

**Jim Rodgers**  
“Magic Oven Process”  
December 14, 2019



Jim Rodgers will end 2019 with a presentation to the Bay Area Woodturners Association on December 14. The Christmas party has been moved to January, and Jim, our incoming president has agreed to bring us another great presentation to close out our year.

During Jim’s presentation in December, he will be using the "magic oven" process, where Jim demonstrates the four phases that comprise the major steps in creating a decorated platter.

- Step 1: Turn the platter
- Step 2: Transfer the design
- Step 3: Burn the design into the wood
- Step 4: Add color

Sanding and finishing will be discussed but not demonstrated during the two-hour presentation.

To speed up the presentation, Jim will have several platters all in different stages of his 4-step process when making and decorating a platter.

With the many training films that Jim has made, he has covered everything from tools to sharpening to cleaning woodturning equipment. Those films reinforce the techniques used when making items similar to platters. And platters also make the perfect Christmas present for those family members who love to entertain guests.

So, come and join us for the last presentation of 2019 as Jim shows us how to make, transfer a design to, burn that design into the wooden platter then add color to bring out the design for the perfect present.

I look forward to seeing you all in December. Look for me in my Christmas best to celebrate our last meeting of the year and the race to Christmas. - *Dave Bentley*





# BAY AREA WOODTURNERS ASSOCIATION

A CALIFORNIA NONPROFIT CORPORATION  
LOCAL CHAPTER AAW

## Club Meetings

Meetings are the 2nd Saturday of each month unless otherwise noted.

8:30 doors open for setup, use store and library, swap ideas, view displays

9:00—12:30 meeting and demo

**Meetings will be held at the PHEC Woodturning Center, 1 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill, CA.**

See [bayareawoodturners.org/](http://bayareawoodturners.org/) for directions and club information.

### **BAWA Officers Meeting -**

Officer meetings are open to all members. Contact Kim Wolfe at: [president@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:president@bayareawoodturners.org) if you would like to be on the agenda.

## 2019-2020 Event Schedule

Dec 14th	Jim Rodgers 8:30-12:30
Jan 11th 2020	Holiday Party 11:00-2:00
Feb 8th 2020	Cindy Navarro 8:30-12:30
Mar 14th 2020	Brad Adams 8:30-12:30
Apr 11th 2020	Dixie Biggs 8:30-12:30
May 9th	TBD

The Bay Area Woodturners Association is a local chapter of the American Association of Woodturners. Our purpose is to provide a meeting place for local turners to share ideas and techniques and to educate the general public regarding the art of turning. The Association usually meets the second Saturday of each month. The Association periodically sponsors exhibitions and demonstrations by local and internationally known turners.

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# Hugh Buttrum

## Christmas Ornaments

November 9, 2019



Hugh Buttrum, our presenter in November, showed us his skills as he created several Christmas ornaments, a fun demonstration of his turning skills and his special brand of humor. His presentation was great fun to watch and listen to.

Like so many in the club, Hugh is a talented turner who has spent many years revising his skills in his chosen hobby of woodturning. Hugh adds to the depth of talent that is found in our club. He is also active in the Wine Country Woodturners in Sonoma.

A unique member that has worked to promote his chosen hobby, sharing his skills and many industry contacts with other clubs to help bring in those professional speakers that we all enjoy.

Hugh does many larger turnings and carvings. With the pieces left over from those turnings, he creates Christmas ornaments, and other small items making good use of all the wood he collects.

Unfortunately, we had technical difficulties with one of the cameras during the presentation so we did not get Hugh on camera this year. But we will try again in the near future.

Hugh, like many of us is self-taught; and like many of us has taken a lesson or three or four. Lessons enough to be asked to be a teaching assistant at Arrowmont Woodturning school. Hugh's favorite book is a Woodturning book by Richard Raffin, bought many years ago he still keeps it in his shop to answer those special woodturning questions.

We hope to see you at the December meeting and at the Holiday party that will be held in January.



The globe portion of the ornament



Buckeye burl mounted



Knocking off corners



Shaping exterior of globe



Hollowing globe



Jig for jam chucking



Thinning finial



Hollowed globe



Turning finial tenon



Coping with top tenon removal



Completed parts

# BAWA New Year's Holiday Kick-off Party

Please calendar Saturday, January 11<sup>th</sup> for the BAWA New Year's Kick Off Party at the Elks Lodge in Walnut Creek from 11 am to 2pm. Kinder's will cater a great lunch of ball tip beef and chicken with all the sides.

Bring 2 or 3 pieces of your best work from 2019 to share with others.

Participate in our only fund raiser of the year by bidding on Silent Auction items and purchasing raffle tickets. We have generous sponsors who have donated to our fund raiser including:

Cook Woods  
Costco  
Craft Supplies  
Packard Woodworks  
Razertip  
Reeds Woodworking  
Rockler  
Ruth Niles  
Treeline  
Wood Turningz



And many of your fellow member's donations, including wood blanks from John Cobb, Joe Dahl, Steve Griswold and Tony Wolcott

We raise funds to be able to host professional demonstrators at our meetings throughout the year. If you have items to donate for the raffle or silent auction, please contact Anna Duncan at [ajduncan3@comcast.net](mailto:ajduncan3@comcast.net) to arrange your donation. We appreciate your generosity!

