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ScrollSaw Woodworking & Crafts
Judy Gale Roberts ®

Claus the Christmas Puppy

This in-the-round
intarsia puppy is
adorable from head
to tail

By Judy Gale Roberts

Start the holidays off right with this Christmas puppy intarsia project. This adorable pup peeks out of its doghouse to offer warm greetings to all.

Intarsia projects are always fun and unique, not only because they use different colors of wood to “paint” a picture but also because they create the illusion of depth. Areas of a project that are farthest from the viewer are the thinnest; parts that are supposed to be the closest are progressively thicker as they “move” toward the viewer. This doghouse takes dimension one step further by making the doghouse itself 3-D.

Getting Started

Make at least five copies of the pattern. Keep one pattern as the master copy, and cut the four extra patterns into individual pieces to glue onto different colors of wood.



Make sure the wood is as flat, smooth, and dust-free as possible. Lay out the pattern pieces on the different types of wood. To glue patterns to wood, I use a Xyron Creative Station 9" with repositionable adhesive. This is a sticker-making machine often used for scrapbooking. It turns all of my patterns into stickers that are easy to apply to wood, peel off easily, and do not leave residue on the wood. If you prefer, glue the patterns to the wood with a repositionable glue stick or adhesive spray.

PUPPY: CUTTING THE PIECES



1

Cut the pieces. Use a #3 or #5 skip reverse tooth blade. As you cut, organize the pieces and mark the backs. Leave the patterns on the wood. Use a small blade (from a #1 to a #2/0) to cut the slats on the doghouse and to separate the nose section from the face. I cut the 45° angle for the roof on the scroll saw by tilting the table, but you could cut it on a miter saw. Sand off any fuzzies on the back of each piece.



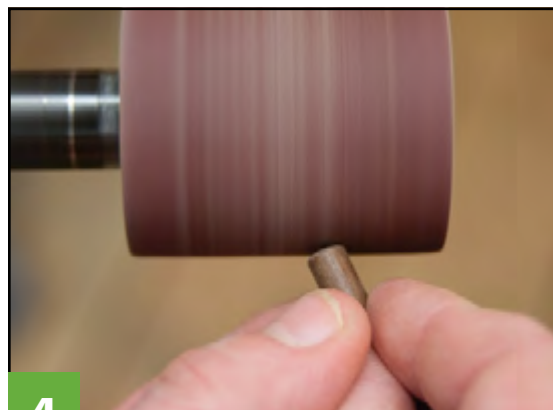
2

Check the fit of the pieces. Use a small square to check the edges, and then fit the pieces together. If the pieces do not fit, the pattern line is probably too heavy. Trim these areas with a sharp blade, rather than sanding them to the line; sanding each piece can make everything out of square. When all of the pieces fit together well, be sure the backs are marked and then remove the patterns.



3

Cut shims. Cut shims from $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) and $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) plywood or tempered hardboard (tempered on both sides). I used a $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) shim to raise the dog's face. The rest are $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm). Use light-duty double-sided carpet tape to stick the shims on the backs of the pieces. *Note: Do not glue the shims in place yet; you may need to adjust them. You will glue them into place after you apply the finish.*



4

Make the eyes. Mark the thickness of the wood around the eyes on the side of a walnut dowel. Sand the dowel, rounding the surface down to the pencil line. I used a Wonder Wheel to burnish the surface of the dowel. The wheel burns and puts a sheen on the surface. Cut off the piece and repeat for the second eye.

PUPPY: SHAPING THE PIECES



5

Mark and sand the doghouse background.

Use a soft Flex Drum sander with an 80-grit sleeve to sand the doghouse background pieces in the front view down to $\frac{3}{8}$ " (10mm) thick. Mark the thickness of the background pieces onto the dog pieces. Repeat the process for the back view.



6

Rough-shape the back of the head. Sand $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) off the top of both ears. Mark the ear thickness on the sides of the head. Sand $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) off the top of the back of the head, and round the sides to the ears. Mark the head thickness on the hat trim. Sand the fur trim until it is $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) thicker than the hat, and round the edges to match the contour of the hat.



7

Shape the dog's body. Use the Flex Drum sander and 80-grit sleeve to sand at least $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) off the top of the body piece. Then, round the sides down toward the outside edges. Mark the final thickness of this piece onto the surrounding pieces.



8

Sand the face and hat. Attach the two parts of the upper face to the shim so you can sand the section as one unit. Sand about $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) from the top of the assembly, and then round the sides. Round the sides of the hat, and sand it at least $\frac{1}{16}$ " (2mm) thinner than the fur trim and pom-pom. Do not sand the hat down below the thickness of the doghouse sides.



