

TURNING A WINGED NATURAL EDGE BOWL

This is a piece of Copper Beech that was a historic tree downed in Nazareth, PA. It was brought to a club meeting by one of the members and I was able to get a nice piece of crotch wood. I plan to turn a natural edged bowl from the crotch, but the small piece I cut off the end was too nice to waste. This is an easy project that takes only a few hours. You will notice that at the end, I placed the turned piece in a bag of wet shavings to slow the drying process, and hopefully prevent the double pith from splitting.



The first step is to drill a hole in the center and mount the blank onto a screw chuck. I use the heavy duty screw chuck on my Oneway chuck. Even though a small blank, it is wet and heavy and I don't want anything flying off the lathe. The piece is oriented on the screw chuck so that the tailstock is brought up to the bottom end of the bowl. That way, the hole will be later turned away as that is the bowl center.

SAFETY NOTE:

Notice that the tail stock is brought up for added support and safety. Speaking of safety, I wear a facemask and breathing protection at all times. I've gotten too many sinus headaches after a day in the shop when not using breathing protection.



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I've started working on the rough shape of the bowl. Now I turn a tenon to later reverse the piece and mount onto my chuck.

The bottom of the bowl has now been turned to the shape desired. I have reversed the piece and remounted onto the chuck. Now to start working on the inner bowl part. Notice the bark left on the edge which makes this a natural edge bowl. I'm told that a tree that is downed in the winter months will retain the bark better. I have also been told that the bark will eventually break off in time. I'm trying to maintain this bark and will hope for the best in the future.



IMPORTANT NOTE: To get a nice crisp edge to the bark edge, it is very important that you use a sharp bowl gauge and approach the piece from outside the work and plunge into the work. Plunge is probably a poor choice of words as you want to make a delicate cut and only take off a small amount of wood each pass. As the piece is spinning, you will see a "ghost" outline of the outside edge of the protruding wings. Do not try to draw the gauge from the center of the work to the outside edge as it will chip off the bark.

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IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTE: Notice the protruding wings. Be aware at all times of their location while turning. A good rule of thumb is to never let your hands get on the wrong side of the tool rest!! Also, always turn the piece by hand before turning on the lathe to insure clearance.

Notice the double pith in this work. By slowing the drying process at the end, I hope to keep the pith intact and not get a lot of cracking. Also notice the drill hole where the screw chuck was mounted. This will be turned away as the bowl is hollowed out.



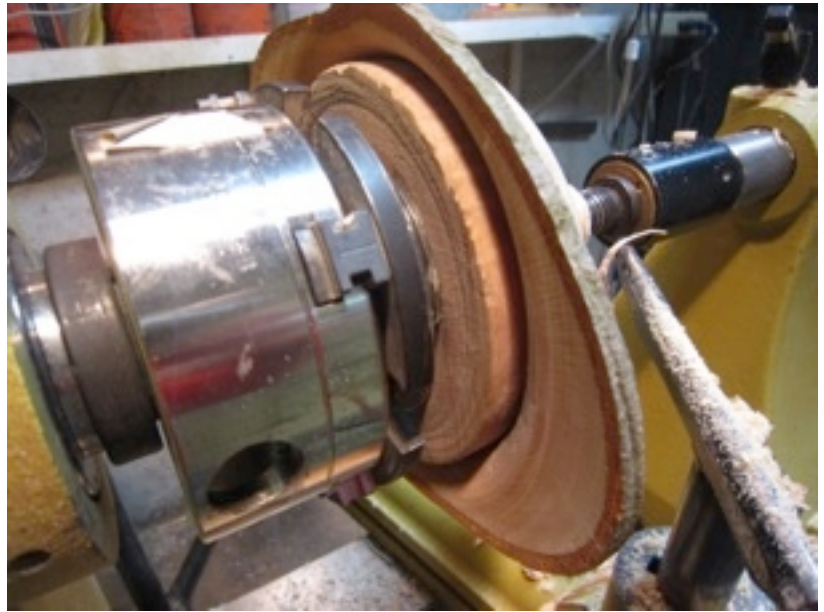
I have finished the inside shape of the bowl. Copper beech has a beautiful grain and is very easy to turn. Grab a piece if ever offered to you.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you have to leave the work for any length of time, wrap in a plastic bag to insure the piece does not dry too fast and cause checking, cracking and splitting.



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It's now time to turn off the tenon and make the final shape to the bottom of the bowl. I use a jam chuck to do this. A piece of wood that is turned to the rough shape of the inside of the bowl is mounted on the chuck. The inside of the bowl is mounted on the jam chuck with a piece of soft material in between to prevent marring. The tailstock is brought up to hold the piece against the jam chuck. An indentation to mark the center will be present from when the tailstock held the piece in place earlier. If not, you may have to reposition the piece to get it centered. When final shape is attained, you will have a small nib at the end of the tailstock that can be carved off and sanded.



Here is the final turning which will be placed in a bag of wet shavings to slow the drying process. I weigh the piece and date it. I will probably let it dry for several months before sanding and finishing

All in all, a fun piece to turn from a blank that would have been thrown away.

PS: I will try to update this after drying and finishing. Stand by to see if working with pith is worth the effort!!

