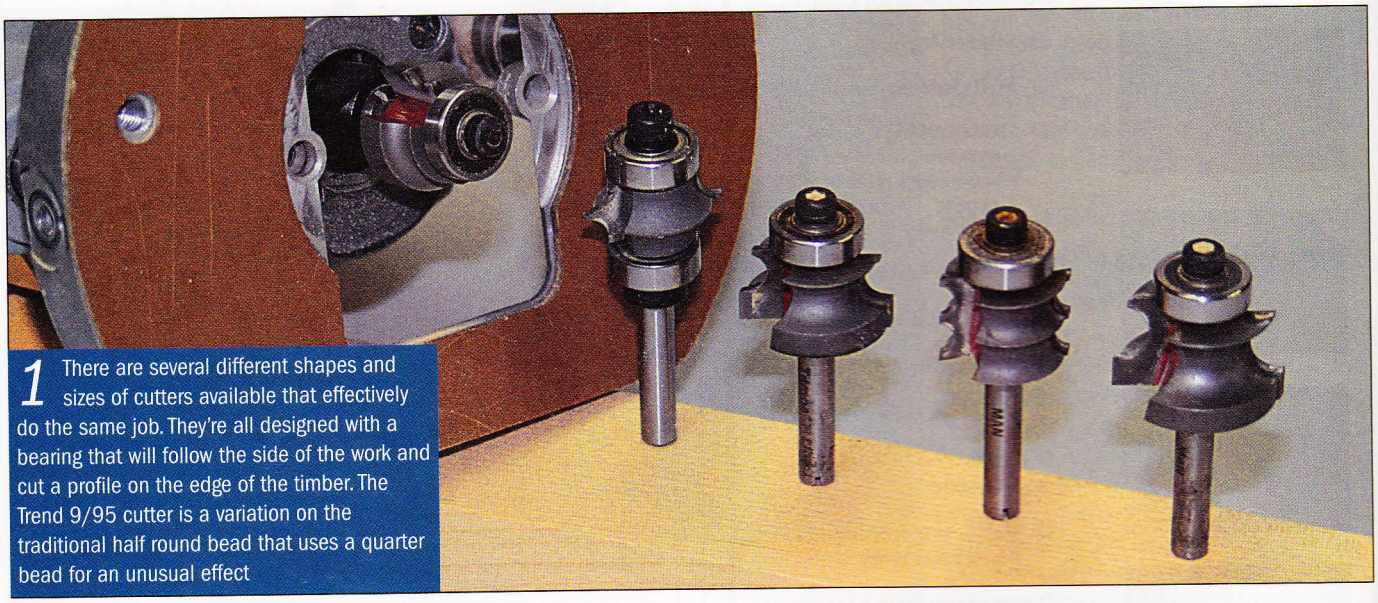


1 There are several different shapes and sizes of cutters available that effectively do the same job. They're all designed with a bearing that will follow the side of the work and cut a profile on the edge of the timber. The Trend 9/95 cutter is a variation on the traditional half round bead that uses a quarter bead for an unusual effect

Cutting beads and reeds

BY PETER DUNSMORE

These versatile router cutters are capable of producing a wide variety of effects. Predominantly they're used to profile the edge of a piece of timber which then forms a decorative part on a piece of furniture. The easiest type to use, as described here, is the bearing-guided type, as it's much easier to allow the bearing to follow the workpiece, although similar cutters are available without a bearing. These are best fitted to the router in a router table and used with the fence acting as a guide for the timber

As can be seen in the photographs above and opposite, the profile of the cutters varies in both in size and shape, although the basic principle in their use is the same. The cutter is fitted to the router and the depth of cut is set as required.

One point worth mentioning at this stage is that it is not advisable to use the fine height adjuster for this type of work. I prefer to set the depth of cut and then use the depth stop on the router.

A cunning plan

The idea here is that the router can be plunged to the preset depth of cut while held slightly away from the work. It can then be switched on and pushed against the work to mould the edge. At the end of the cut the router should be pulled sideways, away from the workpiece, and the locking handle fitted to the router should be released so the cutter can be lifted safely out of harm's way.

If the fine height adjuster is used to set the depth of cut, then the cutter will be left protruding from the router base and there will always be the temptation to place the router, with the cutter possibly still spinning, onto the workbench or other surface. That way serious damage lies!

