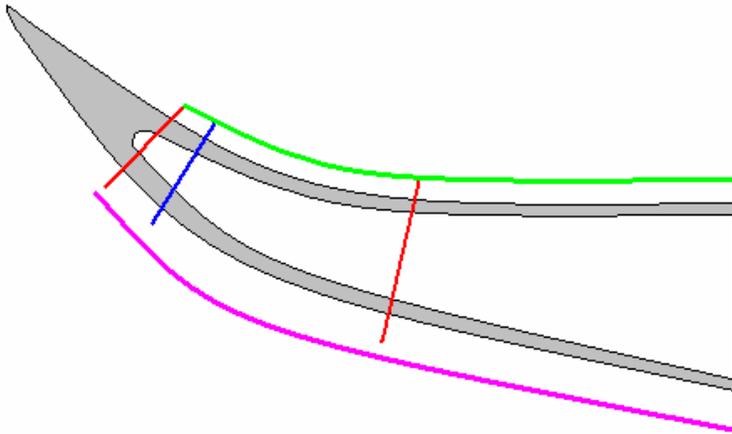


PREPARING THE HORN

Cutting the horn

I cut my horn where the red lines are marked on the picture below. I then cut down the length of the horn (green line and purple line). This gave me 4 horn blanks to work with. The point has been put aside for a different project. On reflection it would have been better to have cut where the blues lines are and length ways along the green line. This would have given longer panels to work with and wider along the top edge.



Boiling and soaking the horn

I soaked the horn for a day in water mixed with cider vinegar. This was then boiled for 3 hours.

I recommend removed the horn and gently flexing the corners. This will help in identifying the layers of stratification in the horn.

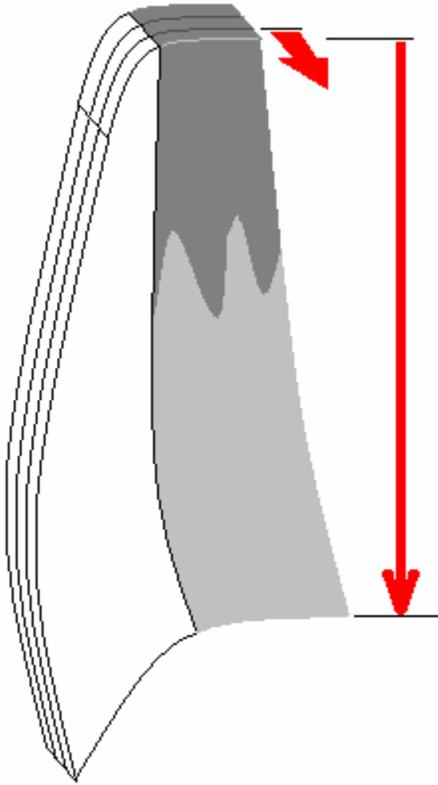
The horn became solid when the water cooled.

The horn was left in this water for 3 days. When I was going to split the horn I replaced the water with boiling water to get the horn soft, and often repeated this during the splitting process.



THE SPLITTING PROCESS

Identifying the stratification



The horn grows in layers and if you look carefully you are able to see the layers. Work from the inside of the horn blank and work from the top down. This provided the best panels. Starting from the outside-in or bottom-up resulted in poorly split panels. The bottom shows the stratifications more clearly - don't be tempted to split up!!



Starting the split

I used a utility art knife to split the horn (I suggest that you blunt it a bit!)

Work the knife in using a gentle rocking action or twisting action. Do this carefully and listen to the sound the horn makes. If you are following the line of the stratification layer it will split relatively easily



Working the split

Work the knife in and down, either rocking from side to side or twisting the blade.



Take your time and try and get the split running across the width of the horn blank. If it dries or feels harder to split then re-soak.



Soon you will split a panel out of the horn blank. Return both pieces into the water. Add fresh boiling water if necessary (and at any stage if the water feels to cool). The horn is easier to split when hot and rubbery.

When the horn blank is soft again, split out another panel.

Note: My thumb shows only half the injuries I received there are three long slices on the palm side of my thumb. Hence the blunt knife and being careful!