

# Glossary of Terms

A B C D E F G H I J K L M O P Q R S T V W Y

## A

### **Air-drying**

A method for seasoning wood that permits covered stacks of sawn wood to dry naturally in the open air.

### **Alloy**

A mixture of two or more metals to create a composition with specific properties.

### **Anthropometry**

The comparative study of the dimensions of the human body.

### **Arc**

Part of an unbroken curved line drawn by a compass.

### **Arris**

The sharp edge where two surfaces meet at an angle.

### **Axis**

The imaginary line about which an object such as a chair rail is symmetrical.

## B

### **Backing grade**

The category of cheaper veneers that are glued to the back of a board in order to balance better-quality veneers glued to the front face.

### **Banding**

A plain or patterned strip of veneer used to make decorative borders.

### **Barefaced**

The description of a joint that has one shoulder only.

### **Batten**

A strip of wood.

### **Bead**

A rounded convex shape turned on a lathe. *or* A fine molded strip of wood, also known as beading.

### **Bench Dog**

A metal or wooden peg inserted into one of a row of holes.

### **Bench Stop**

A flip-up tongue that is permanently inlaid into the bench top.

### **Bevel**

A surface that meets another at an angle other than a right angle. *or* To cut such surfaces. *See also* chamfer.

### **Bifold door**

A type of sliding door made from two hinged panels that fold as the door is slid sideways.

### **Bird's-mouth**

A notched plate of metal or wood that is clamped or screwed to a bench so that the notch overhangs the edge. It is used to support work being cut with a piercing saw or scroll saw.

### **Blank**

A piece of wood roughly cut to size ready for turning on a lathe.

### **Bleed**

A process whereby a substance such as natural wood resin permeates and stains the surface of a subsequent coating.

### **Blister**

A small raised area of veneer resulting from insufficient glue at that point.

### **Blockboard**

A man-made building board with a core approximately square-section solid-wood strips sandwiched between thin plywood sheets. *See also* laminboard.

### **Bore**

To drill a hole.

### **Bowed**

Twisted.

### **Bruise**

To make a dent in wood by striking it with a hard object such as a hammer.

### **Burl**

A warty growth on the trunk of a tree. When sliced it produces speckled veneer.

### **Burr**

A thin hook of metal left along the cutting edge of a blade after honing or grinding.

### **Button**

A wooden device screwed to the underside of a table top to fix it to an underframe.

## C

### **Cabinetmaker**

A manufacture of good quality furniture.

### **Cabriole leg**

A furniture leg developed in the 18th century that is made with an upper convex curve that descends, tapering, to a concave curve.

### **Calibrated**

Marked out with one or more scales of measurement.

**Carpenter**

A woodworker but not necessarily one who specializes in fine work.

**Case-hardened**

A term used to describe unevenly seasoned wood with residual uneven stresses throughout its thickness.

**Catalyst**

A substance that stimulates or increases the rate of a chemical reaction.

**Cauls**

Sheets of wood or metal used to press veneer onto groundwork.

**Chamfer**

A 45-degree bevel along the edge of a piece of wood or board. *or* To cut such bevels.

**Chattering**

The noise caused by a work piece or tool vibrating.

**Checks**

Splits in wood caused by uneven seasoning. *See also* knife checks.

**Chipboard**

A mat of small particles of wood and glue compressed into a flat building board.

**Claw**

A split hammer peen used to grip a nail by its head and lever it out of a piece of wood.

**Clear wood**

Good-quality wood that is free from defects.

**Closed-coat**

A term used to describe sand-paper that has abrasive particles packed closely together.

**Coarse-texture**

*See* open grain.

**Collet**

A tapered sleeve made in two or more segments that grips the shaft of a cutter.

**Comb-grain**

Another term for quartersawn.

**Compound miter**

A miter that is angled in two planes.

**Concave**

Curving inwards.

**Contact cement**

An adhesive that bonds to itself without the aid of clamps when two previously glued surfaces are brought together.

**Convex**

Curving outwards.

**Core**

The central layer of plies, particles or wooden strips in a man-made board.

**Counterbore**

To cut a hole that permits the head of a bolt or screw to lie below the surface of a piece of wood. *or* The hole itself.

**Cove**

A concave molding along the edge of a workpiece. *or* Another term for hollow.

**Crest rail**

The top rail forming part of the back rest of a chair.

**Cross-banding**

Strips of veneer cut across the grain and used as decorative borders.

**Crosscutting**

Sawing across the grain.

**Cross grain**

Grain that deviates from main axis of a workpiece or tree.

**Crotch figure**

Another term for feather figure.

**Crown-cut**

A term used to describe veneer that has been tangentially sliced from a log, producing oval or curved grain patterns.

**Cup**

To bend as a result of shrinkage, specifically across the width of a piece of wood.

