

TURNING A TREE SHAPED CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT

by Chuck Dowler



Tools and Supplies needed:

-SAFETY GLASSES

-One way Talon scroll chuck with #2 jaws (or equivalent).

-Spindle Roughing Gouge

-3/8" or 1/2" Spindle Gouge

-1/2" Skew (or larger)

-1/4" Diamond Parting Tool

-1/16" Narrow Parting Tool

-M. L. Campbell Acetone Microton dye (Red, Green, Yellow & Blue)

(I do not use water base dyes-the above dye will not raise grain and will dry in just a few minutes. Available @ Woodsmith - Dave & LuAnn in paint department know what I use. Is in bulk gallon containers. Suggest you bring your own GLASS containers.)

-Sandpaper - 180 and 240 grit.

-3M Foam backed sanding pad, micro-fine (400 grit).

-#1 or #0 long shank fish hooks.

-1/16" drill bit for pilot holes.

-Small screw eyes, Midwest Fastener #61261 (#216-1/2")

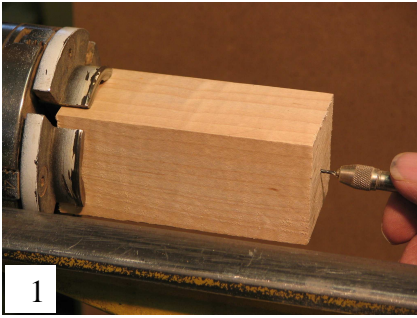
-Hut Perfect Pen Polish stick (light cream color, carnuba wax)

-Roll of Viva soft paper towel (for safety, DO NOT use cloth rag for polishing).

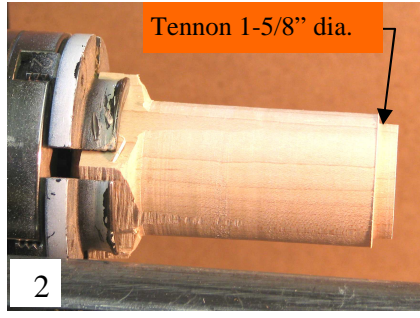
-8/4 (1 3/4" thick) hard maple to rip into turning blanks. Other woods can be used however, the hard maple gives the most uniform stain results.

-Ruler, pencil and caliper.

-Needle nose pliers with wire cutters.



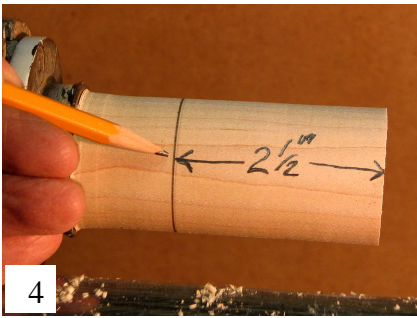
1 Prepare 4" long blank, 1-3/4" square and mount in chuck as pictured above. Drill 1/16" pilot hole in end of blank for later installation of screw eye for drying.



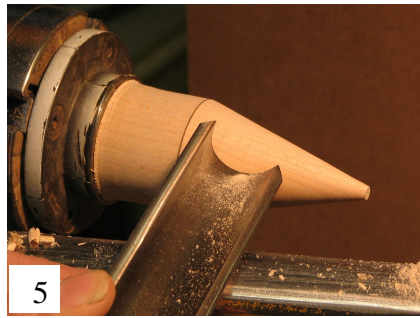
2 Use spindle roughing gouge & turn nearly round. Leave some flat so there will still be enough material for a tennon. Use 1/4" parting tool and turn 1/4" wide tennon, 1-5/8" dia.



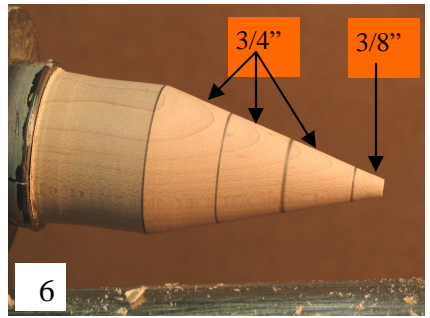
3 Turn blank end to end and re-mount with tennon in chuck. Finish turning to a uniform 1-5/8" diameter.