9

Shape the rest of the dog. Sand the inner ears below the thickness of the face. Sand the fur trim to just thicker than the hat, and sand dips into the rim above the ears to imply the hat is wrinkled. Taper the roots of the ears to match the contour of the face. Taper the top of the outer ears back so it looks like they are folded over, but keep the ears thicker than the house. Round the pom-pom.



10

Detail the mouth. To define the mouth, lower the chin area. Use a round-tip hobby knife to take $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) off where the chin joins the tongue. Sand to blend the chin into the surface of the mouth area. Mark where the chin joins the tongue, and taper the tongue below the upper lip. The tip will be the thickest part of the tongue.



11

Polish the pieces. Taper the feet to match the contour of the body. When you are satisfied with the shapes of the pieces, use a 120-grit sleeve to sand the pieces with the grain, followed by 180- and 220-grit sleeves. When you are finished, hand-sand each piece with 220-grit sandpaper. Check for scratches and pencil marks. Dust the pieces with compressed air, and check that they are smooth.



12

Detail the paws and tongue. Use a Wonder Wheel or a rotary tool and refer to the dashed lines on the patterns to carve a groove down the center of the tongue and to carve grooves to define the toes. Use sandpaper or a small inflatable sander to remove any burn marks.



13

Shape the slats. Round each slat piece to emphasize the separations between them. Round the edges around the opening. Then, round the outside edges of the base and the two roof sections.

TIP

DOWEL CLAMP

A student of mine gave me this handy clamp to hold dowels; it makes it so much easier to drill. He bought the clamps and cut the "V" at a 45° angle, which makes a square for the dowel to go in when clamps are put together.



14

Make highlights for the eyes. Use a pencil sharpener on the end of a piece of aspen to make a perfect cone shape. For each highlight, drill a 1/16" (2mm)-diameter hole in the eye dowel. Cut the tip off the aspen cone, and glue it in place with a dab of woodworker's glue. When dry, use a small inflatable drum sander to sand the aspen flush with the rest of the eye. Try not to sand the eye too much; if walnut dust gets in the pores of the aspen, it's almost impossible to remove.

PUPPY: FINISHING & ASSEMBLING THE PROJECT



15

Apply the finish. Apply masking tape to the parts that will be glued together, like the underside of the rooftop pieces and the top center of the base. Then, use a foam brush to apply three coats of a polyurethane gel finish. The first should be heavy and allowed to dry overnight; the second and third can be lighter and applied 6 to 8 hours apart. While applying the finish, wait a minute before using a paper towel to wipe away excess gel. With a second paper towel, buff the piece completely dry. Don't overuse a paper towel or it will leave some lint.



16

Glue the raising shims to the pieces. I use tacky glue, because takes a little longer to set (10 to 15 minutes), which gives me time to adjust the pieces.



17

Glue the back of the

doghouse. Apply a few dots of glue to each piece; if you apply too much, it should wipe off easily. Glue the two outside slats first, lining them up with the flat bottom and the angled top. Use paper to space the slats evenly. Glue the dog pieces to the back, and let the back dry thoroughly.



18

Glue the front side.

Using the technique in Step 17, glue the two outside pieces first. Glue together the remaining slats, and then glue the dog parts in place. Let the glue set before gluing the rest of the parts. Glue the house to the base, and then glue the roof to the house. To glue the roof, tape two roof parts together, and then glue along the angled edge. Check to make sure the overhang is evenly spaced from the front to the back.

PUPPY: CUTTING & ATTACHING THE SIGN

If you would like to add the optional sign hanging on the doghouse, cut two sections of 1/8" (3mm) Baltic birch or any light-color plywood. Apply finish to the outward-facing sides of the wood before you cut the fretwork.



19

Cut the sign. Stack the blanks using double-sided tape. Drill the blade-entry holes for the letters and leaves. I use a 1/16" (2mm) bit to drill the holly berries, as well. Cut the letters and holly leaves, and then cut the perimeter of the sign.



20

Assemble the sign. Lay red and green acetate on top of the lettering and leaves. Mark and cut the pieces, and glue them in place with dabs of tacky glue. Then, apply glue to the edges of the plywood. I used craft sticks and small clamps to hold the two pieces together until the glue dried. To attach the sign, drill a small hole in the center of the sign and use a small straight pin to hang it on the front of the doghouse.

