

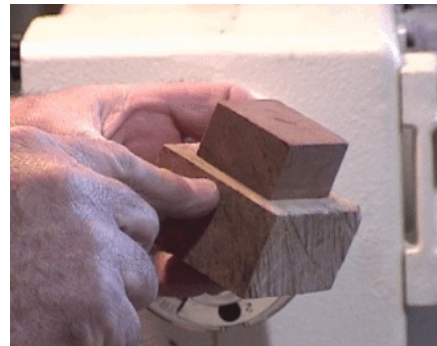
# Turning Christmas Ornaments

featuring Joe Gettys

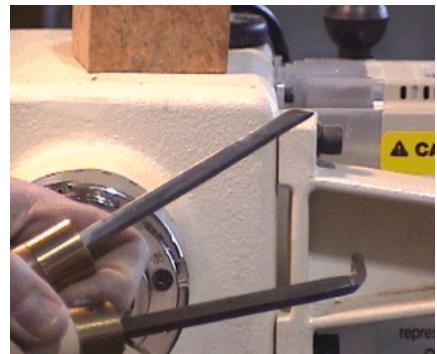
Our meeting demonstrator was Joe Gettys who illustrated one of his techniques for turning a Christmas ornament. He followed a method which he had learned a number of years ago from Robert Rosand. The blank he used was a square block of big leaf maple burl about two inches on a side attached to a square waste block with yellow glue. Joe recommends using yellow glue for attaching waste blocks because of its better holding capacity compared to CA glue. He used two small hollowing tools which he had hand made by silver soldering metal lathe bits onto steel rods. One was a straight shank chisel and the other had the cutter attached at about 30 degrees to the steel rod.



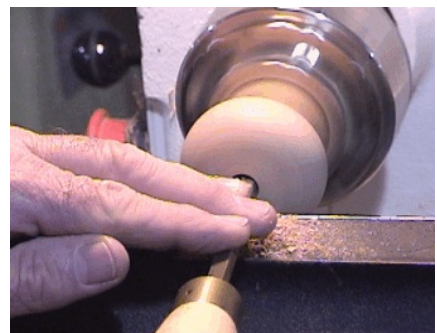
He first rounded the burl block and then turned it into what he called a “door knob” shape for the ultimate ornament. He used a ½ spindle gouges for this purpose. He indicated that this shape was easier and faster to turn than a sphere. He also stated that smaller ornaments are better for hanging on live trees because of their lower weight. He finished shaping and sanding the outside surface of the ornament before center drilling it to begin hollowing. He uses machine screw bits for drilling because they are shorter and thus easier to accommodate on a short mini-lathe bed. They also produce less run out or wobble when drilling.



Joe began the hollowing process by using the straight shank tool to create a cavity to accommodate the bent tool. He used a standard depth gauge to measure how deep he had hollowed towards the top of the ornament. By holding the shank of the bent hollowing tool fixed on the tool rest and rotating the handle he was able to hollow the inside more easily in a circular path. When he was satisfied with the depth of the hollowing, he finished the globe of the ornament using 320 grit sand paper and oil free Liberon steel wool. Next he applied Myland’s Friction Polish to produce a gloss finish on the surface. He then parted the globe from the waste block. He then turned a tenon on the waste block so that the globe could be jam chucked in reverse to finish the bottom that had been parted earlier.



The next step was turning a cap from a cocobolo block to fit into the hole on the base of the ornament. He cut a 3/8th circular hole in the tip of this cap to receive the tenon of a icicle finial which he would turn later. A key step in turning the cap was to cut the face concave inward that would abut against the base of ornament. This was to insure a tight fit against the surface of the ellipsoidal body of the ornament. He also scored two grooves on this same surface to trap any excess glue.



With the base cap completed and glued to the body of the ornament, Joe then turned a cap for the top from the same block of cocobolo which was still mounted in the chuck jaws. He followed the same techniques as used for the base cap except that he embellished the exposed surfaces of the top with a spiraling tool. These marks he set off using a parting tool. Before cutting this cap off, he drilled a small hole in its tip to receive the ornament eyelet.



The final step was to turn the icicle finial to complete the ornament. For this he used a small round piece of cocobolo on which he had previously turned a 3/8th inch tenon on one end. This end he mounted in an Axminster collet chuck. He proceeded to turn the finial using a half inch skew chisel. When sanding the finished finial, he recommended sanding with the grain to prevent sanding marks and then burnishing it with steel wool. Before parting it off, he finished the finial with friction polish. The final ornament was completed by gluing the finial into the hole which had been turned earlier in the base cap.