Project 10297EZ:
Small Colonial Bench

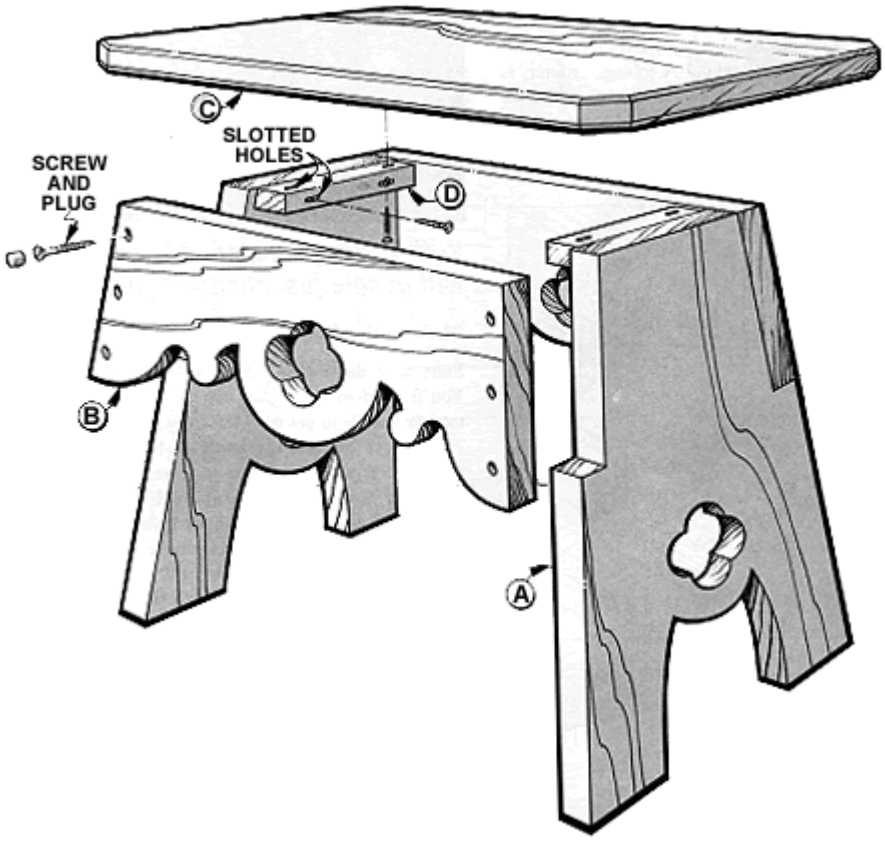
A sturdy bench was a commodity much valued in the American colonies. It provided a welcome place to rest weary legs after a long day of hard work. Most early homes enjoyed several benches.

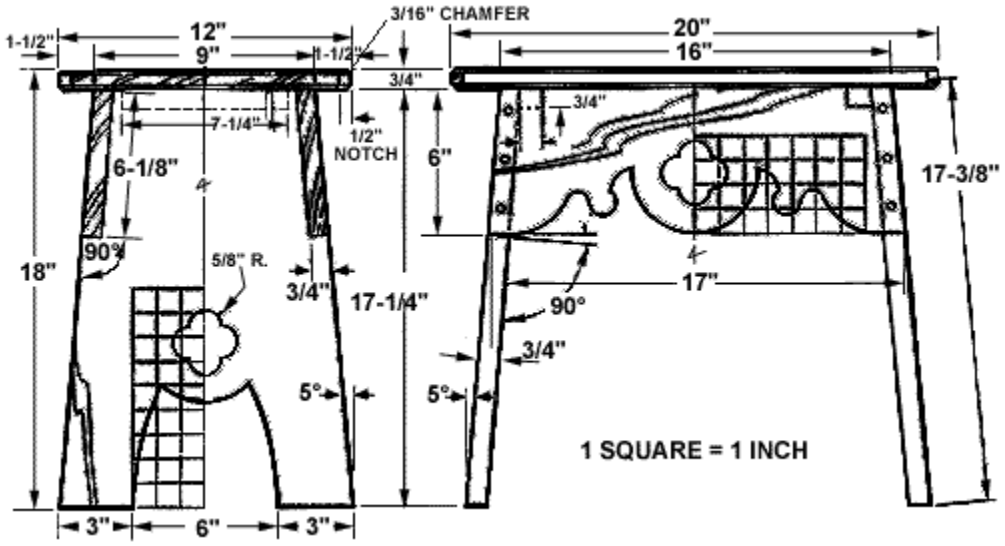
Back then, country cabinetmakers found benches quick and easy to make, which probably explains a good deal of their popularity. Well, not much has changed in the last 250 years or so. Today, a bench like this can still be made with a minimum of time and effort. And while it may not be as comfortable as your favorite reading chair, it offers optional service as a plant stand or portable table.

