



Carving Care

As the proud owner of a piece of chainsaw art, there are a few things you can do to keep it looking good for years to come.

Cracking.

Chainsaw sculptures are, for the most part, carved from whole diameter logs rather than a slice of a log. It's the nature of a log to check or crack as it dries. What's that mean to you as the owner of a chainsaw carving? Well... it means your carving is going to crack, It's just part of the natural process. I do my best to make sure a crack will not form across the front of the carving, but its not a guarantee that one will not show up someday. Small checks will happen just about anywhere, but generally do not take away from the carving at all.

Displaying your carving.

Your carving is wood. Wood can split, crack, rot, fade, burn and/or be attacked by insects. Putting a little thought into where and how it's displayed can help your carving to last years longer.

Do not set your carving directly onto soil or grass. A pad of concrete, gravel or paving stones is better and will help protect the base from water and insect damage. Its also best to leave at least a 1/2in gap between the ground and the base of the carving to allow for air flow.

If your going to keep your carving indoors, household heat will dry the wood quickly which causes additional cracking. Keep the carving as far from direct heat such as baseboard heaters, fireplace/wood stove, and heat vents as possible. Avoid these when possible. Indoor carvings will not need to be refinished except to color in the cracks and checks that show up...if you want to. If you do move a carving that has been kept inside to the outdoors, you should apply a fresh finish to it first.

Rain is not much of a problem for a properly maintained carving. However, frequent drenching with water [irrigation, etc] increases the likelihood of water damage so try to display your carving beyond the reach of your lawn sprinklers. Keeping it properly maintained [described below] is very important for any location, but more so if not in an ideal one

Maintaining the finish.

Your carving is finished with **“Ready Seal” (Natural/Light Oak)**, an oil based, semi transparent sealer and stain. Its a unique blend of resin, pigment, oil and algacide that penetrates deeply into wood to protect and preserve it from the elements. It is available from Home Depot, but only on-line, it is also available from some small paint stores,. You can find them if go on the Ready Seal website and search for a dealer near you. I order it from Amazon, where the shipping is free.

The parts of the carving that are a natural wood color (the base and the snout of a bear for example) are finished with Spar-Urethane (not indoor polyurethane), which you can get from Home Depot, Lowes, hardware stores, and paint stores.

I recommend that any carving displayed outdoors be re-sealed with the same finish that your carving had applied when you bought it each spring or fall, or when you see the color starting to fade and water is no longer beading. Recoat the parts that have Spar urethane on them as well, or at least when you see signs of the finish failing.

Another option is to use Spar-Urthane on the whole carving. If you choose to go that route, wait about a year for the carving to dry out before you apply it. Most of the wood I carve is still fairly wet, and if Spar is used too soon, the wood will not be able to breath and mold could grow under the finish, turning the carving black. If you want to spruce up the color a bit, be sure to stain it before you put Spar on it...once it is coated with Spar, stain will no longer absorb into the wood. Recoat with Spar Urethane every year, or when you see the finish starting to fail.

*Whichever path you choose, it is very important to remember to seal the bottom of the carving as well with Spar Urethane every time you do maintenance on it.

If and when cracks show up on your carving, you can use either a similar color stain (ebony for bears) or paint to make the newly exposed wood the same color as the rest of the carving. In general, just adding that color will make the crack visually disappear, and the crack becomes just part of the carvings personality. Larger cracks, and or ones across the face that take away from the looks of the carving can be easily repaired, feel free to contact if one shows up.

Bugs and Mold/Mildew

Mold, mildew and fungus should not be much of an issue as long as the finish is maintained. If any of those show up, the carving is probably in a wet area and can not dry properly. It should be moved to a dryer location (wet wood rots fast). Bugs such as termites and carpenter ants also should not be a problem as long as the base of the carving is kept off the ground, and the carving is not in a damp location. If your carving does get infested, treat the bugs the carving with the appropriate pesticide and relocate it. Carpenter bees are not often an issue, but they can show up. An infestation of them will not be caused by the location of the carving, but bad luck. These too will have to be treated with pesticide. If there are lots of holes, they can be plugged up fairly easily and stained to match.

If you have any questions about the carving (refinishing, pests, cracks, etc), or want me to refinish your carving, feel free to contact me anytime.

Thanks again!

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Quick Tips

- **Keep your carving off the ground. Leave a small gap between the base and the ground using small sticks or flat rocks to allow air flow**
- **Carvings rot from the bottom up, protecting the base is very important to its longevity**
- **Refinish every year with the appropriate finish....don't forget to coat the bottom as well**
- **Do not place your carving in a damp location and where a lawn sprinkler will be spraying it often**
- **Avoid putting your carving where it will get all day sun...some shade is good.**
- **Spring and Fall is the best time to refinish if needed, and to check to make sure the base is still above the ground, clear away any debris around it, and to check for any bugs or mold.**
- **And the most important thing....put it where you will see it and can enjoy it.**