

Router Know-how

Biscuit cutters

Last month **The Editor** looked at biscuit jointers in Power Woodworking. This month in Router Know-How he finds there is also a useful slot for biscuit cutters too

I am a diehard biscuit jointer enthusiast and there are plenty of reasons why. The low cost of consumables, ease of use, accuracy and versatility would cover it I suppose. Whether you own a biscuit jointer or not, the cheaper option of using a biscuit set with a router has a number of advantages which are well worth exploring.



All 4mm groovers: (top left) Wealden biscuit cutters; (centre top) Makita straight bit; (centre left) Trend; (middle) Makita; (front) Whiteside; (middle right) Wealden with bearing and spacers

Manufacturers and suppliers

Wealden www.wealdentool.com

Trend www.trend-uk.com

CMT www.cmttools.co.uk

Titman www.titman.co.uk

Makita www.makita.co.uk

Axcaliber www.axminster.co.uk

Whiteside www.routercutter.co.uk

Infinity www.infinitytools.co.uk

TYPICAL USES



1 Capable of machining three standard biscuit slot sizes



2 Machining slots for loose tongues



3 Working around tight curves



4 Creating decorative features especially if part of a groover set



5 Making shelf end slots



6 A 4mm straight cutter can create mid-panel slots



7 Slot cutters can be used to fit other more unusual biscuit components



8 Static biscuit slotting

TOP TIPS



1 Slot cutters are a much smaller diameter than a jointer cutter. This means making an elongated slot in order to create the right length of slot



3 It is difficult to see where the slots begin and end when machining. Fix a piece of clear plastic on the router base as you would for drilling with crosshairs, but in this case a start and stop line for the shank not the cutter to match your workpiece marks



5 Biscuit cutter sets can only do slots that aren't far from the router base such as carcass edges. For mid panel cuts use a 4mm straight cutter and a router T-square for guidance



7 To give better balance especially when making long slots, use an offset base with a knob to hold it down and give more control



2 To make marking out easier you can make a marking stick which shows not just the centre mark but also the end positions of the shank for visual reference as you can see the shank but not the cutter of course



4 It is critical that you do not unplug the router or the slots will get damaged. Make sure the plunge lock is firmly applied. A few routers allow you to lock the router positively at a fixed height – some fine adjusters can also do this for you



6 If you want to slot the face of a board at the end it isn't possible to balance a router on it. Make a simple L-jig and clamp the workpiece flush with the top edge before machining



8 Kitchen table joints are often biscuit jointed as well as using worktop bolts because it keeps the dogleg joint level. A standard biscuit jointer cannot get close to the dogleg but a router biscuit can do so easily