**Cure**

To set as a result of chemical reaction.

**Curly figure**

*See* curly grain.

**Curly Grain**

Wood grain exhibiting an irregular wavy pattern.

**Curtaining**

An undulating ridge of sagging paintwork resembling the shape of a draped curtain.

## D

**Dado**

A groove cut across the grain. *or* To cut such a groove.

**Dimension lumber**

Prepared wood cut to standard sizes.

**Double insulated**

A power tool with a non-conductive plastic casing that protects the user from electric shock is said to be double insulated.

**Dressed lumber**

Wood sold with one or more surfaces planed.

**Dust panel**

A horizontally mounted panel that protects the contents of a drawer from the dust created by the drawer above rubbing on its runners.

## E

**Earlywood**

That part of a tree's annual growth rings that is laid down in the early part of the growing season.

**Edge-grain**

Another term for quartersawn.

**End grain**

The surface of wood exposed after cutting across the fibers.

## **Ergonomics**

The study of the relationship between the average human body (especially that of a worker or machine operator) and its environment.

## **Escutcheon**

The metal lining of a keyhole or protective plate that surrounds it.

# F

## **Face edge**

The surface planed square to the face side and from which other dimensions and angles are measured.

## **Face quality**

A term used to describe better quality veneers that are used to cover the visible surfaces of a workpiece.

## **Face side**

The flat planed surface from which all other dimensions and angles are measured.

## **Feather figure**

The grain pattern on wood that has been cut from that part of a tree where a branch joins the main stem or trunk.

## **Feed**

To push a workpiece in a controlled manner toward a moving blade or cutter.

## **Fence**

An adjustable guide to keep the cutting edge of a tool a set distance from the edge of a workpiece.

## **Ferrule**

A metal collar that reinforces the wood where the tang of a chisel or other hand tool enters the handle.

## **Fiberboards**

A range of building boards made from reconstituted wood fibers.

## **Fielded panel**

A solid-wood panel with edges beveled to fit grooves in a frame.

## **Figure**

Another term for grain pattern.

## **Fillet**

A narrow strip of wood.

## **Flat-grain**

Another term for plainsawn.

## **Flat-sliced**

A term used to describe a narrow sheet of veneer that has been cut from part of a log with a knife.

## **Flatsawn**

Another term for plainsawn.

## **Flitches**

Pieces of wood sawn from a log for slicing into veneers. *or* The bundle of slices veneers.

## **Flute**

A rounded concave groove.

## **Flux**

A substance used to clean the surfaces of metal prior to soldering.

## **Fow wedging**

A joint where wooden wedges are used to spread a tenon in a stopped mortise.

## **Front elevation**

A scale drawing showing the front view of a workpiece.

# G

## **Grain**

The general direction or arrangement of the fibrous materials of wood.

## **Gravity guard**

A blade or cutter guard that is raised by passage of the work, then drops back under its own weight.

## **Green wood**

Newly cut wood that has not been seasoned.

## **Groove**

A long narrow channel cut in the direction of the grain. *or* To cut such channels.

## **Groundwork**

The backing material to which veneer is glued.

## **Gullet**

The space between sawteeth.

# H

## **Halving joint**

A lap joint where each member is relieved halfway through.

## **Hardwood**

Wood cut from broad-leaved, mostly deciduous trees that belong to the botanical group *Angiospermae*.

## **Haunch**

The shortened part of a tenon that prevents it from twisting out of line with the upright member at a corner of a frame.

## **Heartwood**

The mature wood that forms the spine of a tree.

## **Hide glue**

A protein-based wood glue made from animal skins and bone.

## **Hollow-ground**

A term used to describe circular-saw blades that are reduced in thickness toward their centers. Also, a concave bevel on a knife, chisel or other edge tool.

## **Hollows**

Concave shapes turned on a lathe.

## **Hone**

To produce the final cutting edge on a blade or cutter by rubbing it on or with an abrasive stone.

## **Horn**

Excess waste wood left on a workpiece to support the end of a mortise while the joint is being cut.

The horn is sawn off after the joint is assembled.

## **Housing**

A dado, either through, blind or half-blind that accepts a shelf, stair tread, dovetail, etc.

# I

## **In-cannel**

A term used to describe a gouge with a bevel ground on the inside of the blade.

## **Infeed**

A term is used to describe that part of machine's worktable that is in front of the blade or cutter.

## **Inlay**

To insert pieces of wood or metal into prepared recesses so that the material lies flush with the surrounding surfaces. *or* The piece of material itself.

## **Isometric drawing**

A scale drawing with its main axes equally inclined, but giving an impression of perspective.

# J

## **Jig**

A device used to hold a workpiece or tool so that an operation can be repeated accurately.

## **Joiner**

A woodworker who specializes in the construction of building components such as windows, doors and stairs.