Materials & Tools

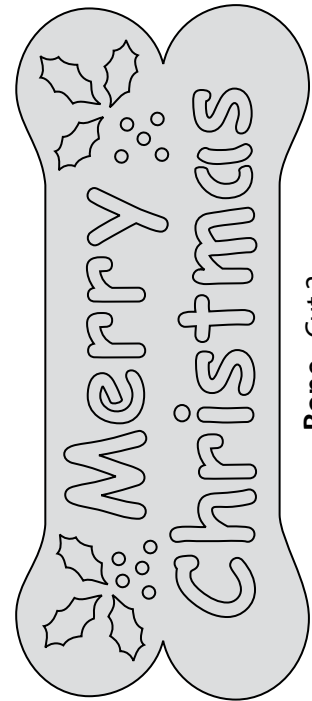
Materials:

- Dark wood, such as dark western red cedar or walnut, $\frac{3}{4}$ " (19mm) thick: 4" x 4" (102mm x 102mm)
- Medium-dark wood, such as western red cedar, mahogany, or cherry, $\frac{3}{4}$ " (19mm) thick: 6" x 3" (152mm x 76mm)
- Medium-dark wood, such as western red cedar, mahogany, or cherry, $\frac{1}{2}$ " (13mm) thick: 6" x 9" (152mm x 229mm)
- Medium wood, such as western red cedar, pecan, or red oak, $\frac{3}{4}$ " (19mm) thick: at least 6" x 22" (152mm x 558mm)
- White wood, such as aspen, white pine, or holly, $\frac{3}{4}$ " (19mm) thick: 6" x 6" (152mm x 152mm); eye highlights, $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) dia. x 8" (203mm) long
- Red wood, such as red heart, blood wood, or aromatic cedar, $\frac{3}{4}$ " (19mm) thick: 3" x 4" (76mm x 102mm)
- Walnut dowel, $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) dia.: eyes, scraps
- Plywood or tempered hardboard, $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) and $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) thick: scraps for shims
- Adhesive: Glue stick, spray adhesive, or a Xyron Sticker Maker
- Finish, such as polyurethane gel

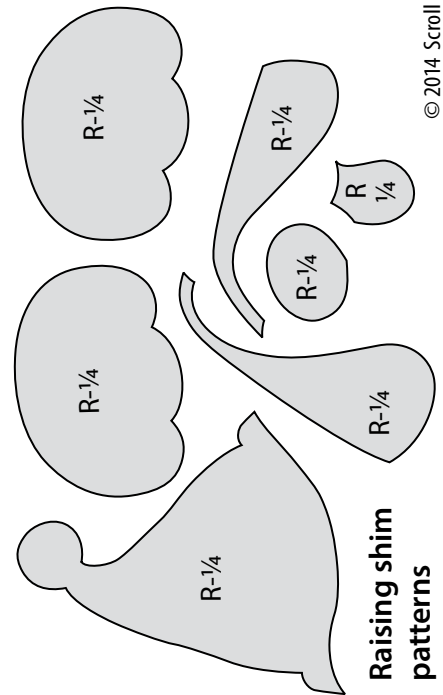
- Glue: tacky, wood
 - Tape: double-sided light-traffic carpet, masking tape
 - Sandpaper: 220 grit
- #### Optional Sign
- Baltic birch or any light-color plywood, $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) thick: 4" x 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (102mm x 44mm)
 - Acetate sheets: red, green (available at art and craft supply stores)
 - Pin
- #### Tools:
- Blades: #3 or #5 skip reverse tooth, #5, #1, #0, #2/0
 - Pencil sharpener
 - Small inflatable sander
 - Drill with $\frac{1}{16}$ " (2mm) drill bit
 - Flex drum sander with 80-, 120-, 180-, 220-grit sleeves
 - Air compressor or canned air
 - Wonder wheel or rotary tool
 - Hobby knife with round tip
 - Foam brush: 1" wide

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.

