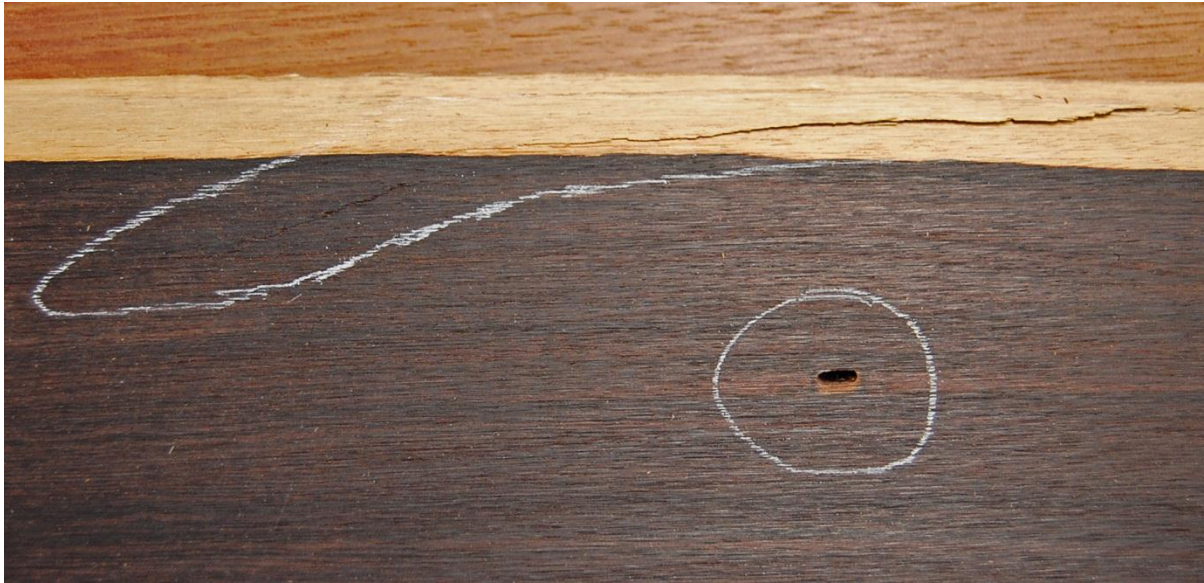


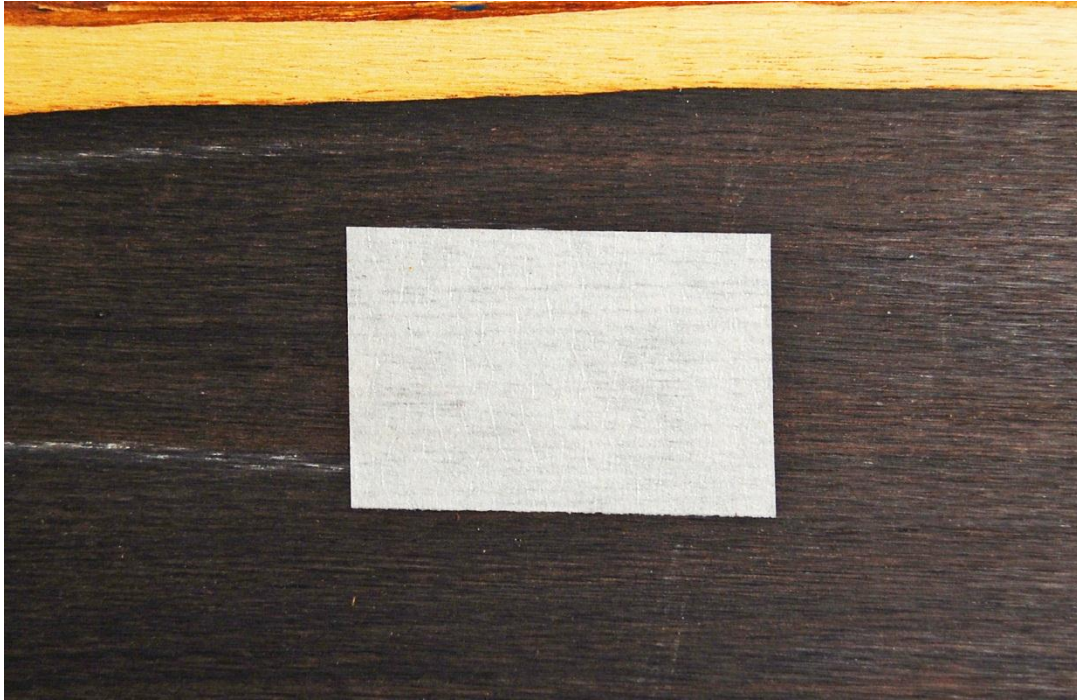
There are many pieces of choice lutherie woods that just don't quite make the grade of "flawless". These pieces are still entirely usable with a little time spent fixing them up. African blackwood is a very valuable timber that has quite a few small defects that are not visible until the wood is processed into guitar sets. What follows is one method of salvaging a back set of African blackwood.



