

# WOODCARVING



## PURPOSE

This merit badge will aid in the development of God-given talents and generate a greater appreciation of the world that God has created.

## LEARNING

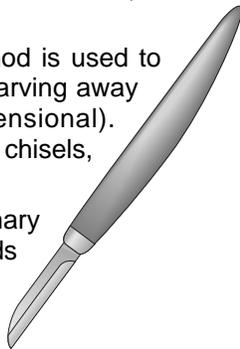
- The references to carving in the Bible are filled with warnings. God's people were warned time and again not to worship carved images, which were nothing more than powerless idols. That doesn't mean, however, that God's people were never to appreciate fine art in the form of painting, tapestry, and sculpture. We can see that God approved of excellence in art and architecture by the detailed instructions He gave for building the tabernacle and the temple, along with their accessories (see 1 Kings 6:18, 31–35).

It is interesting to note that the first person in the Bible that is described as being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a prophet or priest, but an artistic craftsman. It's Bezalel, whom God chose to craft and carve much of the materials connected with the tabernacle (Exodus 31:1–5).

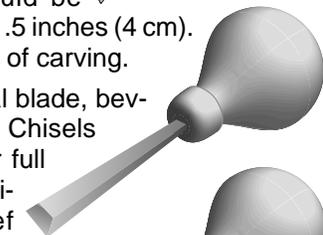
- Whittling (carving in the round)*— Using a sharp knife, the wood carver cuts three dimensional objects from a block of wood.
  - Chip carving*— Complex patterns are formed by arranging dozens of small triangular incisions with a sharp knife on a flat piece of wood (two dimensional).

- Relief carving* — This method is used to create a raised design by carving away the background (two dimensional). Tools used include gouges, chisels, mallets, and knives.

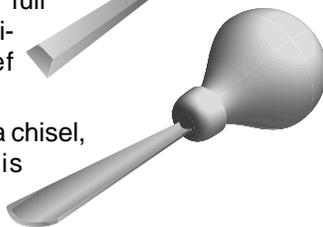
- Knife* — A knife is the primary tool in carving wood. It needs to be very sharp; the handle must be comfortable to hold; and the blade should be fairly short — about 1.5 inches (4 cm). It is used in all types of carving.



- Chisel*— A flat metal blade, beveled on both sides. Chisels can be palm size or full size. Chisels are typically used in relief carving.

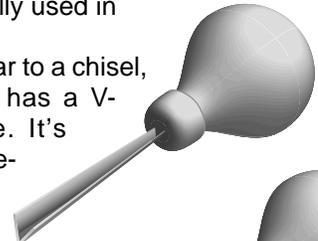


- Gouge*— Similar to a chisel, except the blade is curved instead of flat. It's used for making rounded

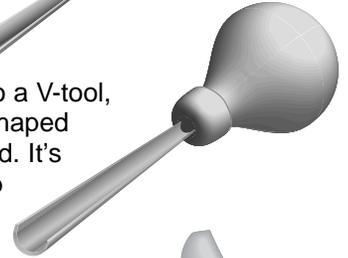


surfaces, either convex or concave. Gouges are also typically used in relief carving.

- V-tool*— Similar to a chisel, except that it has a V-shaped blade. It's used for fine detail work in relief carving.



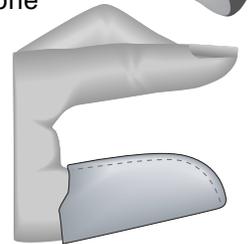
- Veiner*— Similar to a V-tool, except that it's U-shaped instead of V-shaped. It's used to make deep round cuts in the wood in relief carving.



- Carving glove*— A special glove made to protect your hand from a slip of the knife or other tool blade, especially while whittling (carving in the round). The carver needs one glove, to be worn on his non-carving hand.



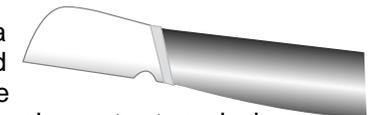
- Thumb guard*— Worn on the thumb of the carving hand, it saves wear and tear on the carver's thumb when using it to push the knife blade into the wood (especially important when whittling or carving in the round).



- Whittling/carving knife* — Useful for whittling, carving, chip carving, and cleaning up details in relief carving.



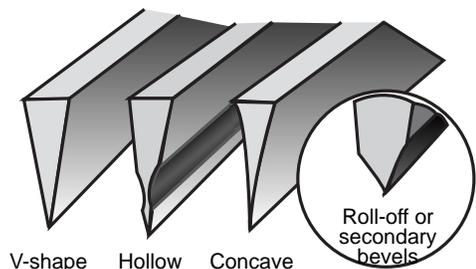
- Chip knife* — a straight-edged blade that must be kept razor sharp to make neat cuts and crisp clean lines.



- Skew point chip carving knife* — the sharp cutting edge is at the end. This knife would be used for fine detail work in chip carving.