Avoid releasing the locking handle with the cutter still turning and against the work piece, as this will simply pull the cutter up and through the moulding and ruin the desired effect.

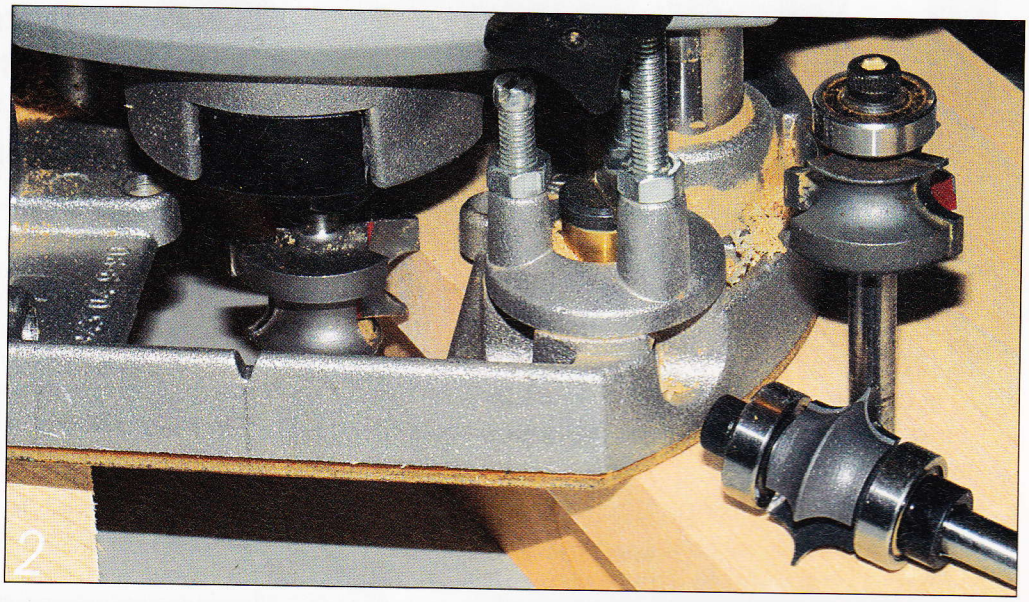
Cutting corners

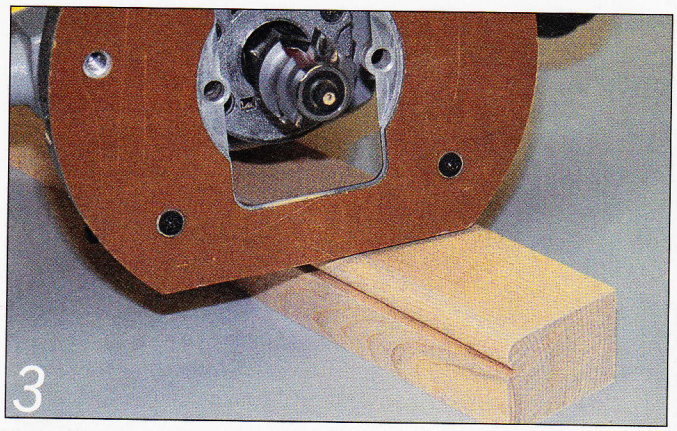
In the example shown in the following photographs, I've taken the moulding a step further. Instead of using the cutter on one face only and thus producing a decorative bead on the edge of the wood, I've made a second pass at 90° on the adjoining face. As can be seen, this gives the effect of a bead accurately fitted along the edge of a piece of timber.

This is an effective way of rounding the corner of a square piece of timber and at the same time making a feature of it. The success of this depends on the correct selection of the depth of cut, and this should be carefully set at the outset. Obviously it is sensible to make a test cut on a scrap piece of timber first.