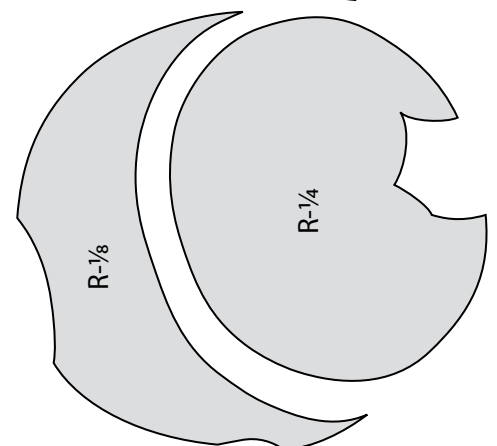
Intarsia puppy patterns



Bone - Cut 2
 $\frac{1}{8}$ "-thick wood



Raising shim
patterns

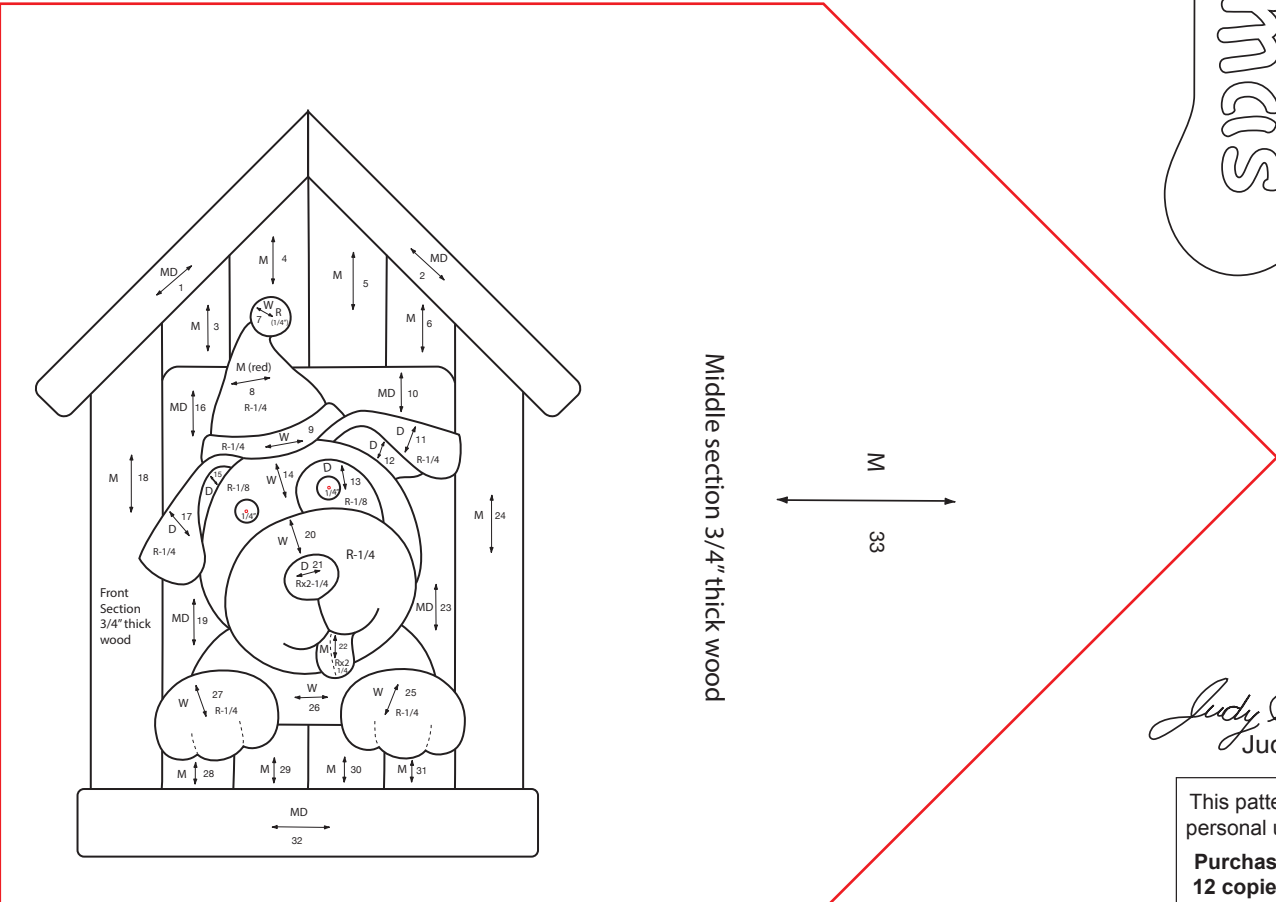
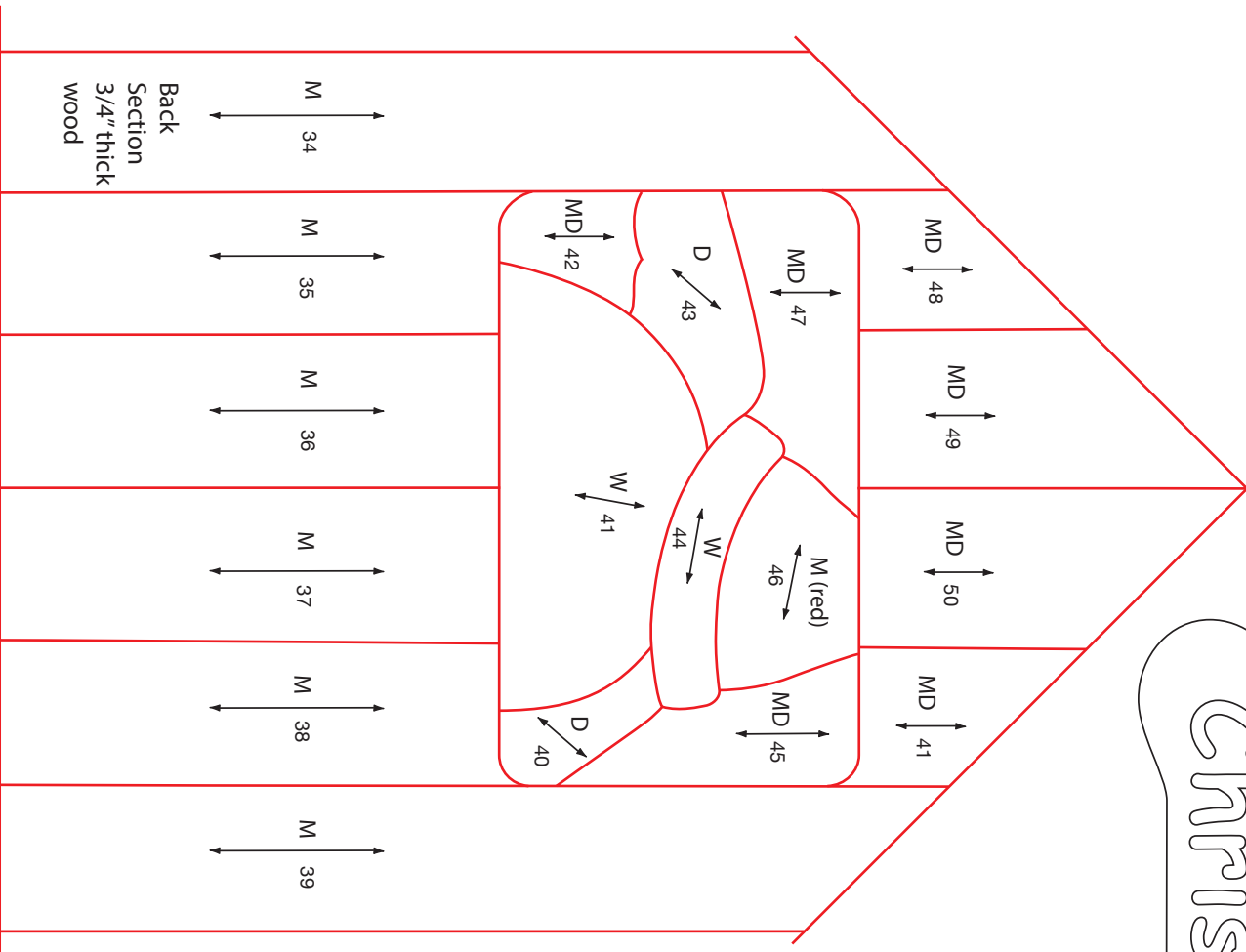
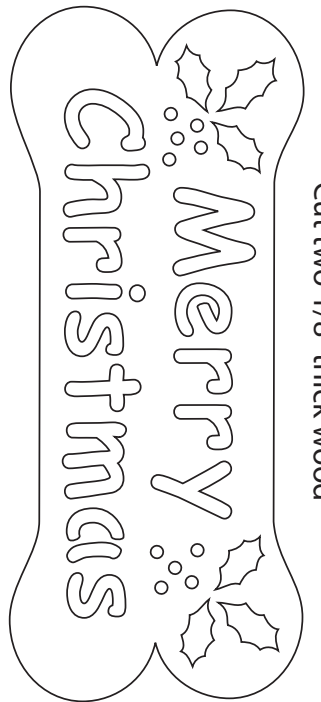


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Judy Gale Roberts has long been recognized as the leading authority on intarsia. Judy was one of the first 10 people to be inducted into the Woodworking Hall of Fame. For more of her work or information on classes held at her studio in Seymour, Tenn., contact Judy at 800-316-9010, or visit www.intarsia.com. Judy's numerous intarsia books are available at www.foxchapelpublishing.com.

Cut two 1/8" thick wood



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