This photo shows a typical situation: a check on the outside edge and a worm hole.



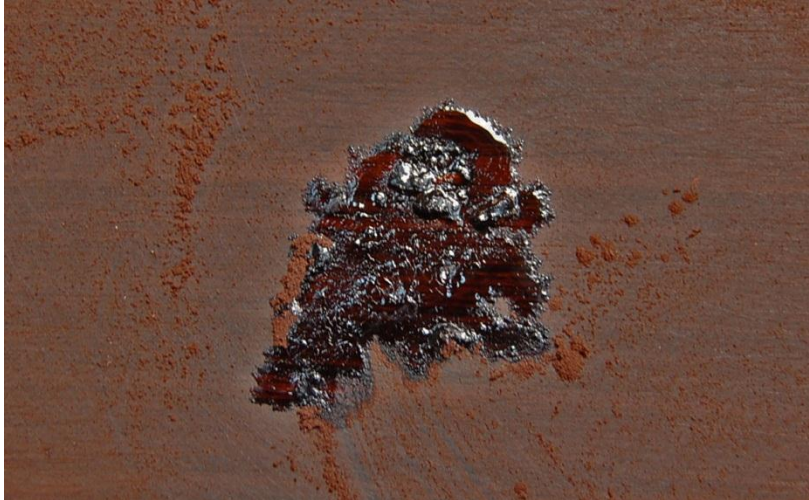
The first step is to dig out all the loose material in the worm hole with an Exacto blade.



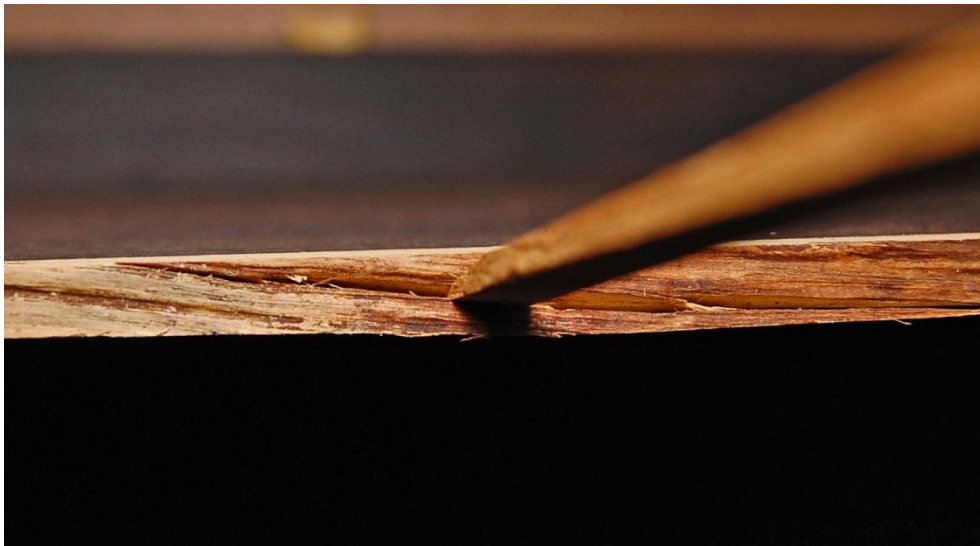
The back side is taped over with masking tape to keep the CA glue from leaking out all over your workbench.