4 Measure & mark blank 2-1/2" from right end.



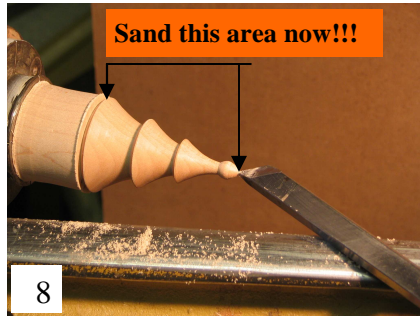
5 Use spindle roughing gouge to cut uniform 'cone' shape from mark on blank to a diameter of about 3/16" on right end of 'cone'.



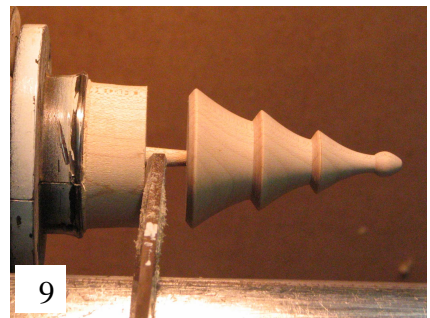
6 Lay out and mark for three equal segments 3/4" long and 3/8" long at the smallest diameter. Use the long point of skew to make 'V' cuts at each of the pencil marks about 1/8" deep.



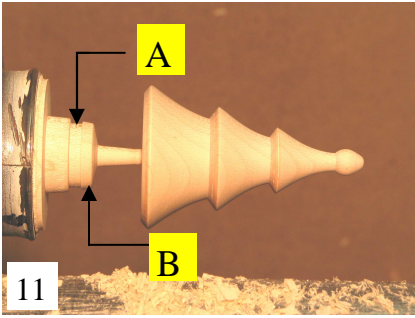
7 Use spindle gouge to make sweeping cuts from left to right on each segment swinging the tool handle through an arc to make each segment a curved section. Shape oval ball at tree tip.



8 Use long point of skew to cut a dimple into end of ornament for centering hanger eye later. Do all sanding thru final 400 grit between points before next step. If you sand AFTER tree trunk is cut, you will break it.



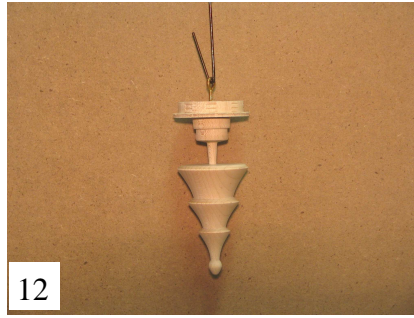
9 Use the 1/4" parting tool to cut the tree trunk to length of just a little over 1/2" and a diameter of about 3/16". (use the width of the 1/4" parting tool to judge the approximate 1/2" trunk length)



A - Cut 1/16" deep groove to establish BOTTOM of tree base.

B - Shape tree base about 7/8" diameter by 1/8" thick.

Sand tree base and trunk.



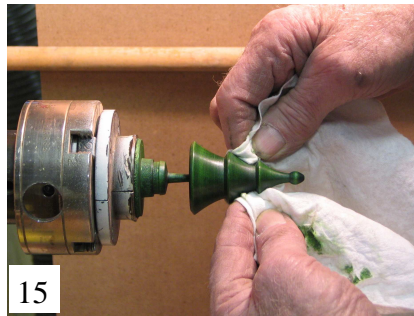
Do not part off base at this time. Remove from lathe, install small eye screw in bottom pilot hole and hang from 12" long piece of straight stiff wire with tight hook.



Prepare to dip ornament into selected dye.



After immersion into dye, slowly lift and twirl ornament out of solution. By twirling as you lift, centrifugal force will throw excess liquid off into jar.



