



Carving Care Guide

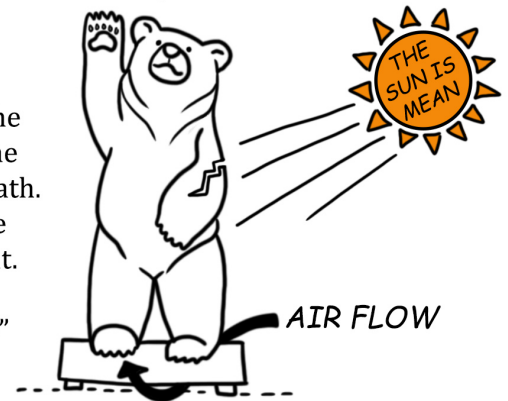
by TM Custom Carvings

Wood is both a beautiful and unpredictable medium. Hairline cracks are to be expected and embraced as part of the natural drying process of wood. Our goal is to prevent large deforming or structural cracks. This is best done by slowing down the drying process. Too fast and cracks will appear, too slow and you may start to see mold growth. Here are some tips to prevent these.

WHERE TO KEEP YOUR CARVING...

Keep your carving out of direct sunlight if possible. The sun can cause your carving to dry out too fast and result in excessive or larger cracks. The best place for a carving is in a cooler shady location like under a tree canopy or a covered porch.

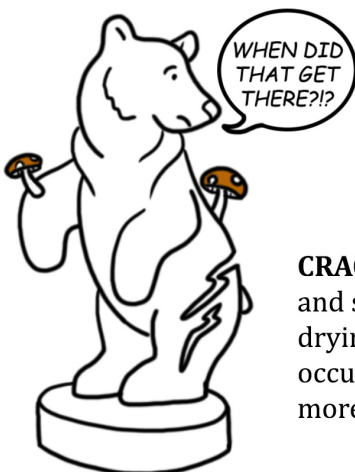
Keep your carving off the ground. Carvings will dry from the top down due to gravity. As the moisture settles towards the bottom of the carving it needs a way to escape. By lifting your carving slightly off the ground, you will allow for proper air flow and breathability underneath. This is why some larger carvings have the bottom left unsealed. If the bottom of your carving is unsealed, wait about a year before sealing it. You can raise the carving by placing bricks, pavers, or even large hex bolts underneath, this rule applied for indoor carvings as well. A 1/4" lift is all that's needed on flat surfaces, more for grassy areas!



Carvings do best outdoors where temperature and humidity changes are more gradual compared to an indoor environment. Carvings brought indoors tend to dry faster than normal and are at higher risk of cracking. If you desire to keep your carving indoors it is best to leave it in a shady spot outside for a year or so to allow the wood to dry a bit first. Once you bring the carving indoors try to keep it away from heating sources and windows that let in direct sunlight. Nothing is stopping you from taking your carving directly indoors after purchase, just be aware that cracking is more likely to occur.

PROBLEMS TO LOOK OUT FOR...

For the first year check your carving monthly for large cracks and/or mold growth and adjust the environment as needed.



MOLD GROWTH: If you notice mold growth, that's nothing to worry about, especially if you catch it within a reasonable timeframe. Simply wipe it down with a soft brush. You can also use Dawn or a water/vinegar mixture. If your carving is light enough to move, you can give it a day or two in the sun to dry a bit and prevent more mold growth.

CRACKS: Cracks are a feature not a fault. Hairline cracks are nothing to worry about and should be expected and embraced, but if large cracks start to form, your carving is drying out too fast. Place it in a cool shady spot to stop further large cracking from occurring. Consider resealing your carving to slow down the drying process and add more UV protection. Cracks should not be repaired until the carving has fully dried.

Visit www.tmcustomcarvings.com for more information!

ONGOING MAINTENANCE...

On custom orders and larger inventory pieces, the carving is sealed with a premium penetrating timber oil. Then an oil based stain and/or paint is added on top if color is required on the piece. The penetrating timber oil protects the carving against the harsh conditions of the outdoors - mold, mildew, rot, and the UV rays of the sun. It is recommended to reseal your carving yearly. The sealant you choose will need to be oil base, as water based sealants can not adhere to oil based products. Some smaller inventory pieces are NOT sealed in order to offer them at more affordable prices, these will need to be sealed by the customer at the earliest convenience. You will be made aware at the time of purchase if your carvings has been sealed or not.

WHAT TO SEAL MY CARVING WITH...

The sealant I find to offer the most protection is an exterior oil based varnish called SPAR Urethane, not to be confused with polyurethane. SPAR Urethane is a marine grade sealant used on ocean docks, it is known to hold up against the harshest of environments.

This sealant can be found at most large home improvement stores such as Lowes and Homedepot. Due to some VOC laws in certain states, only smaller quantities can be purchased like quarts and spray cans. Spray cans come with a premium price tag but make the sealing process significantly easier and faster.

The sheen of the sealant you choose is personal preference, my go to is always Satin. Due to the UV protection SPAR Urethane offers, it has a slight brown/yellow hue and will amber any white present on the carving. This creates a cool antique look. However, if this ambering effect is unwanted you can reduce it by thinning the sealant with mineral spirits or by avoiding the white areas all together.

Remember to make sure your sealant is the OIL BASED version. If it's not clearly marked on the front of the can, you can confirm this by looking at the clean up instructions on the back, if it states paint thinner or mineral spirits, it is the correct product. If it states soap and water, it is the incorrect product.



(SOME EASY TO FIND OPTIONS)

WHEN AND HOW TO SEAL YOUR CARVING...

Regardless of which option you choose, it is recommended to reseal the carving yearly. The BEST TIME to apply your yearly sealant is right before the heat of summer or before the cold of winter. Before sealing remove any dust/debris with a soft brush. Then closely follow the instructions on the back of the sealant you chose, temperature and humidity levels can greatly affect the quality of the finish. After a few years you can change your sealant routine to every other year, then eventually you will just seal as needed. Don't forget to seal the bottom of the carving, and if the bottom was left unsealed at the time of purchase, seal it during your first yearly reseal. Now, all that's left to do is admire your carving until the next coat is due!

Never hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns regarding the sealing process and I will try my best to guide you through it! Enjoy your carving!