

Alternative Bow Woods



I strive to provide you with wood that I would like to work with myself. If you would like to try something that you don't see here, please let me know and I'll try to find it for you. Thank you for your interest and support.

Check out my articles on various aspects of bow building:

[All Wood Composite: Bow Building 101](#)

[Hickory Backing--The Available Alternative](#)

[Building a Durable Hickory \(White Wood\) Bow, Quickly](#)

[Red Mulberry, Its characteristics and application in Wood Bowery](#)

[Follow The Grain, Practical Advice for Working With Osage and Other Woods](#)

[Moisture Content as Related to Construction and Performance in Wood Bowery](#)

Here's a nice article on crafting your own [Flemish string](#), by John Hutton.

Here are pictures of my homemade [lamination grinder](#).

Check out my [price list](#).

More Traditional Archery [Links](#)



Environmental Audit & Assessment

Falconry

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Crafting the Flemish String

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B50 Strand Requirements

The table below incates how many strands of B50 Dacron the final string should contain based on the draw weight of the bow.

Bow Weight (In pounds)	Strands of B50 Dacron
20 - 30	8
25 - 35	10
35 - 45	12
45 - 55	14
55 - 80	16

The formula show below is used to compute the length of the string and the string jig dimension for doing the wraps

Formula	Example
Bow Length (AMO)	64
MINUS 3" for Long Bow bracing (4" for Recurve Bow)	- 3
EQUALS FINAL STRING LENGTH	61
ADD 16" for Braids	+ 16
EQUALS Length of Strands	77
DIVIDE in HALF	/ 2
EQUALS Jig post-to-post Length	38 ½

General Instructions for Crafting the String

1. Prepare and Cut Bundles

Using the table and formula above, prepare and cut the bundles of B50 to the appropriate length. (It is assumed you are making a traditional two-color Flemish string. Keep the strands of the same color in their own "bundle".)

See the pages [Flemish String Jig Construction](#) and [Using the Flemish String Jig](#) for information on how to build a simple jig and utilize it to get the bundles of B50 prepared and cut properly.

Also, I've added information about building a smaller, compact jig which takes the math out of figuring out how long the strands need to be. You can review the pages [Construction of the Compact Flemish Jig](#) and [Using the Compact Flemish Jig](#) for information on how to build and use that jig.

2. Wax the Strings

Heavily wax each bundle - especially the last 8 - 10 inches of each end.

3. Braid for the First Loop

Grab the two colored bundles in your left hand between thumb and forefingers. Leave 8" to the right and the remainder to your left.

Grab one of the colored bundles and, using your right hand, twist the individual strands towards you. (NOTE: if you were to move your head to the right and look down the strands towards your left hand you would see you are **TWISTING** in a counter-clockwise direction)

Twist tightly and work the twist towards the 8" end (to the right). Now, take the this twisted color bundle and braid it over the top of the other bundle and away from you. (NOTE: if you were to move your head to the right and look down the bundles towards your left hand you would see you are **BRAIDING** in a clockwise direction.)

Grab the other colored bundle and twist the strands **TOWARDS** (counter-clockwise) you as you did with the first color.

Once this color is twisted tight, braid it over the top and **AWAY** from you (clockwise).

Repeat this twisting-and-braiding, alternating colors until you have braided about 3". Use your thumb and fingers on the left hand to hold the braided bundles tight as you braid. The tighter the braid - the better the final appearance of the Flemish will be.

4. **Make the Loop**

Fold the braided section in half to form the loop.

What you should have now is the two long bundles (one of each color) and two "tails" (one of each color). Lay each "tail" along its similiar colored bundle and smooth each tail into its bundle. Do one tail then the other. You're **NOT** braiding in each tail - your merely grabbing the tail and its bundle at the loop junction and rubbing them down the length of the bundle to get the wax warmed up to have the tail adhere to the bundle.

Hold the junction at the base of the loop in your left hand with the loop to the left and the two standing ends off to the right. (Each standing end has the tail of a color "wax welded" to its same colored bundle.

5. **Braid in the Two Colors of the First End**

The "twist and braid" technique here is identical to what you did in Step 3 (Braid for the Loop) - so if you got that down pat, you're in the home stretch ...

