

SATURDAY PROJECT

Hidden card trick

This pine tea light holder has a secret. The top pivots to reveal a space inside sized for two decks of playing cards. Hidden in plain sight, your cards can be close at hand *and* safe from spills. The key to making this project look table-worthy is cutting the edges flush after assembly and lining up the grain to complete the illusion of a solid block of wood. Combine this with a couple of neat tricks—a cut brass screw for the top pivot and magnets as hidden latches—and you’ve got a fun, simple project with more function than meets the eye.—Paul Lewis

1 Cut three pieces at 5¼" by 7⅞". These are your three layers.

2 Prepare the middle layer as in Fig. 1. Set the table saw fence ¾" from the blade and cut along the length of each side. You'll end up with three pieces. Cut the wider centre piece in half horizontally, then test-fit the cards before gluing the pieces together as in Fig. 2. Leaving the middle pieces long at this stage allows them to be cut flush after assembly.

3 Once the glue has dried, make a small finger recess using

a 1"-dia. spindle sander. If you don't have a spindle sander, you can improvise one by wrapping sandpaper around a 1" dowel.

4 Bore the holes for the magnets now, before continuing the assembly: line up the edges of the top and middle layers and bore a tiny pilot hole (⅓"-dia.) through the centre layer and into the top layer. Then bore shallow ⅝"-dia. pockets that will hold the magnets.

The pilot holes will ensure the magnets will line up.

5 Glue and clamp the middle layer to the bottom layer so that the edges line up. Then temporarily attach the top with strips of the double-sided tape.

6 Cut all four edges of the assembly flush, then separate the top from the middle and bottom layers. Bore the 1½"-dia. pockets in the top, ½" deep, for the tea lights.

7 Line up the top again, and drive the brass pivot screw just until the smooth shank of the screw is halfway into the wood (Fig 3). Cut the brass screw just above the surface of the wood with a rotary tool spinning a small abrasive cutting wheel. Sand the shank of the brass screw flush with the surface of the wood with a random-orbit sander fitted with 150-grit sandpaper.

8 Lastly, adhere the magnets into the pockets with a drop of epoxy.

FIG. 1 Cut the middle piece into sections

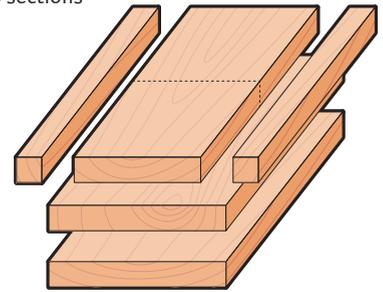


FIG. 2 Glue the middle pieces together

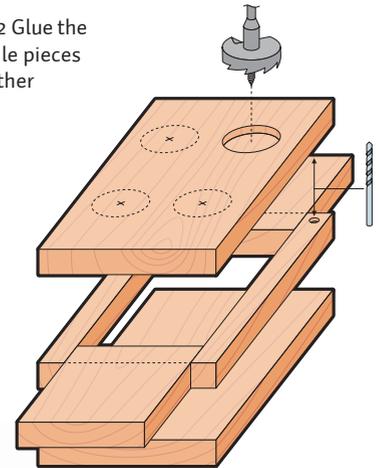
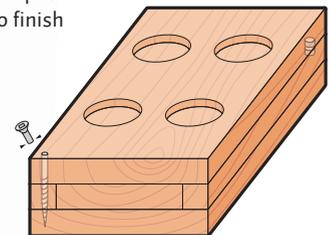


FIG. 3 Use two coats of paste wax to finish



Save the nicest piece of pine for the top.



What you'll need

- 2' 1x6 pine
- 2" #8 brass screw
- 2 rare earth magnets, ⅝"-dia
- Double-sided tape
- Epoxy
- Paste wax