

Preparing Cherry Plywood Blocks for Printing

The darker, cherry side of these blocks has been sanded to a smooth, printable surface. You can continue sanding it to a mirror-like surface using successive sandpaper grits up to 400 and 600 grit. This extra effort will result in more solid printed areas, especially if you are using water-based inks. Be sure to always sand with the grain of the wood, not across it. Use a rubber sanding block or warp the sandpaper around a small block of wood and take care to keep the sanding block absolutely flat on the surface of the cherry as you sand.

Be careful to sand the entire surface of the block equally. This is especially necessary if you will be printing with a press, since areas that are over-sanded or dished will show up as light areas on the print.

Cherry requires skillful carving. Because the wood is very hard, carve Cherry Blocks slowly and with control. This wood is not meant for fast or jerky carving. Do not rock or twist the tool to force it through the wood. Doing so can damage the blades.

Unlike wood which has distinctive growth rings that are very different in density, such as fir or pine, there is virtually no difference in the hardness of the growth rings of cherry. Because of this, cherry is used to make prints that do not show any grain pattern.

The birch side of the block can be carved and printed as well if it does not have flaws. Birch will show a grain pattern when it is printed.

Store the blocks flat in a dry place, preferably at room temperature, to prevent warping.



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