Colonial Bench Materials List

Part	Description	Size	Number Required
A	Leg	3/4" x 12" x 17-3/8"	2
B	Apron	3/4" x 6-1/8" x 17"	2
C	Top	3/4" x 12" x 20"	1
D	Cleat	3/4" x 1" x 7-1/4"	2

Colonial Bench Complete Schematic





Colonial Bench Instructions

Step 1: Make the Legs (A)

1. Cut a couple of narrow boards that when edge-glued together will achieve a width slightly longer than 12" and a length slightly longer than 17-3/8".
2. Apply a thin coat of glue to the mating edges.
3. Use three or four pipe clamps to apply pressure.
4. Allow the glue to dry.
5. Remove the clamps.
6. Use a sharp chisel or scraper to clean up any glue squeeze-out.
7. Set the table saw blade to make a 5-degree cut for the bevels on the legs (A).
8. Use the miter gauge to support the stock as it’s passed over the blade.
9. Make the cut on one end.
10. Flip the stock over and turn it end for end
11. Cut the stock to 17-3/8" length.
12. Lay out and mark the taper — 9" width at the top, 12" width at the bottom — on each leg (A).
13. Use a band saw to cut just slightly on the outside of the marked lines.
14. Use a sharp hand plane to trim the sawn edge exactly to the line.
15. Cut the two notches in each leg (A) that accept the aprons (B).
16. Lay out and mark the location of each notch, keeping in mind that the bottom edge of the notch is angled at 90 degrees when viewed from the end, but when viewed from the front it is angled at 5 degrees (see schematic).
17. Use the band saw, with its table angled at 5 degrees, to make the 3/8" deep cut.
18. Use the table flat to make the lengthwise cut to complete the notch.
19. Transfer the grid pattern for two “feet” on each leg (A) from the end view of the schematic to the stock.
20. Use the band saw to cut out the “feet”.
21. Smooth the sawn edge of the “feet” with a file and sandpaper.

Step 2: Make the Aprons (B)

1. Cut the stock for the two aprons (B) so that each one is wider and longer than needed.
2. Angle the table saw blade at 5 degrees.
3. Use the rip fence to cut the bevel along the top edge of each apron (B).
4. Set the table saw blade to 90 degrees.
5. Set the miter gauge to 5 degrees.
6. Cut the aprons to a 17" length.
7. Transfer the grid pattern from the front view of the schematic to the apron stock.
8. **NOTE** that the curve starts 6" from the top edge.
9. Use the band saw to make the curved cuts.
10. File and sand the curved cuts smooth.

Step 3: Cut the Cloverleafs for the Legs (A) and Aprons (B)

1. Get a saber saw or a 1-1/4" dia. Forstner bit to make the cloverleafs in the legs (A) and aprons (B).
2. Drill the cloverleaf in both the aprons (B) and the legs (C).

Step 4: Make the Top (C)

1. Use the same procedure provided in Step 1, sub-steps 1-7, to cut and edge-glue stock for the top (C).
2. Trim the stock for the top (C) to final length and width.
3. Use the miter gauge set at 45 degrees to cut the notch on each corner.
4. Use the router and a 3/16" bearing guided chamfering bit to cut the chamfer all around the top and bottom edges.

Step 5: Make the Cleats (D)

1. Rip one edge of each cleat (D) to 5 degrees so that the cleats will butt up against the inside of each leg (A) while leaving a flat surface on which to fasten the top (C).
2. Cut the cleats (D) to length. **NOTE: The ends of the cleats DO NOT butt up against the inside of the aprons (B), and are thus cut slightly shorter on each end to allow for any shrinkage in the width of the legs.**
3. Cut the slotted holes in the cleats. **NOTE: Again, the holes are slotted to allow for any shrinkage in the width of the legs.**

Step 6: Sand, Assemble, and Finish

1. Final sand all parts, finishing with 220-grit sandpaper.
2. Use glue and 1-1/2" long x #10 wood screws countersunk to a depth of 1/4" to join the aprons (B) to the legs (A).
3. Glue the plugs in place and sand them flush with the surface.
4. Screw the cleat to the leg with 1-1/2" long x #10 flathead wood screws. **NOTE: DO NOT use glue on this joint, as the legs and top must be able to expand and contract with changes in moisture content.**
5. Secure the top with 1-1/4" long x #10 screws. **NOTE: DO NOT use glue on this joint, as the legs and top must be able to expand and contract with changes in moisture content.**
6. Apply two coats of walnut or other stain, followed by three coats of penetrating oil, to finish.
7. Complete the project with a light rubdown with 0000 grade steel wool.

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