

So, it seemed a lot of people had been asking questions about filling gaps lately and some of those were questioning the shellac and sawdust method. I was in the process of doing this on a table I'm working on so I figured I'd post a little walkthrough just for those that haven't done this yet or haven't had good results.

To begin, when I do a large sanding I like to keep a small jar of the sawdust I get until I have a jar of each main species I work with. This way I don't have to worry about acquiring the dust when I'm ready to use it. So, I cut the bottom off a water bottle for an easy mixing cup, add some sawdust and shellac until it starts to get muddy. The consistency that I look for is to see liquid when I press down on the mixture. I like this because in a minute or two, it will be getting solid.



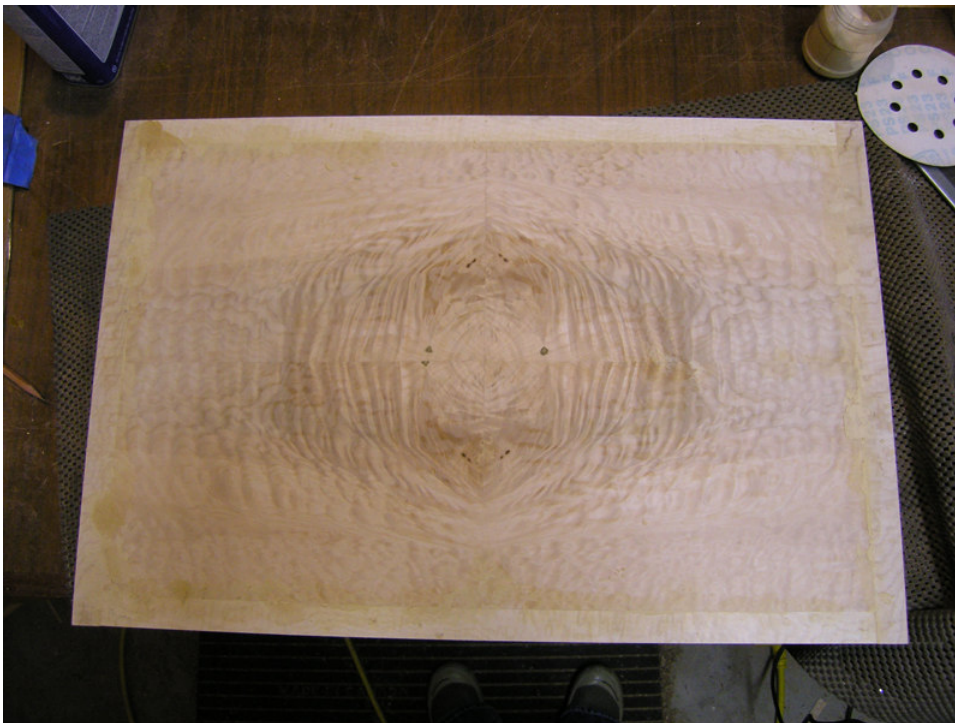
I have a table top made from a nice maple veneer and bordered with 1 inch of curly maple that will be rounded off on the edges and corners. My piece actually turned out to have a lot more gaps than I would have hoped for but this is what the filling method is good for. Here you can see what I'm trying to fix.



