

Thatch Birdhouse Ornament

Joan Lech 2014 August meeting demonstration

Roof

1. Blank. Size $2 \frac{1}{4} \times 2 \frac{1}{4} \times 3 - 4$ inches recommended. Species such as cottonwood bark, mahogany, pine, poplar or some other soft species is recommended. Needs to be clear of knots.
2. Round the blank between centers using a **Roughing Gouge** to make a cylinder approx $2 - 2 \frac{1}{8}$ inch diameter. Once round, remove from between centers and mount in a chuck.
3. Drill hole $1 \frac{1}{8}$ inch diameter x $\frac{1}{8}$ inch deep using a **Forstner bit**. This is where the birdhouse body will attach to the roof.
4. Mark a line $2 \frac{1}{2}$ inch from the end of the blank, then use a **Parting tool** to make a groove $\frac{3}{4}$ inch deep. This will be the top of the roof.
5. Use a **Spindle Gouge** to turn the cylinder to a shallow concave cone, then take a **Skew** and score five lines to make step down shingles, leaving the tip about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick. Part off the roof.

House

1. Blank. $1 \frac{3}{4} \times 1 \frac{3}{4} \times 2$ inches.
2. Round between centers using a **Roughing Gouge** making a $1 \frac{1}{2}$ inch diameter cylinder.
3. Mark a line $1 \frac{5}{8}$ inch from one end, then put the cylinder in a chuck and use a **Parting tool** to part off the excess.
4. Mark the entrance and perch holes. Use a center punch to start the holes.
 - $\frac{3}{8}$ inch from the bottom of the tenon is the middle of the entrance hole.
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch down from the above line and to the side is the perch hole.
 - Drill holes using a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter bit for the entrance hole and $\frac{1}{8}$ inch diameter bit for the perch hole.
5. Using a $1 \frac{1}{8}$ inch **Forstner bit**, score a little circle. This will allow you to see how close you are to the correct size tenon needed to fit in the roof.
6. Using a $\frac{7}{8}$ inch diameter **Forstner bit**, drill a hole $1 \frac{1}{4}$ inch deep. This leaves the bottom $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick.
7. Using the score mark as a gauge, cut a tenon with a **Parting**

- tool** until it is a snug fit with the roof.
- Place the birdhouse body on a 7/8 inch diameter mandrel as far as it will go. The mandrel is made from a separate piece of scrap wood. Turn this to have a 7/8in diameter x 1 1/2 in long (minimum) using a **Spindle Gouge**. Taper the body from the top to 1 1/8 inch at the base and round over the end slightly for easier fit.
 - Sand the house to remove tool marks and scratches. Abralon abrasive lasts a long time. Normally start with e.g., 220 grit due to the soft nature of the wood.
 - Using a **Skew**, add 3 starter rings a little up from the bottom. Using a burning wire, friction burn the lines on the house.

Carving the Roof

- Pencil in the horizontal roof lines for the entire roof. Use a **Vee tool** to go over the lines. This puts a groove in the roof to step down the shingles. **Omit if you did Roof Step 5 above.**
- Using a **Knife** or **Gouge**, carve up to each line all the way around for a layered look.
- Pencil in vertical roof lines for the entire roof. Use a **Vee tool** to go over all the lines. Also add extra vee grooves on the edges of the shingles using a knife. You also need to texture with the vee tool under the roof as well as burn these lines.
- Make an eye hook by twisting thin pieces of copper wire to create an eye and a length of twisted metal to glue into the wood. Safety wire twisting pliers can be purchased from Harbor Freight.
[6in Safety Wire Twisting Pliers](#)
- Burn all the horizontal and vertical lines on the roof using a **Burning pen**. Then put extra lines of different lengths over the shingles in a random pattern to give more of a thatched look. Drill a small hole for the eye hook. Diameter depends on the diameter of the hook.
- Put a finish on the roof. Alternate is to glue the birdhouse body on the roof and attach the perch, then put a finish on the entire house. Last glue in the eye hook.

Perch

- Blank – up to 3/8 x 3/8 x 2 inch. This will be turned much

smaller, so can start with narrower stock. Use 2in length so you are not working so close to the chuck.

2. Turn the blank round with a **Spindle gouge** to make a straight section of 1/8 inch diameter x 1 inch long. Soft wood is recommended for this piece so it turns easily. Hard woods tend to break.
3. Attach to the birdhouse.
4. A small bird can be glued on the perch for decoration. These can be found at arts supply stores.