

Turning a Goblet in Forty-Five Minutes

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Presented by Earl Rutherford

Goblets are a step up in elegance from most simple bowls and weed pots, but are only slightly more difficult to make. Once a turner is familiar with his tools, he or she can make a goblet in about 45 minutes. Spraying with lacquer adds two or three minutes, and oil or urethane finishes may add ten to fifteen minutes actual applying time, dependant upon how many coats are applied.

Step 1. Cut stock to length. I like about two inches longer than the finished piece will be, to add distance from the chuck or faceplate. It can be a limb, a section from a trunk, or glued up lumber. I prefer one piece from a limb or trunk.

Step 2. Mark each end for centers. If the stock is oval shaped as it usually is, mark plenty of lines with a center-finder, each from a different place on the circumference. Then, the average center spot will be readily evident.

Step 3. Determine which end you want to be the bowl. If using a faceplate, mount it on the other end and proceed with roughing out. If you are using a chuck, hammer a drive spur into the bowl end and insert it into the headstock spindle. Turn a tenon to fit your chuck on the tailstock end, leaving about a 1/4" flange. Remove bark and some of the excess diameter. The tenon must be slightly less in length than the depth of your chuck.

Step 4. (for chuck and tenon) Remove drive spur, place your chuck on the lathe, and mount the semi-roughed out piece in the chuck, taking special care to seat the flange of the tenon with the chuck all the way around.

Step 5. Rough entire cylinder to slightly larger than the maximum diameter you want the bowl to be. Shape the bowl until it looks right. Drill out the inside of the bowl with a Forstner bit, or hollow it out with a bowl or fingernail gouge. A Forstner bit will save quite a bit of time.

Step 5. Optional: Place a hose clamp around the bowl to give extra support while cutting the inside.

Step 6. Finish the inside of the bowl with the tool of your choice; a bowl gouge, a fingernail gouge, or a boring bar, then sand. I use a barrel sander with sleeve on an electric drill for the rough sanding, then hand sand to 220 or so.

Step 7. Do the final shaping/trimming of the outer portion of the bowl, and taper it to a thin edge at the rim. Measure the depth of the inside part of the bowl and mark the outside at that distance plus at least 1/8" inch. Failure to do this can convert the goblet into a bowl with a hole in the bottom.

Step 8. Remove excess wood at the stem. Finish shaping the bottom of the bowl and the top portion of the stem. Shape the lower portion of the stem, increasing the length until you like it. Then shape the base.

Step 9. If the wood is green, apply two or three coats of Pentacryl if you have it, letting it dry between coats. Sand, and apply finish of your choice, and part off. Pentacryl chases the moisture out, and helps avoid splits.

Note: If the wood is green, hollow the bowl out the same day you turn the outside, and this will minimize cracking and splitting.