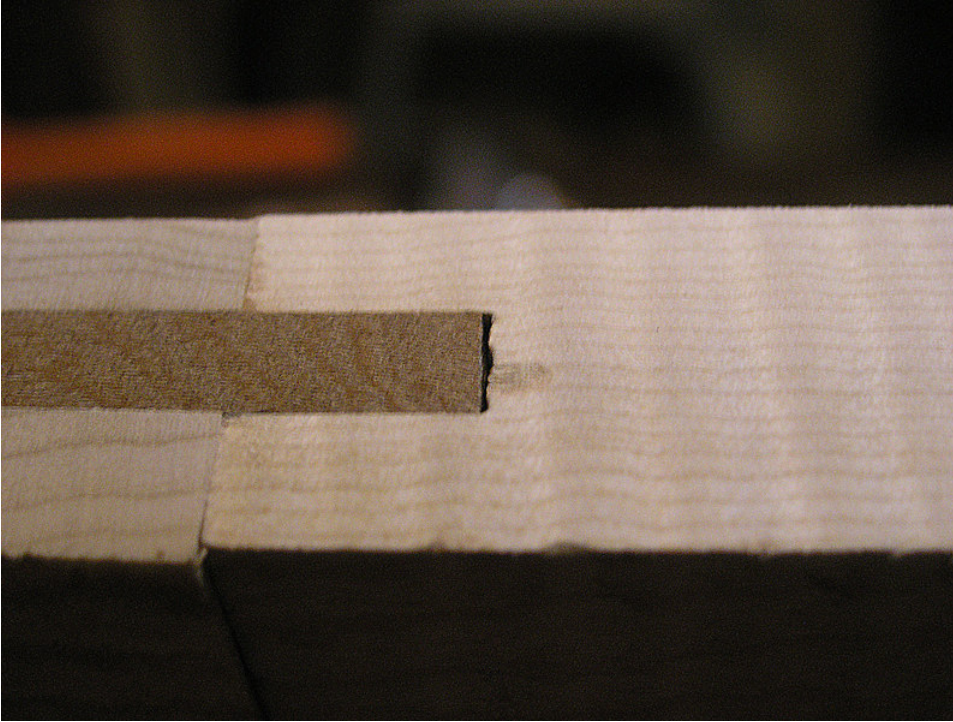
Using a putty knife, I fill the gaps and ensure I'm pressing the mixture into the gaps, not just spreading it on top.



Here you can see a few pictures after I'm done filling. I'm not worried about how it looks right now because all of that ugliness will be gone as soon as I'm done sanding.



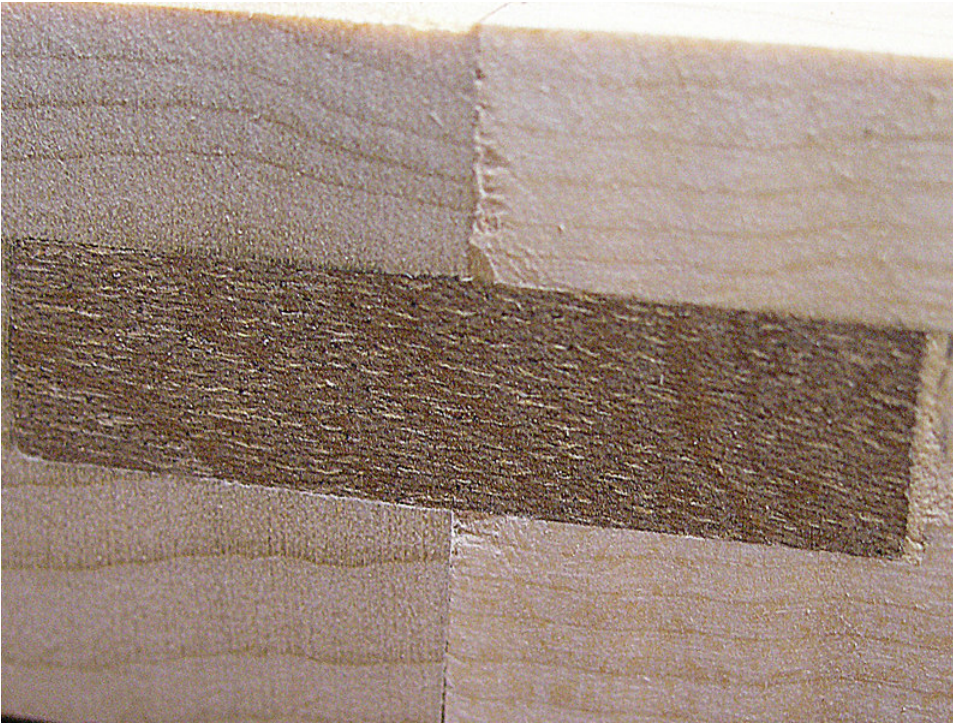
I also found one of the border splines had a gap in it so I decided to fill that as well.



Here you can see a closeup of a gap after it's been filled. They're not perfect but they look a lot better than they did before and, once I've finished the piece, it will look even better.



Here you can also see a fill for that gap I had found before at the spline.



I won't bother anyone with more finished pictures of the top but I'm sure I'll be posting pictures once the whole table is done.

Additions:

If you're staining, there's a way around this. First, stain the piece. Then make up your filler, but add a few drops of your stain to the mixture, just enough to get a good color match. Now the filler should practically disappear, especially if you're repair is very small.