

Chatham County 4-H Leatherworks Club

Making a Small Suede Bag

Richard Harber

You're starting with two pieces of suede leather (chrome tanned), a 3" diameter circular piece of vegtan, two cardboard patterns, some suede or latigo lace, a marking implement (I like a fine or ultra-fine tipped black sharpie), a 1/16" and 1/4" drive punch, or a rotary punch, a piece of HDPE cutting board to punch into, plus your mallet or maul. (Photo 1)

Suede leather is regular leather that has had its top grain removed. So, it essentially has two flesh sides. It has been processed (rolled) to increase the temper (firmness) of the leather and dyed.

The round pattern with spokes is for the bottom part of the bag, while the other pattern is for the top.

- (1) Examine the suede and determine which side you want on the outside of your bag. Think of this as the front of your leather. The back of the leather will be the inside surface of the bag.
- (2) Turn the suede over so the backside is up and trace the pattern onto the suede. Be sure to mark the outer perimeter and all the holes. Be sure to trace the center circle of the bottom pattern. This will be used to help place the "floor" of the bag. Also be sure to mark where the "Xs" are on the pattern. (Photo 2)
- (3) Cut the perimeter of the top of the bag and punch all the 1/4" holes. (Photo 3)
- (4) Use the 1/16" drive punch or the smallest tube of the rotary punch to punch the small holes marked at the points where the spokes join together in the bottom of the bag. These holes will help prevent overcuts when you cut the perimeter.
- (5) Cut the perimeter of the bag bottom. Do not cut the circle in the center!
- (6) Punch the 1/4" holes in ends of the spokes for the bag bottom. (Photo 3)
- (7) Glue the 3" diameter piece of vegtan leather onto the inside of the bag in the center circle. This will be the "floor"/bottom of your bag. (Photo 4)
- (8) To begin assembly, align two of the "X"s as shown in Photo 5. The bottom of the bag is placed inside the top.
- (9) Put one end of your lace through the aligned "X" holes, going from the inside out. Leave a 6-7" tail on the outside.
- (10) With the other end of the lace, go through the hole in the next "arm" of the bottom and through the next hole in the top part of the bag.
- (11) Now continue going through the third hole in the top and through the hole in the third arm. Photo 6 shows this stage from the inside of the bag, while Photo 7 shows it from the outside of the bag.
- (12) Continue lacing around the bag. You will need to push the "arms" close together and pull the lace through tightly. At later stages you can go back and tighten things up as needed.
- (13) When you get the second "X," lace across the junction and get both ends of the lace on the outside of the bag and on opposite sides of the edges. (Photo 8)
- (14) Now lace up the seam forming an X as you go up (Like you're lacing a shoe).

- (15) When you get to the top, run the lace ends in opposite directions through the top holes. You may need to go back and tighten up your lacing in order to have enough lace to do this. (Photo 9)
- (16) You can now pull the top closed and tie it off! (Photo 10)



Photo 1 Starting materials



Photo 2 Patterns traced onto the suede



Photo 3 Patterns Cut and Holes Punched

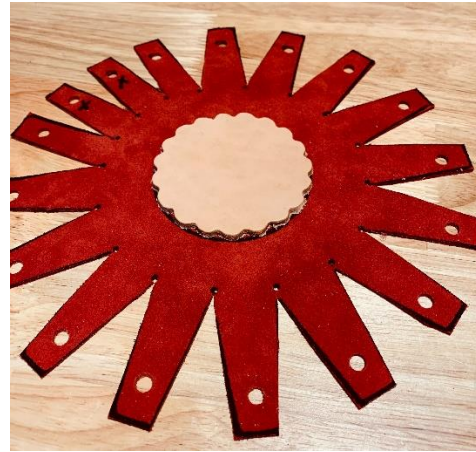


Photo 4 Vegan Floor Glued into Bottom

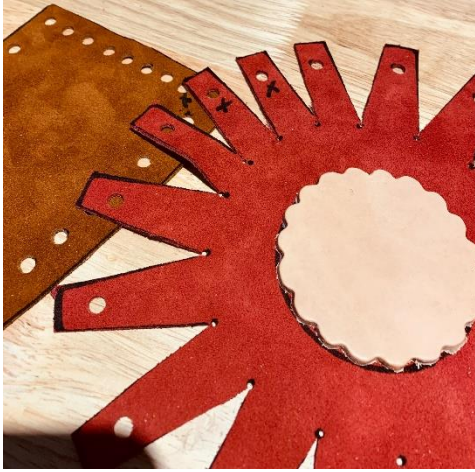


Photo 5 Layout to Start Assembly



Photo 6 Starting to Lace, Inside View



Photo 7 Starting to Lace, Outside View



Photo 8 Bottom laced in



Photo 3 9 Edge and Top Laced



Photo 2 10 Finished