

Better Late Than Not At All...

In what's become a last-minute tradition for this column, here are a few last-minute gift suggestions for the woodworker on your Christmas list.

You can't go wrong with shop supplies or simple hand tools – abrasives for his or her sander, good screwdrivers, bit-sets, wood screws, wood glue, drill/driver bits... They're inexpensive, available almost anywhere and sure to be used.

Or, how about something safety-related? Woodworking isn't the safest of hobbies. Putting aside the obvious danger of slicing-off a finger or two, you can also lose your hearing or clog your lungs with sawdust – a known carcinogen. Good hearing protectors are available for less than \$50; a quality dust mask costs about the same. The trick, of course, is to make certain your giftee actually uses these well-intentioned gifts.

Moving up the ladder a rung or two, consider a new blade for his or her table or miter saw. Most table saws use 10-inch blades. So do many miter saws, but a smaller one might need an 8-inch blade while a bygone might require a 12-incher. Blades come in lots of different tooth configurations, some designed to cut quickly and aggressively, others for trimming the edges of boards so silky-smooth they (supposedly) can be glued-together into seamless panels without the need of a jointer. Get an all-purpose grind. A good one will outperform and outlast a cheaper one, so get the best you can afford.

A woodworker who doesn't have a random-orbit sander needs one. Typically, they run between \$60 and \$125. A good one will last for years and save hours of tedious hand-sanding. Or, how 'bout a circular saw? There's nothing better for cutting an awkward 4x8-foot sheet of plywood down to size. A new model from Festool comes with an attached guide-rail, so cross-cuts don't wander.

A good cordless drill makes a great gift. Look for one in the 9.6 to 14.4 volt range. Bigger isn't necessarily better when it comes to driving screws into wood, so resist the impulse to buy one of those mega-monster 30-plus volters.

So many gift ideas, so little space to mention them all... A saber-saw or jigsaw for cutting curves; great for crafts. A shop dust collector or maybe just a nice big whisk-broom and dustpan. Nice, close-fitting woodworking gloves; great for wintertime work in cold, drafty shops. Better yet, an electric workshop heater – but for safety's sake, no propane, please.

Sadly, that's all for now, but check next month's column for some revolutionary news about a new safety-engineered tablesaw that's catching-on fast.

Merry Christmas!

Counterfeit Products Pose Major Safety Hazards

Trademark counterfeiting has reached the electrical sector. Counterfeiters have targeted well-known industrial and consumer brands and registered certification marks of testing and certification laboratories. Counterfeit electrical products can pose significant safety hazards and left undetected, can cause deaths, injuries and substantial property loss in the home and the workplace, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI).

ESFI noted that the following tips could help avoid potentially dangerous counterfeit electrical products:

- Look for the CSA, UL or ETL-SEMKO Certification marks. If you have concerns about the marks, contact the certifier.
- Buyers should beware of bargains that seem too good to be true. Products may be cheap because they are counterfeit or defective.
- Use established vendors who purchase their goods from legitimate distributors and genuine manufacturers. Fly-by-night vendors may not be willing to grant refunds for electrical products that do not perform as they should.
- Check the warning label. It should be free of grammatical errors and not conflict with information elsewhere on the package.
- Look for the name and contact information of the manufacturer. If this information is missing, consider purchasing electrical products elsewhere.
- Avoid no-name products.

Kids' Corner Safety Poster

"Don't pull plugs out by the cord"



Ashley Strand, 9 years old

Ashley is the daughter of B.J. And Kevin Strand, Hermosa, S.D. They are members of Black Hills Electric Cooperative, Custer, S.D.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents.

Super Soups

Potato Cheese Soup

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 3 cups chopped potatoes | 1/4 tsp. salt |
| 1/2 cup sliced celery | 1 chicken bouillon cube |
| 1/2 cup sliced carrots | 1-1/2 cups milk |
| 1/4 cup chopped onion | 2 T. flour |
| 1 cup water or chicken broth | 1/2 lb. cubed Velveeta cheese |
| 1 tsp. parsley flakes | |

Combine vegetables, liquid, seasonings and bouillon cube; simmer 15 to 20 minutes until tender. Add milk, slowly, to flour until well blended. Add to hot vegetables. Cook and stir constantly until it boils and thickens. Add cheese and stir until melted.

Melanie Schelske, Virgil
Cooperative Connections

Corn Chowder

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2 cups diced potatoes | 2 cups milk |
| 1 medium onion, chopped | 1/8 tsp. pepper |
| 1/2 cup chopped celery | 1 tsp. salt |
| 1/2 cup chopped carrots | 2 cups cream-style corn |
| 1 cup boiling water | 6 to 8 slices bacon |

Combine first 5 ingredients and cook until potatoes are done, about 10 minutes. Add milk, pepper, salt and corn; heating an additional 15 minutes. Cook and crumble bacon and add before serving.

Patricia Dunnam, Hawarden, IA
Cooperative Connections

Buffalo Chili

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 3 lbs. ground buffalo | 1 (15 oz.) can red beans |
| 1 small onion, chopped | 1 (16 oz.) can black eye peas |
| 1 small green pepper, chopped | 1 (30 oz.) can chili beans |
| 1 pkg. Carroll Shelby's chili seasoning | 1 (28 oz.) can diced tomatoes |
| 1 (15 oz.) can black beans | 1 (10 oz.) can mild enchilada sauce |
| 1 (16 oz.) can refried beans | |

Brown buffalo; add onion and green pepper and continue to brown. Add remaining ingredients. Cook on low until heated through.

Connie Schumacher, Rapid City
Cooperative Connections

Pepperoni Pizza Soup

- 4 large Italian or sourdough rolls
- 1 T. olive oil
- 2 T. shredded parmesan cheese
- 1 (14-1/2 oz.) can chunky pasta-style stewed tomatoes
- 1 (14-1/2 oz.) can chicken broth
- 2 cups sliced zucchini, 1/2-inch thick
- 1 large red bell pepper, cut into 3/4-inch pieces
- 1 (2-1/4 oz.) can sliced black olives, drained
- 2 oz. thinly sliced pepperoni
- 1-1/2 cups shredded pizza blend cheese

Hollow out rolls, leaving 1/2-inch shell. Brush with oil; sprinkle with parmesan cheese. Place on baking sheet. Bake at 400°F. for 6 minutes or until golden brown. Combine tomatoes, chicken broth, zucchini and bell pepper in large saucepan. Heat to a boil; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, 5 minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender. Stir in olives and pepperoni. Simmer 1 minute. Ladle soup into four bread bowls; sprinkle evenly with pizza blend cheese.

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Eight-can Soup

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 can Hormel turkey chili with beans | 1 can corn |
| 1 can Hormel turkey chili without beans | 1 can kidney beans |
| 1 can old-fashioned vegetable soup | 1 can veg-all |
| | 1 can diced potatoes |
| | 1 can diced tomatoes with green chilis |

Combine all ingredients in crockpot; cook on low 6 to 8 hours.

Sylvia Ladenburger, Caputa
Cooperative Connections

Cream of Cauliflower or Broccoli Soup

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 head cauliflower or broccoli, steamed and mashed | 16 oz. canned chicken broth |
| 2 cups milk | 1 slice onion |
| | 1 small jar Cheese Whiz |

Combine all ingredients. Heat in microwave or saucepan to serving temperature, stirring until smooth. Variation: For a thicker soup, start with 6 T. melted butter and 6 T. flour. Blend together, then add rest of ingredients.

Marla Gilbert, Corsica
Cooperative Connections

Please send your favorite seafood recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2007. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