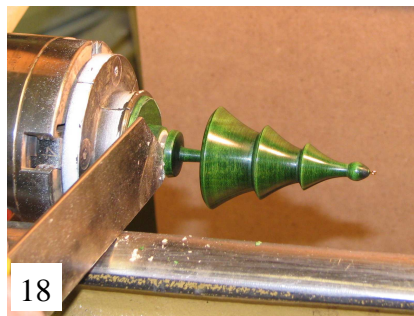
Air dry 5 to 10 minutes then remount into chuck. Run lathe at slow speed, use Viva paper towel & polish entire surface exerting EQUAL pressure on EACH side of ornament to prevent bending & breaking.



After dry polish, apply Hut Perfect Pen polish stick wax to surface, again applying pressure on opposite side with towel. After application of Hut stick wax, polish as with previous photo #15.



Cut hook loop off #1 long shank fish hook leaving straight shank with eye in one end. Using pliers, push shank in rotating ornament stopping 3/16" from bottom. Stop lathe and tap to bottom like a nail.



Using thin parting tool, part tree ornament off at bottom of base. Angle tool in slightly so the base will be concave on the bottom.



Ornament parted free. Note nib on bottom that can be trimmed off with sharp knife.

See sanding tool on next page that the bottom can be sanded with.



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Turn a fixture with about 1" diameter on outer end. Shape the face a little convex. Attach 120 grit sticky sand paper (or glue your own) to the face.



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Sanding base of tree. In photo #11 I had directed you to establish the base with a 1/16" deep cut. This shallow cut prevented dye from penetrating bottom of ornament. This left clean area to sign & date.

Helpful Hints

Ref: Photo #2 & #3. When desiring to make trees in multiples, prepare the needed number of blanks then perform step #2 on them ALL then perform step #3 on ALL. This eliminates a lot of chuck wrench turning when you turn the blanks end to end.

Ref: Photo #9 . I grind the point of the 1/4" parting tool with right side of point slightly longer than the left. This allows me to cut the tree trunk a little tapered. (mark top of tool)

Ref: Photo #11. Do not make the "A" labeled cut any deeper than about 1/16". This will keep the dye from coloring the bottom of the tree base. It will then be a light color to sign and date. **ALWAYS SIGN AND DATE YOUR WORK.**

Ref: Photo #11. You can see that when I cut the 7/8" diameter of the tree trunk, I did not carry that diameter all the way to the chuck jaws. Leave about 1/8" untouched. This then will leave a bit of a "stop shoulder" to but up against when you re-chuck after dying.

Ref: Photo #13. I use 1 quart glass canning jars. Some plastics work with the dye, others will deteriorate both the dye and the jar. Glass always works, but be careful to not break! If you drop it on the floor, your shoes or jeans all will be permanently decorated.

Ref: Photo #15. I use Viva brand paper towels. Many paper towels are course and will scratch the item. Viva is nice and soft. **DO NOT USE CLOTH RAGS--UNSAFE!!**

Ref: Photos #15 & #16. **ALWAYS** put **EQUAL** pressure opposite on each of two points when polishing and applying the Hut Stick wax. Also do not grip the two opposite points to tightly. Side pressure or to tight grip will break the trees little trunk. After you have broken a few, you will learn the proper amount of pressures.

Ref: Photo #18. I could not show it in the picture, but, when I am parting off the tree, I hold the parting tool in my left hand and reach my right hand over the tree, cup my hand and fingers under the tree without touching it. When I am parted thru, the tree will fall into my hand.

Lathe Speeds: --I do all the roughing cuts to round, shaping the tree body, trunk and base at highest speed on my lathe. (3000 to 3200 RPM)
--I reduce the speed to 400 to 600 RPM for all sanding, polishing, eye hook installations and parting off.

USE CAUTION WHEN USING THE DYES. The solvents are flammable and inhalation could be hazardous to your health. Use adequate ventilation and do not breath the fumes.

ALWAYS WEAR PROPER EYE PROTECTIONS of safety glasses or full face shield.

WORK SAFE AND HAVE FUN