beading bit to cut one-half bead. Then, rout upper and lower edge of each front divider piece.



Use partially driven nails to hold drawer frames when drilling screwholes. Dry assemble and check before gluing.

shape the dados in the drawer sides, and cut the rabbets in the backs. Rout the grooves for the drawer bottoms.

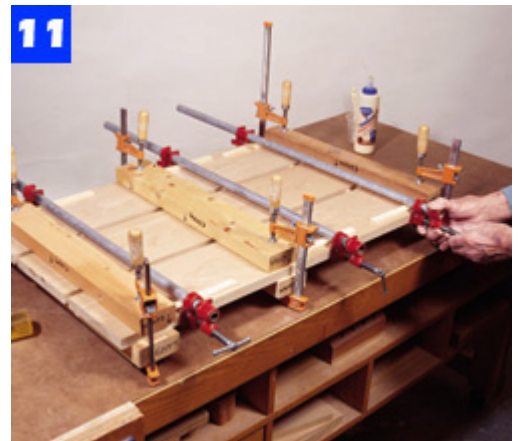
To assemble the drawers, first apply glue and join a front and rear to a bottom. Then, glue the sides to the front, rear and bottom panels.

Finishing

We stained the cherry with a coat of Behlen medium brown mahogany Solar-Lux stain with 10 percent retarder added to ease brush application. Follow this with two coats of Minwax Polyurethane Clear Satin Finish. For smooth drawer operation, apply a strip of self-adhesive nylon tape to each runner. Secure the top, back and bottom panels, and install the drawer pulls.



Use dowels to join the three boards that make up the top. A doweling jig ensures accurate hole alignment.



To keep the top assembly flat, clamp waxed cauls on each face. Then, apply clamps across the top to close the joints.



When the glue is dry, use a cabinet scraper to smooth the top. Then, cut the top to exact size.

13



After routing the top edge with the ogee panel bit, turn over the top and round the edge with a fingernail bit.