Make a reservation to attend at the December BAWA meeting (December 14<sup>th</sup>) and on the Club's website. \$15 until December 15<sup>th</sup>, and then the price goes up to \$25.

Happy holidays and see you in January!

## Thank you to our Generous Donors

These organizations generously donated to BAWA to support our fundraiser at the Holiday Party. You will see their items in the Silent Auction and Raffle Baskets. Please support them when shopping for your woodturning supplies!



# President's Chatter

December 2019



Short and sweet. . .

This year is coming to a close, and upon reflection, I can see that the club is set up nicely for continued success. The BAWA board continued to engage our members, explore outside funding sources and solicit corporate contributions. Our Vice President solidified strong relationships with other clubs strengthening our ability to bring in top tier demonstrators. Our fledgling scholarship program is set to encourage a lifelong love of turning. Overall the BAWA mission statement "Our purpose is to provide a meeting place for local turners to share ideas, techniques and to educate the general public regarding the art of turning" is alive and well. The incoming board members bring with them a vast wealth of knowledge and dedication to the craft of turning and we are fortunate to have them take up the reins.

As I take a step back from a leadership role, I look forward to helping the club identify venues to display members' work and share the value of our organization with the general public. Each BAWA member brings a unique perspective to turning. Thank you for sharing that with one another and rolling up your sleeves to keep the club moving forward.

See you Saturday!!!  
Kim Wolfe

## Rockler Helps BAWA Members

BAWA members receive a 10% discount when purchasing directly at the Concord Rockler Store at:

<http://www.rockler.com/retail/stores/ca/concord-store>.

Mention your BAWA membership when checking out, to receive your discount. Rockler also donates part of the proceeds back to the club which help support our Holiday Party raffle.



## Membership News

By Hugh Bevan-Thomas



**IT'S RENEWAL TIME!**

Please see me on December 14 or renew on line.

To date we have only had 30 renewals. It's time to step up to the plate!

Thank you,  
Hugh Bevan-Thomas, Membership

## DON'T FORGET!

Bring some of that wood you have taking up space in your shop to share in our monthly raffle.



# AAW Craft School Scholarships for 2020

## It's scholarship time!

The AAW is pleased to announce we are continuing to offer financial assistance for quality woodturning instruction.

**NEW:** The program has expanded eligibility to every individual AAW member in our chapter, and have introduced a **self-nominating process** using an online submission form at <http://tiny.cc/AAWScholarships>.

28 scholarships will be awarded to selected AAW chapter members to attend classes at one of two craft schools. The AAW Endowment Trust Fund (ETF), in combination with craft schools, provides funds for the scholarships.

[Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts](#) - Gatlinburg, Tennessee. This scholarship offers tuition only for courses directly related to woodturning. Room, board, and travel expenses are the responsibility of the scholarship recipient. Fourteen scholarships will be awarded. Please note Arrowmont schedules selected "Master" woodturning classes. If any scholarship recipients choose "Master" classes, they will be responsible for paying an additional \$125 tuition premium on their own.

[John C. Campbell Folk School](#) - Brasstown, North Carolina. This scholarship offers tuition only for courses directly related to woodturning. Room, board, and travel are the responsibility of the scholarship recipient. Fourteen scholarships will be awarded.

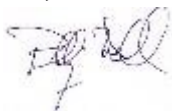
### Nomination Process

- Scholarship nominees must be current AAW members. Guest members and those whose AAW memberships are lapsed or expired are not eligible.
- **NEW:** There is no limit to the number of applications from the AAW members in each chapter.
- Each scholarship nominee may submit no more than one scholarship application.
- If more members are nominated than the total number of available scholarships, a drawing will determine the winners.
- All awards will be for courses in 2020.
- Individual self-nominations must include nominee name, email address, phone number, chapter name, craft school preference, and AAW member number.
- All self-nominations must be entered using the online application at <http://tiny.cc/AAWScholarships> **not later than January 15, 2019.**
- Winners will be notified by January 21, 2019.

**Please communicate this valuable educational opportunity to your chapter members!**

If you would like additional information, or have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me or any of us in the AAW office at [memberservices@woodturner.org](mailto:memberservices@woodturner.org), 877-595-9094 (toll free), Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m., to 4:30 p.m. central time.

Best,



Phil McDonald  
Executive Director



# Tree Article #32 What is a Burl?

By: Tony Wolcott  
November 19, 2019

Burlwood is akin to a wild card in poker. There is no limit to the potential beauty you possess. Burls may disappoint, but the mystery of their creation and expansion draws us into what might be.

First, what is a burl?

Sterling Publishing Company, *The Encyclopedia of Wood*

Burl. A hard, woody outgrowth on a tree, more or less rounded in form, usually resulting from the entwined growth of a cluster of adventitious buds. Such burls are the source of the highly figured burl veneers used for purely ornamental purposes.