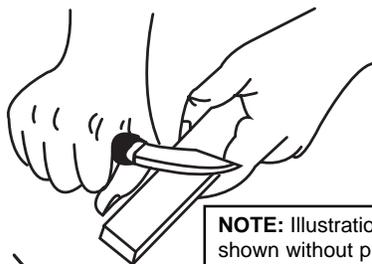
- Two other common types are hollow and concave. They are not for the novice, because their thin cross sections near the cutting edge make them too weak. An expert, however, can find them useful for very fine detail work.



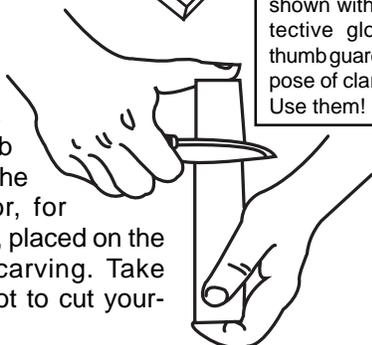
V-shape Hollow Concave

Roll-off or secondary bevels

6. a. *Forehand grip* — Used for rough cuts, it can carve away large amounts of wood. Hold your hand like a fist.



b. *Draw grip* — Pull the knife toward yourself with this grip. The thumb can be under the index finger or, for greater control, placed on the wood you're carving. Take special care not to cut yourself.

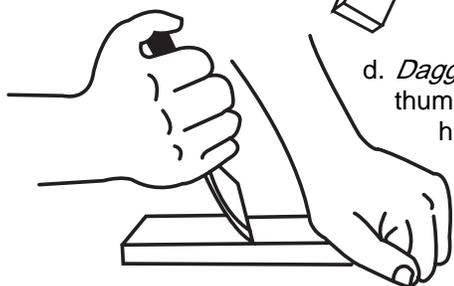


**NOTE:** Illustrations shown without protective glove and thumb guard for purpose of clarity only. Use them!

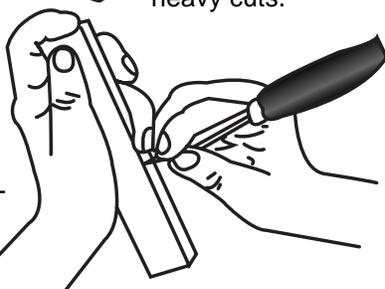
c. *Pointer grip* — Grip the handle with the blade pointing away, and use your thumb to push and provide control. Actually, you can use both thumbs to push the blade with this grip.



d. *Dagger grip* — Hold your thumb over the end of the handle, as if you're about to stab something with a dagger. This is used for deep heavy cuts.



e. *Pencil grip* — As the name implies, the knife is held like a pencil and used for fine detailing work. Use the index finger and push the back edge of the knife, cutting toward the body.



f. *Chip carving grip* — Place the first joint of the thumb at the blade end of the handle of the knife and wrap fingers around the handle. The knuckle of the index finger and the tip of the thumb should rest on the wood. The hand moves with the knife rather than pulling the knife toward the thumb.



7. Good carving wood can be either hardwood or softwood. You want to avoid wood that will split or chip easily or is spongy (like balsa) or sappy. Woods that check should receive a good protective sealer/finish before they dry out to protect the quality of your projects. The following is a partial list of good carving wood, arranged by approximate hardness:

a. *Hard*

Ash — easy to work with and can be bent to shape. Ash has a moderately open grain and good split resistance. Color ranges from grey-white to brown with red tints.

Beech — Odorless and excellent for carving utensils. It has high split resistance. Checks.

Birch — hard to damage. It works and burnishes well, and has high split resistance. The grain is moderate to close and it's creamy to light reddish-brown in color. Checks.

Mahogany — excellent to work with and carves easily. It has good split resistance, with a moderate grain. Colors vary with different varieties of mahogany.

Oak — excellent for durability. Types range from excellent for carving to easy to carve but not good for fine detail. It has good split resistance with pronounced grain pattern. Colors range from light grey to dark brown.

b. *Medium*

Alder — good to work with, easy to glue, and can be finished to resemble other woods. It has good split resistance with unobtrusive grain. Color from pale pink to brown.

Cottonwood — good for fine detail. Works easily and has unobtrusive and close grain. Color is grey-white to brown. Good split resistance.

c. *Soft*

Basswood — good for fine detail. Carves well and has good split resistance. Grain is unobtrusive and color is white to creamy brown.

Pine — excellent for carving. Has visible resin canals. Split resistance is low. Grain is indistinct and very close. Color is creamy-white to light red-brown.

## DOING

Items in this section should be self-explanatory.

For additional resources for this badge, check on the internet for woodcarving, woodcarving tools, woodcarving patterns, etc. Your local woodworking supply store has many different types of craft woods and tools, along with many patterns and books. Your local library should also have some books on woodcarving (or be able to locate them for you) if you choose not to purchase them.

Model car derby kits would be a good project for this badge (and would fit the requirement for 3.a. to carve an object designed by man).