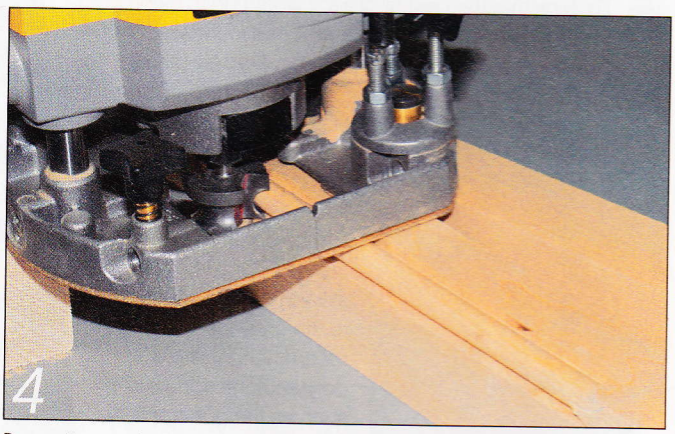
FURTHER INFORMATION
- Trend Machinery
- 0800 487363
- www.trendmachinery.co.uk

The secret to a successful cut is to set the depth of cut accurately and to avoid producing a small quirk (unless this is desired). As can be seen, the top of the cutter is positioned to just touch the surface of the wood. The depth stop is then set on the router. Although the fine height adjuster can be used, I prefer to use the depth stop as the cutter can easily be withdrawn out of harm's way at the conclusion of the cut

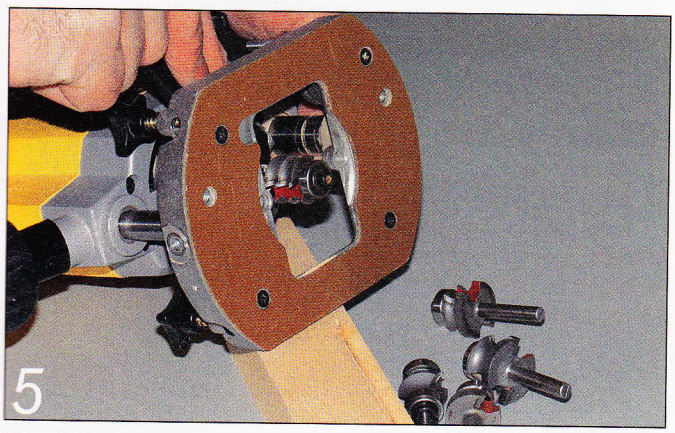

2


3

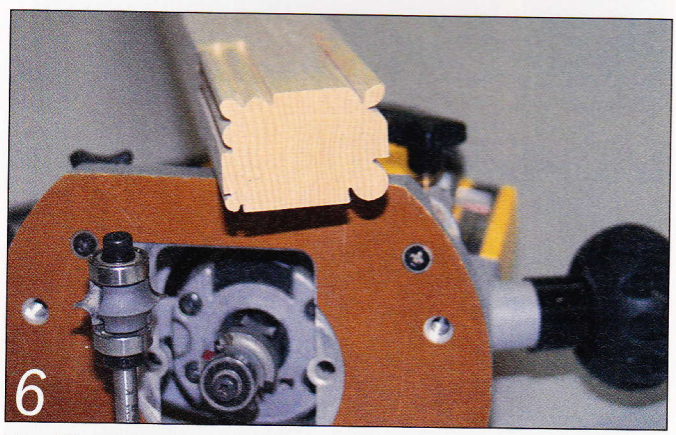
Plunge the cutter and use the locking handle on the router to secure this in position before making the cut. Profile the edge of the timber, working from left to right and moving the router at a steady speed to avoid burning the wood. Avoid plunging the router into the timber or out of it. Instead start the router while the base is positioned on the wood but with the cutter held away from the wood. Then feed the cutter into the wood and make the pass


4

Depending on the job in hand, this step could complete the moulding. However, the clever bit is to turn the timber through 90° onto its side and to make a second pass so the two mouldings join together. The result is the effect of a bead cut onto the corner of the wood. For best effect it is important to set the depth of cut very precisely, and it's worth testing this on a scrap piece of timber first


5

When fitting the cutter, ensure that at least two thirds of the shank is held in the collet and that the securing nut is tightened fully. Set the depth of cut carefully. The cutter being fitted here cuts two reads alongside each other, and when the cuts are joined they make an attractive corner feature


6

Four different cutters were used two produce these effects. The Trend cutter previously mentioned makes the attractive shape shown on the top right-hand corner of the timber, while the two simple beads are made by two similar cutters of different radii. This double reed effect is a useful method of decorating small table legs. You can create a different effect if the cutter is plunged deeper and the reed is run down the centre of the leg