



BAILEY'S ROUTER CLASS

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Hexagonal planter



Anthony Bailey creates a charming wooden planter to hide your plastic pots inside



THE PROJECT

This hexagonal wooden planter is a rather charming way to present your indoor plants. It not only looks good, can be made in a variety of sizes and suitable timbers but it incorporates a rather nifty jig and method for using your router table as an edge planer.

Now that spring is upon us you can show off all your plants to good effect and hide any of those unsightly plastic pots in the process!



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GMC/ANTHONY BAILEY

The router is still the most versatile power tool there is. Along with a vast range of cutters, jigs and gadgets – many of which you can make for yourself – it can help produce high-quality woodwork.

This series is intended to show you what the router can do, while assuming the reader has a general level of woodworking knowledge.

We hope to show you the aspects of each project that specifically involve the router and how this great bit of kit can expand your woodworking skills to produce great projects.

Each month we highlight the jigs, cutters and gadgets you need to get more from this incredible machine. Feel free to send us pictures of your routing endeavours, or post them on the WPP forum at:

www.woodworkersinstitute.com

THE JIG



1
In order to make a hexagonal structure you need to machine timber at an angle of 30°. A jig is required if you do this with a router on the table but first the fence requires packing out at the outfeed side to turn it into an edge planer. I used two thicknesses of veneer and double-sided tape to achieve this. Next with a long straight cutter and with the packed out, outfeed side level with the edge of the cutter, I successfully planed a board of maple. You can also straighten a crooked edge by machining the offending section and then re-running the entire edge



2
Having achieved the basic requirement you now need to making up a slanted jig using some 30° wedge shaped pieces with a thin board on the top surface



3
Pin the board on carefully so the wedges are firmly fixed in line with one another so there are no dips or bumps



4
Now fix a thicker strip of ply or MDF along the back of the jig. This will help hold it all together and make it possible to clamp it in place



5
The finished jig should look like this. We can now fit it to the router table

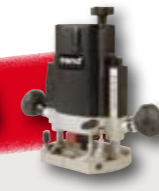


6
The jig needs to be clamped in place using clamps that do not stand up too high so they cannot interfere with the workpiece as it is pushed through

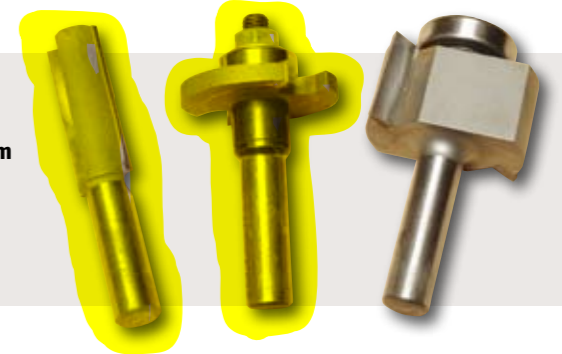


7
If you find the workpiece catches on the outfeed side use a knife or chisel to bevel the leading edge of the tape back

THE CUTTERS



Just three cutters are needed: a longish straight cutter, either 16 or 19mm dia, a 6mm groover mounted on an arbor and a large rebate cutter with a removable bearing in case you need to adjust the groove depth. All these cutters are on 1/2in shanks



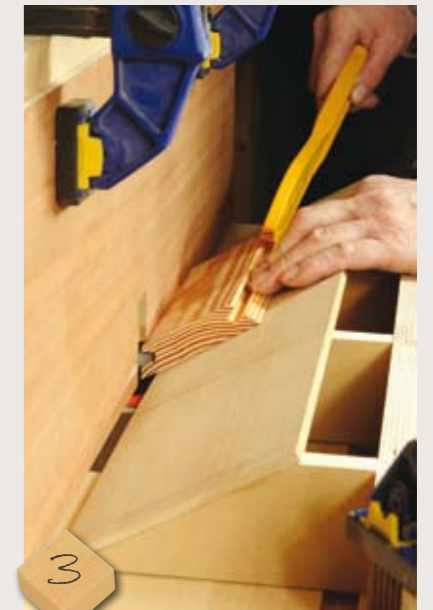
MAKING IT



1
I decided on the size of pot I wanted and cut the timber for the hexagon to width. Then the lengths were machined on the jig with the straight cutter fully raised so it can cut the entire width of each edge. The first cuts take away very little but it doesn't take long to reach a fully bevelled edge



2
A finished section which when measured was remarkably parallel. It now needs to be cut into finished lengths



3
Each section needs a slot to take a loose tongue. This is done with a 6mm groover on an arbor raised up sufficiently so the slot is close to the inside edge preventing the outer edge breaking off. The jig has been pulled away slightly so the edge of the bevel sits low down to assist the slot positioning. Note the outfeed packers have been removed



4
The bottom will also fit in a groove. Each component is run across the groover with the pushblock behind for safety



5
A dry fit using ply strips as loose tongues shows just how successful this machining procedure really is



6
The planter bottom blank is marked out by sitting the dry assembled planter on the board and drawing inside then marking an inner line that represents the amount of tongue required to fit in the grooves made in the side pieces



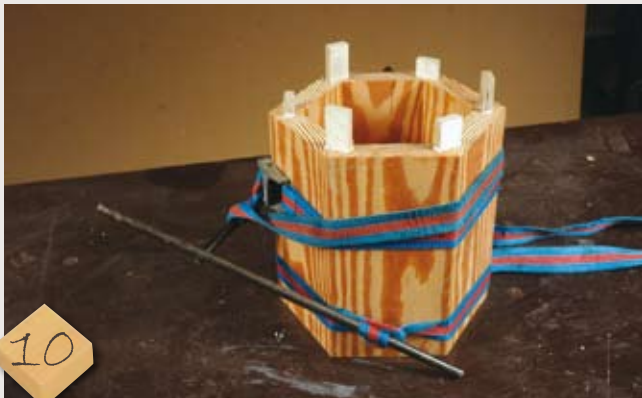
The bottom has its tongue formed using a rebate cutter and a breakthrough fence for safe, even working. Note the waste from cutting out the bottom is used as a perfect push piece



The finished bottom with a tongue formed all round. Check it fits the side grooves before assembly



The loose tongue position which stops short of fouling the planter bottom when inserted



An old technique but using modern luggage straps and spare fence rods – the Spanish windlass. This is necessary in order to persuade the glue to be exuded from the grooves. Wipe up surplus glue and leave to set



The loose tongues are trimmed off flush and the planter sanded to a finish all round ready for a varnish coat

Router torque

Q I use a lot of straight cutters in my work especially using manmade boards but it doesn't seem worth getting them resharpened because there aren't many saw doctors around these days and the cost is high. Is there a better alternative?

A For some years now it has been possible to buy replacement tip blades such as these ones from Wealden. The initial outlay is obviously higher but you get reversible blades with no less than four cutting edges on the square type and you can simply buy and fit new blades when the old ones dull. ■

Email your router questions to:
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Instead of resharpening cutters, it's possible to buy replacement tip blades