

Rubber Stamp Cabinet

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Posted 2022 Feb 25

Although I don't spend much time rubber stamping any more, at one time I did amass a large collection of wooden-handled stamps . . . about 3700 on last count (!).

Needless to say, organizing and storing so many of *anything* can be challenging.

I started out keeping my stamps in small parts boxes, but as the collection outgrew those, I needed another solution – one that would allow easy access and retrieval.



I envisioned a rack or a cabinet of some kind with shallow trays or drawers. The problem is, drawers make furniture costly, and I doubted I'd find anything within my budget that would accommodate a large collection.



So . . . I made my own homemade solution: a tall wooden stand holding about 25 shallow drawer/trays so I could store the stamps in single layers. These drawers can easily be pulled out and carried to a work station if need be. Perfect.

I'm no carpenter, and my cabinets are not elegant, but I wasn't aiming for a show-piece. I just needed a simple and functional design that wouldn't cost the earth and that would corral the stamps so they'd be easy to locate and retrieve. In the end, I made two of these tall units, which in essence are large racks that hold several large trays or drawers. To build the units, I began with the 12x24" drawer trays, which I made from wood laths cut to size and nailed to a hardboard base.



I used 2x2s to construct the frame, beginning with the sides, to which I added 1/2" wooden supports, shown in this inside view. The drawers are about 1 3/4" high, so I spaced the supports about 1 7/8" apart, so the drawers have enough clearance to slide in without binding. I finished the cabinet with a hardboard back for stability, and covered the sides with additional pieces of hardboard.

I later made a similar cabinet for a friend who lives several hundred miles away. Since I planned to bring it along when I next visited, it had to be small enough to fit (along with three adults and their luggage) into the car, so it ended up around 4 feet high. And because there was no room to bring wooden drawers like the ones I had made for my own cabinets, I ended up using plain pizza boxes instead. I bought the boxes first, and then built the cabinet to fit them.

As with my own cabinets, the stamps are stored in a single layer, and individual boxes are easily removed without disturbing the rest. The boxes maybe aren't quite as convenient as the drawers, but on the plus side, the lids keep the contents dust-free. My friend was delighted with her new cabinet.



Even if you don't have a rubber stamp collection, a unit with many shallow drawers is super useful for storing lots of other craft supplies. Unfortunately, they're hard to find and expensive when you do. A simple cabinet like this one fills the bill, and can be made from inexpensive materials. Best of all, you don't need to be an expert woodworker to build it.

Although they aren't fancy, my cabinets are functional and convenient, and they've held up well for more than 20 years.