

## Using the Sun in Woodworking

Many of you know that the sun can bleach your wood if you leave it outside or in front of a window and in the case of cherry, it will even darken it and give it a nice rich tone. But did you know the sun can help you solve the problem of a warped board?

I am in the last stages of building a buffet to go as a set with a table and chairs that I made a little over a year ago. I was getting everything ready for finishing and I needed to take the maple drawer bottoms out of the drawers and do a final sanding. I did the sanding and without thinking I put them in a pile on my workbench to get them out of the way. All woodworkers know about moisture and wood movement...right? Putting freshly sanded boards in a pile is not the smartest thing to do....you probably guessed...the top board warped.



For beginner woodworkers who are reading this, you always need to consider moisture evaporation on newly cut or freshly sanded wood surfaces. When I stacked the boards in a pile, all the surfaces were covered except for the top surface of the top board. Therefore, it was open to the air and when some moisture evaporated it caused the board to warp. I should have covered the pile or put the pile of boards into a plastic bag to prevent this from happening.

So...what to do? I have a very good friend, Charles Neil, who is a professional woodworker here in Virginia. He has a huge bag a tricks and he said..."put it out in the sun for awhile and it will flatten out". So, that is what I did.



I put the board out in the sun for a couple hours with the convex side up facing towards the sun. The intent being that the sun will cause increased evaporation on the opposite side of the board and cause it to flatten out again. It works!



The board was in the sun for a couple of hours and it flattened right out. The picture shows the beveled side of the drawer bottom which is only about 1/4" thick. However, the board is actually 1/2" thick with the bevel going around 3 sides to fit into the drawer groove. The board is too thick to simply bend back into shape and I was concerned that if I forced it then it might twist the drawer out of shape. Using this tip I now have a drawer bottom that is flat again and ready for finishing.

There are many tips like this that you learn via experience, trial and error and listening to veteran woodworkers. I hope this little tip will help you out of a jam if you ever end up with a warped board.