

SAWMILL FORUM

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My edger saws seem to be spitting bits every now and then. What should I do about that?

The answer depends on a few different situations. First we need to look at the exact cause. A number of years ago, some sawyers who thought they were saving money would use up the worn shanks from their head saws by putting them in their edger saws. The misguided thinking was that the edger saws didn't need to carry sawdust out of the cut as much as the headsaw.

Well, of course they need to clear the sawdust from the cut. And worse yet, the more worn the shanks were, the looser they would get in the edger saw sockets, and the looser they were in the sockets, the more they would tend to wear the sockets out from all of the extra movement.

So if your edger saws are spitting bits because the shanks are worn, regardless of whether they were worn out when they were installed or they have run a complete cycle in those sockets, you should try replacing them to see if you still have the problem. Oh, and by the way, if you replace the shanks in the edger saws, they should go out to be worked over by your saw doctor because just like re-shanking a headsaw, the process stretches the rim of the saw and then

it needs to be re-tensioned.

Now if it turns out these saws are spitting bits and the shanks are not worn out, I would ask if it is just one socket that has the problem, or is it multiple sockets?

If it is just one socket that is the culprit I suggest you have your saw doctor cut that one off and weld a new one on. It could be that the shoulder is just pushed back a bit and it can be hammered back into place instead of having to weld it, but even so, there is a fairly good chance that under the stress of sawing it will get pushed back again because it is now weaker than it should be.

On the other hand, if more than one or two sockets are at fault, you will need to replace the saws. I know that edger saws seem rather expensive for their size, but it costs just as much to weld a shoulder on an edger saw as it does to replace one on a headsaw.

On 56" headsaw, you can possibly weld as many as ten shoulders and still be repairing something that is worth more than the cost of the repairs. But by the time you have welded two shoulders on an edger saw, you are starting to get to that magic point where it just isn't all that economi-



If just one socket is causing the problem, have a saw doctor replace it. More than one? Get a new edger saw.

cally feasible. Not that it costs more than a new saw to weld two or even three shoulders, but the amount it costs starts to exceed the value of this worn out saw. For a little more money you can have a pair of new ones that are in better shape to withstand the apparent abuse you will start putting them through.

I say abuse, because properly-maintained edger saws should last a long time. On the other hand, it is such a pain to sharpen edger saws in the edger that the sharpening often gets neglected, and it is that sort of neglect that will shorten their life considerably. It wouldn't be so tough to sharpen them if you could remove them from the machine, but unfortunately the old style two-saw edgers didn't ever allow for easy saw changes. So when you replace these saws, try sharpening them before they are dull, replace the shanks before they are completely worn out, and send them out to be hammered every now and then. And by the way, that same advice would hold true for your headsaws.

Questions about sawmills and their operation should be sent to Forum, The Northern Logger, P.O. Box 69, Old Forge, NY 13420, FAX #315-369-3736.

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