

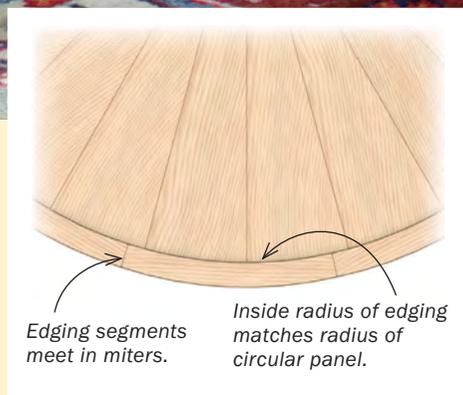


Curved solid-wood edging

BY BRUCE EATON

In “Circular Sunburst Veneer Top” (pp. 54–58), I take you through veneering a round tabletop. A veneered panel needs edging, though, to protect the veneer and hide the substrate. For the table shown here, I wrap pieces of solid wood around the perimeter. On a circular top, this process can feel like a high bar to clear: The edging pieces must be shaped to match the curve of the top, and they’ll be fitted together with multiple miters.

There are two strategies to greatly lower that bar. The first is a straightforward full-size drawing. The second, a sled for template routing, is almost as straightforward, but the path to get there involves a little more ingenuity. It will yield spot-on, fuss-free results, though, without leaving you scratching your head. I’ll show you how to apply edging to my table’s top,



using a process that will work on any circle. As an added bonus, the edging will be proud of the table’s surface, creating a lip around the perimeter.

Full-size drawing shows angles

I recommend a drawing for the table’s top veneer in addition to the one for

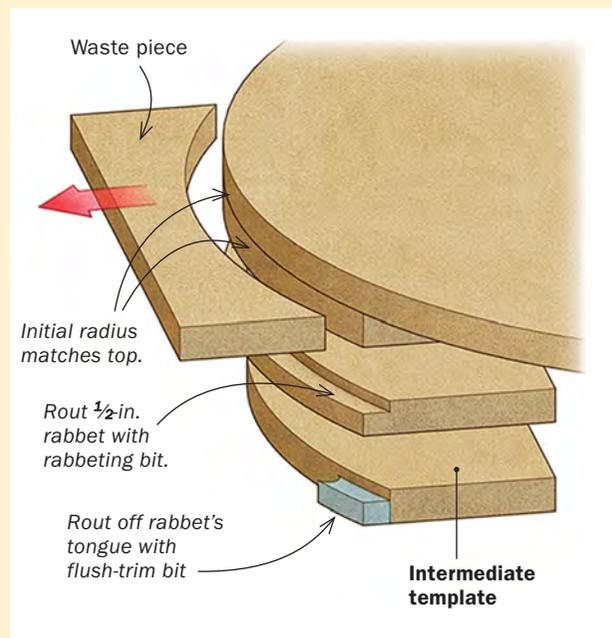
the edging. When you draw out the pieces, you also draw the angles. As a result, the edging pieces, which start out as trapezoidal blanks, are no longer complex shapes with uncertain angles; they’re something you can set your bevel gauge against. The drawing has all the information necessary.

The number of edging pieces can differ from the number of veneer segments. For this table, I milled each edging blank about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. wider than its final dimension to let me adjust the arc of the inside curve during construction. While the drawing

Two templates match

Make an intermediate template, and use it to create the final template. The final template becomes the jig for routing the curve in the edging segments.

INTERMEDIATE TEMPLATE



Match the radius of the circular top. To start, the intermediate template needs to match the radius of your top. Trace the top (or a pattern the same size as the top, as here) onto a piece of MDF, bandsaw close to the line, and then use the top to pattern-route the workpiece.



Rout a rabbet before pattern-routing it off. This two-step process reduces the intermediate template's diameter by a fixed amount. Here, Eaton cuts a 1/2-in.-wide rabbet.



helps you get to the finish line, there will be some fussing and fitting, especially on the final piece.

This jig's a two-step

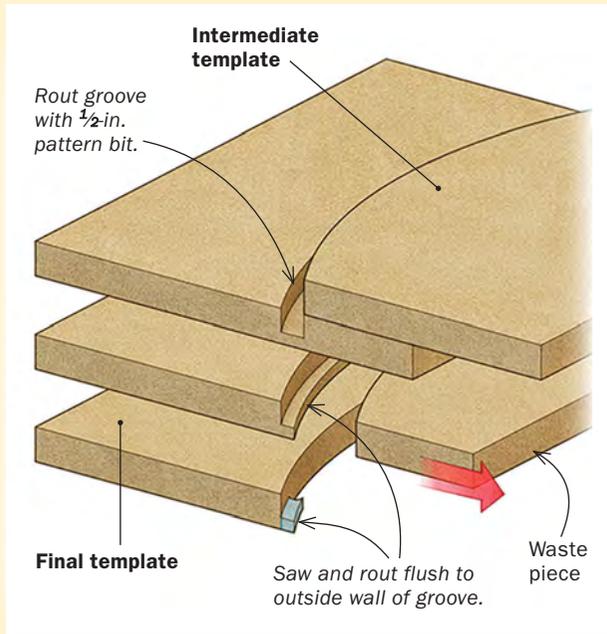
The edging's inside curve needs to match the circular panel's radius precisely. For consistent results, I use a routing sled to cut the curve in each of the edging segments. Making the sled is a two-step process: First I make an intermediate template, and then I use that to generate the final template, which will be the base of the sled.