# K

## **Kerf**

The slot cut by a saw.

## **Kickback**

The action of a workpiece being thrown toward a machinist by a moving blade or cutter. *or* The action of a power tool when it jumps backward as a result of its blade or cutter jamming.

## **Kicker**

A strip of wood fixed above a drawer's side to prevent it from tipping upward as the drawer is withdrawn.

## **Kiln-drying**

Methods for seasoning wood that accelerate drying.

## **Knife checks**

Splits along veneer caused by poorly adjusted veneer slicing equipment.

## **Knock-down fittings**

Mechanical devices for joining components, especially those that may have to be dismantled at a future date.

## **Knot sealer**

A shellac-based sealer used to coat resinous knots that would stain subsequent finishes.

## **Knuckle**

The cylindrical part of a hinge through which the pin passes.

# L

## **Laminate**

A component made from thin strips of wood glued together. *or* To glue strips together to form a component.

## **Laminboard**

A man-made building board with a core of narrow strips or wood glued together and sandwiched between thin plywood sheets. *See also* blockboard.

## **Latewood**

That part of a tree's annual growth ring that is laid down in the latter part of the growing season.

## **Laying off**

The action of finishing an application of paint or varnish using upward brush strokes.

## **Lipping**

A protective strip of solid wood applied to the edge of a man-made-board panel or table top.

## **Long grain**

Grain that is aligned with the main axis of a workpiece. *See also* short grain.

## **Lopers**

Draw runners that are pulled from a cabinet in order to support a fall flap.

# M

## **Marquetry**

The process of laying relatively small pieces of veneer to make decorative patterns or pictures. *See also* marquetry.

## **Miter**

A joint formed between two pieces of wood by cutting bevels of equal angles (usually 45 degrees) at the ends of both pieces. *or* To cut the joint.

## **Mock-up**

A temporary construction made from scrap materials in order to test a design.

**Modesty board**

A deep rail fixed between the two end frames of a desk. Its original purpose was to conceal the legs of a seated person.

**Mortise**

A rectangular recess cut in wood to receive a matching tongue or tenon.

**Muntin**

The central vertical member of a frame-and-panel door. *or* A grooved strip of wood that divides and supports the two sections of a wide drawer bottom.

## O

**Offcut**

Scrap wood cut from a workpiece.

**Open-coat**

A term used to describe sand-paper that has widely spaced abrasive particles.

**Open grain**

A term used to describe ring-porous wood with large pores. Also known as coarse-textured.

**Out-cannel**

A term used to describe a gouge with a bevel ground on the outside of the blade.

**Outfeed**

A term used to describe that part of a machine's worktable that is behind the blade or cutter.

**Oxidize**

To form a layer of metal oxide as in rusting.

## P

**Pare**

To remove fine shavings with a chisel.

**Parquetry**

A similar process to marquetry but using veneers cut into geometric shapes to make decorative patterns.

**Patina**

The color and texture that a acquires as a result of a natural aging process.

**Pawls**

Pivoted pointed levers designed to grip a workpiece as soon as it is thrown back by a moving blade or cutter.

**PEG**

Polyethylene glycol - a stabilizing agent used in place of conventional seasoning processes to treat green wood.

**Photosynthesis**

A natural process that takes place when energy in the form of light is absorbed by chlorophyll, producing the nutrients on which plants live.

**Pilot hole**

A small-diameter hole drilled prior to the insertion of a wood screw to act as a guide for its thread.

**Plainsawn**

A term used to describe a piece of wood with growth rings that meet the faces of the board at angles of less than 45 degrees. *See also* riftsawn.

**Plan**

A scale drawing showing the top view of a workpiece.

**Plan elevation**

Another term for plan.

**Plywood**

A building board made by bonding a number of wood veneers together under pressure.

**Pocket screw**

To bore a hole at an angle through the inside face of a rail in order to insert a top-fixing screw.

**Pumice**

A light volcanic rock that is ground to a fine abrasive powder and used to modify the texture of a wood finish.

**Pummel**

A square section left on a turned workpiece.

**Push stick**

A notched stick used to feed a workpiece into a blade or cutter.

## Q

**Quartersawn**

A term used to describe a piece of wood with growth rings between 60 and 90 degrees to the face of the board. *See also* riftsawn.

## R

**Rabbet**

A stepped recess along the edge of a workpiece, usually as part of a joint. *or* To cut such recesses.

**Rack**

To distort a frame or carcass by applying sideways pressure.

**Ratchet**

A device that permits motion in one direction only.

**Relief carving**

A type of carving where the background is cut away, leaving a motif projecting from the surrounding area.

**Riftsawn**

A term used to describe a piece of wood with growth rings that meet the faces of the board at angles of more than 30 degrees but at less than 60 degrees.

**Ripping**

Sawing parallel to the grain.