Some sanding dust is raised by sanding across the surface and packing the dust into the hole with a toothpick or other small tool.



Then we flow thin CA glue into the hole. The thin glue will wick into the dust by capillary action.



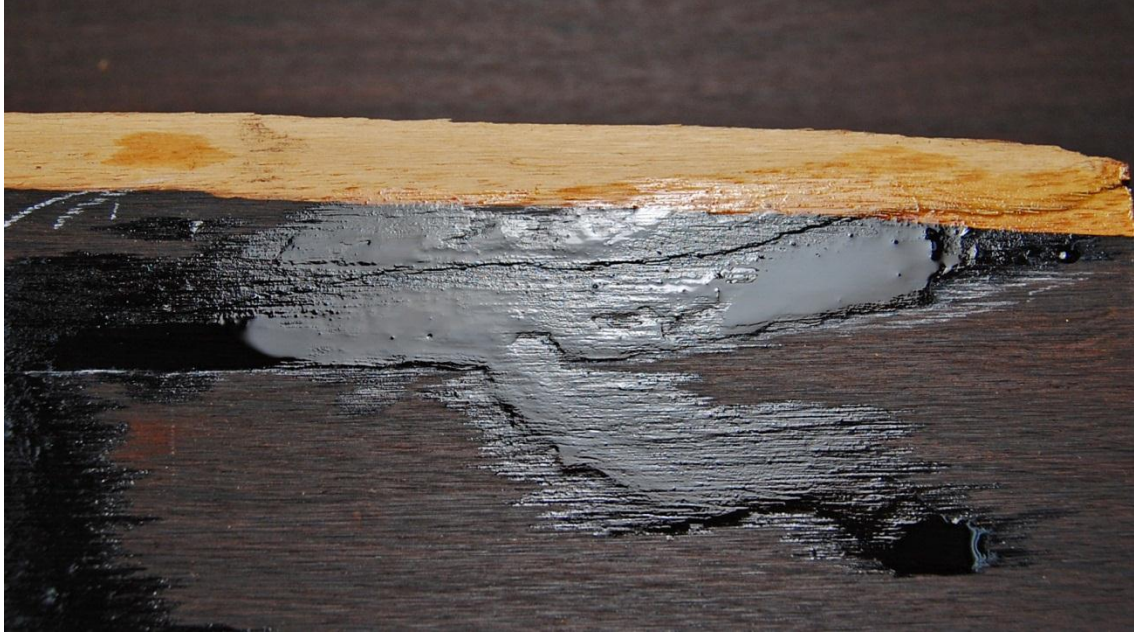
The next step is to fix the checks on the sapwood edge. Inserting a thin wedge into the check will help the glue penetrate to the farthest reaches of the check.



It is a good idea to wrap your fingers with some masking tape to keep from gluing your fingers to the wood!



After the crack is flooded with CA, you can use your protected fingers to hold the check together while some waxed paper and spring clamps are applied to keep the wood in alignment.



What we are concerned with is the CA glue wicking all the way into the check, so flood the surface liberally. You can see the glue disappear into the check.



This picture shows the completed repair. The glue-filled check in the dark heartwood will disappear once the finish is applied. CA glue, although colorless in the bottle, dries to a darker line, similar to looking at the edge of a pane of glass. The checks in this particular piece were deep enough so that CA is the only adhesive that would penetrate all the way. If the checks were limited to just the sapwood and the check could be held open with a wedge, it is possible to use hot hide glue and a heat lamp to flow the glue into the crack. Hot hide glue is fairly runny and with the addition of heat will flow into a check fairly well. It is up to the judgment of the luthier to determine which method will work best for a given piece of wood.