Start the intermediate template by flush trimming a piece of MDF to match a section of the tabletop's perimeter. Next, with a rabbeting bit, rout a 1/2-in.-wide rabbet along the curved edge of the intermediate template. Then, with a flush-trimming bit, cut off the tongue of the rabbet. Now the curved edge of the intermediate template is exactly 1/2 in. smaller in radius than the circular top.

To make the final template, clamp the intermediate template to a blank of MDF. Using a 1/2-in. pattern bit, plow a curving groove in the blank. Because the diameter of the pattern bit matches the amount you removed from the intermediate template, the outside wall of this groove will match the curve of the tabletop. Saw off the inner part of the blank, then flush-trim off the remaining tongue to form the final template. Turn this template into a sled by attaching



FINAL TEMPLATE



Rout a groove in the final template using a pattern bit the same width as the rabbet. Because the rabbet in the intermediate template was 1/2 in. wide, Eaton uses a 1/2-in. bit for this groove. As a result, the outer wall of the groove matches the curve of the tabletop.



Trim away the waste before pattern-routing flush. This yields a template that will let you repetitively shape an inside curve that matches the tabletop's radius.

a fence, two end stops, and two toggle clamps.

Why this two-step process? Because if you were to forgo the intermediate template and employ the same plowed-groove method to make a final template directly from the tabletop, the resulting curve would be off by the diameter of the router bit. But having cut the 1/2-in.-wide rabbet in the intermediate template and then removed its tongue, you can duplicate the table's curve.

Make and apply the edging

For color and grain conformity along the edging, lay out the pieces from continuous or adjacent



Turn the final template into a sled. To the top of the final template, secure a fence, two end stops, and two toggle clamps. Sticky-back sandpaper on the sled helps keep the edging blanks from shifting as you secure them in the jig.

Make and apply edging



Angled ends. To wrap the edging segments around the circle, miter their ends. After mitering one end on every segment, Eaton resets his miter gauge and adds a stop to angle the other ends and cut the pieces to equal length.

Apply glue only where the edging meets the panel. Because the edging on Eaton's table is lipped on top, he doesn't apply glue to the entire inside edge. Otherwise, he'd have to deal with obvious squeeze-out in tight quarters.



Shape the inside of the edging using the sled. If your curve is gentle enough, like it is here, you can rout this curve in one pass. For steeper curves, you'll need to flip the workpiece end-for-end to avoid routing against the grain. Either way, center each workpiece in the sled before routing.



Glue on the first piece of edging while using another piece dry as a caul. By using a piece of edging as a caul on the opposite side of the circle, you can apply even clamping pressure to the glued-on piece without damaging the circular panel.

parts of a board and keep track of orientation while milling. The goal is to limit changes of color and grain direction as the segments go around the circle. While you're at it, cut out a few extra segment blanks for test-fitting and mishaps.

Using your drawing as reference, cut the edge pieces to length and miter their ends. Next, shape their inside edges with the router sled. Before machining all the real segments, use a few extra pieces to check that the curved edge and the miters close when several segments are clamped to the tabletop. If necessary, adjust the miters until they fit. If you adjust the angles as you go around with the real pieces, the joints can start to get out of square as the error compounds. Check the miters for square vertically too. Finally, check the fit all the way around.

Glue on the edge pieces, clamping across the table. Set them slightly proud of the bottom. Use



Pinch dogs close the miters. After gluing on the first segment, add the edging one piece at a time, locating it using the previous piece. The pinch dogs, whose two teeth are a pair of mating wedges, draw the miter tight as you hammer them in.



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Shape the edging's perimeter



Clean up the edging. Eaton attaches the edging so it's slightly proud on the bottom face, letting him flush it up after assembly. It's a fast process with a sharp handplane.

a pinch dog to first draw the miter tight and then clamp across the tabletop and clean up glue as you go. I've had good luck using Titebond Molding and Trim Glue for the edging. It doesn't run and leaves just a nice, clean bead to clean up. It also dries clear, and if you're having trouble getting the joints completely closed it will help fill them. The last edging segment will likely need to be recut to fit. Once all the segments are attached, handplane, scrape, and sand the edging flush with the bottom of the panel.

The outside face of the edging now needs to be cut into a circle. I use a larger MDF disk, created with a router in a trammel, to flush-cut the edging to final shape after bandsawing it close. □

Bruce Eaton's shop is near Boston, Mass.



Use a template to form the outer diameter. Center the template on the panel and trace its perimeter. Bandsaw close to the line before securing the template to the panel and pattern-routing to final shape. This step also removes the holes made by the pinch dogs.



A lip means careful finishing. Eaton's edging has a raised lip. Because of its inside corner, he needs to be extra attentive during surface prep and finishing.