

The Beauty of Black Walnut

We have a beautiful black walnut slab table in our breakfast nook crafted by my dad and brother. My dad was driving home from picking up a cedar shed for our dogs near Mt. Mitchell when he spotted a dilapidated roadside antique store that had a messy pile of wood slabs leaning against the outside wall. The first slab on the pile was the right size and shape and appeared to be black walnut so he whipped his car and trailer around on the highway and turned into the store's small parking area. As he got out of his car and walked closer, he realized that it was in fact a beautiful triangular slab of rough sawn black walnut from the stump of a gigantic tree. It had a wormy edge to it that gave it a special distressed character. It weighed almost 200 lbs! He purchased it immediately from the ancient shopkeeper and they both nearly collapsed trying to load it onto the trailer.

When my mother and I saw it, we both loved the dark wood and the triangular shape of the slab. My dad and brother sanded down the slab to a mirror finish in three stages over several days, and then applied three coats of urethane. Black walnut is naturally dark and looks best without stain. Although the slab was beautiful, it still needed legs. My mom purchased a beautiful pair of mountain modern style metal legs. There was one problem however. The legs didn't quite fit the table. My brother brought them to his welding class at Watauga High School and resized them to perfectly fit the table. Once they were done, my father drilled a couple holes in the bottom of the table and mounted the legs. It was finally complete! My brother and father hoisted the slab table up from the workshop to our breakfast nook and called for me and my

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mother. As we walked into the kitchen, we gasped. It was beautiful! The dark walnut went so perfectly with all the other wood accents in our house.

We use the table constantly throughout the day. It's an ever present focal point of our house. It has definitely helped us to have more family meals together and find time to sit down, take a breath amidst all the craziness of our life, and talk to each other about how our day was.