**Rotary-cut**

A term used to describe a continuous sheet of veneer peeled from a log by turning it against a stationary knife.

**Rottenstone**

An abrasive powder similar to pumice but ground even finer.

**Rubber**

A cloth pad used to apply polish, stain or varnish.

**Runners**

Strips of wood that support a drawer and upon which it slides.

## S

**Sapwood**

New wood surrounding the denser heartwood.

**Scribe**

To mark with a pointed tool. *or* To mark and shape the edge of a workpiece so that it will fit exactly against another surface such as a wall or ceiling.

**Seasoning**

Reducing the moisture content of wood.

**Secret haunch**

Another term for sloping haunch.

**Section**

A scale drawing that shows a view of a workpiece as if it had been cut through.

**Set**

To bend sawteeth to the right and left of the blade in order to cut a kerf wider than the blade itself.

**Setting in**

The fine shaping of carved work.

**Shank**

The cylindrical shaft of a screw or nail. *or* The shaft of a drill or cutter.

**Shear force**

The force applied to a structure by a transverse load.

**Shellac**

A secretion of the lac insect used to manufacture French polish.

**Shoot**

To plane accurately using a finely set plane.

**Short grain**

A term used to describe where the general direction of wood fibers lies across a narrow tenon or wood.

**Shoulder**

The square end of a workpiece on one or both sides of a tenon or tongue.

**Side elevation**

A scale drawing showing the side view of a workpiece.

**Skiver**

Thin leather prepared for gluing to a desk or table top.

**Slashesawn**

Another term for plainsawn.

**Sloping haunch**

A tenon haunch cut at an angle so that it is invisible when the joint is assembled.

**Softening**

Pieces of scrap wood used to protect workpieces from metal vise or clamp jaws.

**Softwood**

Wood cut from coniferous trees that belong to the botanical group Gymnospermae.

**Splitting nut**

When a cutter or drill roughly breaks through the bottom or back of a workpiece.

**Springwood**

Another term for earlywood.

**Stile**

A vertical side member of a frame-and-panel door.

**Stop**

A strip of wood against which a drawer front or door comes to rest when it is closed.

**Stopped mortise**

A mortise that does not pass right through a piece of wood.

**Straight grain**

Grain that aligns with the main axis of a workpiece or tree.

**Striker plate**

The metal plate against which a latch or lock comes to rest.

**Stringing**

Fine strips of wood used to divide areas of veneer.

**Strop**

To produce a razor-sharp cutting edge by rubbing it on a strip of leather. *or* The strip of leather itself.

**Stub mortise**

Another term for stopped mortise.

**Stub tenon**

A short tenon that does not pass right through a piece of wood.

**Summerwood**

Another term for latewood.

**Sweep**

A term used to describe the curved section of a carving gouge.

**Swing**

The maximum diameter of a workpiece that can be turned over a lathe bed.

## T

**Tack rag**

A cloth impregnated with resin for picking up loose dust. Also known as a tacky rag.

**Tang**

The pointed end of a chisel or file that is driven into the handle.

**Tangentially cut**

Another term for plainsawn.

**Template**

A cut-out pattern to help shape a workpiece accurately.

**Tenon**

A projecting tongue on the end of a piece of wood that fits in a corresponding mortise.

**Thermoplastic**

A term used to describe a material that can be resoftened with heat.

**Thermosetting**

A term used to describe a material that cannot be resoftened with heat once it has set hard.

**Thinner**

A substance used to reduce the consistency of paint, varnish, shellac or lacquer.

**Thixotropic**

A property of some paints that have a jelly-like consistency until stirred or applied, at which point they become liquefied.

**Throat**

The clearance between a blade of a machine such as a scroll saw and its frame. *or* The outlet for shaving above the mouth in a plane's sole.

**Tongue**

The projecting ridge cut along the edge of a board that fits into a corresponding groove in another board. *or* A plywood strip that fits in grooves cut in two boards to be joined.

**Tusk tenon**

A wedged through tenon used to join floor joists. An additional stub tenon (the tusk) below the through tenon provides extra support. A simplified version is used to allow disassembly of a trestle-table understructure.

**V****Veneer**

A thin slice of wood used as a surface covering on a less expensive material such as a man-made board.

**Vertical grain**

Another term for quartersawn.

**Viscosity**

The extent to which a fluid resists the tendency to flow.

**W****Waney edge**

The natural way edge of a plank. It may still be covered by tree bark.

**Wavy grain**

A term used to describe the even wave-like grain pattern on wood cut from a tree with an undulating cell structure.

**Wild grain**

Irregular grain that changes direction, making it difficult to work.

**Winding**

A warped or twisted board is said to be winding or in wind.

**Y****Yacht varnish**

An exterior-grade varnish especially suitable for coastal climates.