Grab one of the standing ends and twist the tail and bundle (of the same color) **TOWARDS** you (counter-clockwise). After its twisted tight, braid it away and over the top of (clockwise) the other standing end (tail and bundle of the other color).

Grab the other color's standing end, twist its tail and bundle **TOWARDS** you (counter-clockwise) - and then braid it away from you and over (clockwise) the first color.

Repeat this twisting and braiding, alternating standing ends until you pass the point where the tails end. "Pass the point" meaning go about 2 - 3 braids past the end of the tails to help keep them tight.

Take a small (3" or so) single strand of B50 and tie an overhand knot around the Flemish string where you ended your braiding. This will keep this end of your bowstring from unraveling while you work on the other end.

6. Stretch and Even-up the Standing Ends

Put your completed loop around the post of the string jig. If you don't have a string jig - place it over a nail in a board. Pull the two colored standing ends *away* from the post or nail together. Use an equal amount of tension while pulling on each standing end and pull them tight a few times. If you don't apply equal tension you will end up with a finished Flemish string that has one of the colored strings bearing a lot more weight than the other.

7. Braid for the Second Loop

Measure 8" down from the end of the standing ends and repeat the "twist and braid" process just as in Step 3. Do this until you've completed a 3" braid.

8. Make the Second Loop

Make the second loop in the same manner that you made the first one as described in Step 4.

9. Braid in the Two Colors of the Second End

Complete your Flemish Bowstring by braiding in the two colored bundle/tail pairs as described in Step 5.

10. Heavily Wax

Heavily wax the completed string. Be sure to wax from the loops towards the center to help "weld" in the braiding.

11. Serve

Serve in an area of about 7 - 8 inches. For placement, look at your old bowstring. Keep in mind the following points when deciding where the serving goes on the string:

- The center point of the bow, in relation to the arrow rest. Usually the bow's center point is at the center point of the handle.
- How you shoot the bow. Three fingers split or three fingers below.
- The size of your hands.

Place the newly crafted Flemish String on the bow and adjust the brace height to the desired/appropriate measurement. To increase brace height, twist the string tighter. To decrease, untwist the string. Be sure to exercise the string a few times after you restring the bow with it to stretch it and let the fibers settle in before taking the brace height measurement. After you've established the desired brace height, add your nocking device at the appropriate place.

Periodically recheck the brace height of your new string. New Flemish strings will take a few outings to "settle in" as the fibers and braids are stretched. Eventually they'll settle to an equilibrium and brace height will stop dropping.

Alternative Bow Woods Price List

Shipping is via UPS Ground or by US Mail and will be added to the prices below. Please e-mail me if you have any questions about shipping costs.

Billets		Staves		Backing Laminations	
Yew	\$ 80.00	Hickory or Maple	\$ 40.00	Hickory	\$ 12.00
Red Cedar	\$ 40.00	Red Cedar	\$ 50.00	Maple	\$ 12.00
Osage Orange	\$ 45.00	Osage Orange	\$ 60.00	Bamboo	\$ 12.00
Mulberry	\$ 45.00	Mulberry	\$ 60.00	Rawhide Leather	\$ 20.00
Iron Wood	\$ 40.00	Iron Wood	\$ 50.00	Buffalo Sinew	\$ 5.00
Many others	POR	Black Cherry	\$ 50.00		
		Yew	\$ 150.00		
		Many others	POR		

Backing laminations are cut in 2 sizes, 3/16" x 2" x 72" and 3/16" x 2" x 36" (sent as a pair). Shipping less than three (3) full length wood laminations is difficult. Bamboo can be ordered in 1 1/2" or 2" widths and is suitable for use in backing bows, as a belly core and handle or for building an all-bamboo bow. Rawhide backing comes in a set of 2 pieces, 1 3/4" wide, suitable for backing 1 bow perfectly. It takes about 6 pieces of buffalo sinew to back 1 bow.

Exotic Core Woods	
Purple Heart	\$ 25.00
Green Heart	\$ 25.00
Pau Amarillo (yellow)	\$ 25.00
Wenge (black)	\$ 25.00

Boards and Cut Stock	
Hickory	\$ 25.00
Maple	\$ 25.00
Osage Orange	\$ 40.00
Mulberry	\$ 40.00

The prices above are for belly cores of at least one bow's width and thickness. Core lengths are cut to order. Generally a pair of 38" matched cores will make a bow or a core of 60" to 70" is used. If you need specific dimensions, please let me know. If you need a handle or wish to buy a decrowned self-stave, please advise.

The imported exotic core woods offer excellent performance when backed with hickory for safety and offer a colorful departure from our more familiar native woods. The grain is very straight on the stock I select and textures vary from dense to super dense. This translates to speed, workability, availability, durability and beauty. If you need exotics for handles and nocks let me know. The list of available species is expanding rapidly so call or write for new additions.

Other Assorted Products

River Cane (for arrow shafts)	\$ 15.00/doz
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River Cane is a small bamboo which grows in the southern and eastern sections of our country. The local tribes used it for arrow shafting because of its availability, strength and ease with which it can be straightened. Once straightened and dried it is very stable. It can be used with a self nock or you can insert a hardwood plug on either end, creating solid nock and a barreled, footed or weight forward effect. This natural material makes a very durable arrow.

Raw Wood Arrow Shafts	\$ 15.00/doz
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Premium matched shafts, matched in spine to 5 pounds, matched in weight to 10 grains. Available in Alaskan Yellow Cedar, Oregon Douglas Fir (slightly heavier than cedar and very durable) and Maple (very durable). All arrow shafts are parallel.



How-To Videos and Books

Building Bows from Wood	\$ 29.95
Bows from the White Woods	\$ 29.95
Heartwood Bows from Osage, Mulberry and Locust	\$ 29.95
Building All-Wood Composite Bows	\$ 29.95
Building Bows From Boards	Coming Soon
Building Composite Bows From Eastern Red Cedar and Yew	Coming Soon
Backing Bows with Sinew and Rawhide	Coming Soon
Making River Cane Arrows and Stone Points	Coming Soon
The Bent Stick by Paul Comstock	\$ 12.00
The Traditional Bowyer's Bible , Volume 1	\$ 24.95
The Traditional Bowyer's Bible , Volume 2	\$ 27.95
The Traditional Bowyer's Bible , Volume 3	\$ 29.95
Whitetail Tactics with Recurves & Longbows by Jim Hamm	\$ 19.95
Hunting the Osage Bow by Dean Torges	\$ 19.95

Other Assorted Items

Farrier's Rasps (slightly used)	\$ 12.00
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Please include \$3.00 (check/money order) for shipping/handling of videos/books via Priority Mail.

The Bent Stick is a great companion book to order with your first video. If you read this book most of your initial questions about wood bows will be answered.

Suggestions for future video projects and articles are enthusiastically welcomed.

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Traditional Archery and Special Links



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Environmental Audit & Assessment, Inc.

Environmental Audit and Assessment, Inc. is a full service multidisciplinary consulting, engineering, and surveying company which is experienced in the performance of commercial property assessments for development and transfer, contaminated site risk assessment and remediation for private individuals, commercial developers and financial institutions.

The various activities involved in construction and permitting of Wetlands Mitigation Banks, jurisdictional wetlands delineation, wetlands violation resolution or wetlands planting and construction are specialties of EAA, Inc.

Consulting Services: Full-service innovative solutions to environmental issues, wetlands educational areas, including project and permit management, threatened and endangered species and mitigation plans for wetlands and habitat restoration.

Plants for Mitigation sites: EAA, Inc. can supply top-quality container and bare-root native upland plant species and herbaceous aquatic plants and has an experienced installation staff to install them at your site.

Mitigation Banking: The Cherry Creek Mitigation Bank in Lowndes County, Georgia was formed to create a wetland and stream mitigation bank to serve the Withlacoochee drainage basin. EAA, Inc. can check on the availability of wetland mitigation credits for potential clients wishing to comply with Clean Water Act regulations in the Withlacoochee drainage basin. Potential clients wishing to permit a Wetland Mitigation Bank or for construction and planting of other potential mitigation sites should contact: [Murray Gaskins](http://www.murraygaskins.com).

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Endangered Species Assessments



Click on the pics below to view of some of the various types of projects I have been recently involved with.



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Falconry



One of my favorite hobbies since childhood has been raising and training hawks.





My favorite is Nemo, a young Harris Hawk.

Check out my [article](#) in [Wilderness Way](#) on the Harris Hawk as a falconry bird.



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