Hoadley, R. Bruce, *Understanding Wood, A Craftsman's Guide to Wood Technology*

Burls are large, knoblike projections or bulges formed along the trunks (or sometimes limbs) of trees. The wood tissue within the burl is extremely disoriented and often contains numerous bud formations. The resulting figure is quite attractive and traditionally appears in small articles such as bowls and turnings. Veneers cut from burls also display the fascinating figure. Page 30-31

Hoadley, R. Bruce, *Identifying Wood, Accurate Results With Simple Tools*

Burls develop in virtually every species; only in a few instances are the surfaces of burl wood distinctive enough to aid in identification.

O'Donnell, Michael, *Turning Green Wood*

'Burr' is an English word for a type of growth on the side of the tree, which is full of bud eyes. The type of growth is the tree's reaction to insect irritation under the bark; it is irregular compared with normal tree growth, but regular within itself. The burr appears as a large bulge on the side of the tree, but it also extends into the tree where it has been enclosed as the tree grows. There is no particular grain orientation. Page 16-18

'Burl' is an American term referring to any type of growth on the side of the tree, including burrs. The term also includes healing growth over the surface damage or broken and dead branches. Page 19

I prefer the English term, 'burr.' In arboricultural usage, burr and burl are the same things - a collection of adventitious buds gone mad. Reactive wood, wound closure, ram's horns, vascular bulging-- these are not burls. Attached is a photograph of a decayed black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*) and a burl. I am not sure which came first the chicken or the egg. To avoid another bankruptcy, PG&E has elected to remove this tree. The burr (burl) is solid as an oak.



I have no idea why burls form. I conjecture that the vascular cambium with the in and out production of xylem and phloem, and the occasional ray formation is not responsible. The cork cambium is more likely the culprit, but I have never been fond of the irritating insect theory. Burls are not xylem, but more like apical meristematic growth- stunted, stopped, and started again.

*Continued on following page*

Over time camphor trees will incorporate burls inside the tree, forming a transition zone into your normal annual ring growth. At least with camphor trees, burl growth can interfere with healthy growth. I oversaw 300 camphor trees. These trees, planted in 1950, are 69 years old. One of every five camphors now has a burl or two. As the trees mature, the camphor trees would decline and die with heartrot problems.

The burls were resistant to any decay, and I never saw a CODIT-like compartmentalization response. Vehicles would damage burls, and over time, some decay would occur at the entry point. A camphor burl bowl is pictured to the right.

We are aware that most species have burl capability. However, burl production is rare in many species. Here in the west with young soil, we do not have the collection of old trees that are found in eastern North America or Europe and Asia. We do have some species with spectacular burls: redwoods (both *sempervirens* and *giganteum*, walnuts (*Juglans spp.*), madrones (*Arbutus menziesii*), big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*), oaks (*Quercus spp.*), and I am sure there are others.



Some species-specific burls are very disappointing. If I never get succored into a plum (*Prunus cerasifera* 'KV') or an American elm (*Ulmus americana*) burl again, it will be too soon for me! Photographs of burls can be amazing:



Do not do this or buy redwood burls without identifying the legitimate source.

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The above link connects to an article on burls. The author, Kevin Smith, is well known in the Arboricultural world. His view is that hyperplasia causes burls. Hyperplasia is a greatly abnormal proliferation of xylem production generated by the vascular cambium. Plant growth hormones are involved. The abnormal growth creates an interesting figure. The abnormal orientation is attributed to many factors (bacteria infection, fungi, virus, maybe some insect infestation). There is not a good way to induce burl formation. Removing a burl is damaging to the tree, similar to skinning off the bark and opening the stem to decay.

Burls are a mystery. Do not try to split a burl with an ax. Your ax will be unhappy. Keep in mind that adaptive wood from tension, compression, lean, weight or vascular problems; all adaptations are wood with grain, figure, growth rings. Burls lack this structure. Burls can be dense and strong, just without any orientation, no quarter sawing or rift sawing, no plane sawing, no pith orientation. Since buds represent piths, burls can be called a collection of piths, or simply the piths. You be the judge.



Black Walnut Burl

### Attention BAWA members who shop on Amazon.com

BAWA is always looking for ways to generate funds to improve our Club. BAWA recently registered with Amazon's program to support charitable organizations, AmazonSmile. It is an easy, no cost way for our Club to benefit from your Amazon.com shopping expenditures.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization; **BAWA!** When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same products, prices, and Amazon Prime benefits as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate .5% of the purchase price to BAWA.

Here's how it works:

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you need to designate BAWA to receive donations before you begin shopping. We are one of the almost one million charitable organizations registered with Amazon Smile. From then on when you enter Amazon through [https://smile.amazon.com/](https://smile.amazon.com) every eligible purchase you make will result in a donation to BAWA.

You may want to bookmark the AmazonSmile URL to your desktop or mobile device to insure that you don't end up at the standard Amazon portal, thus bypassing benefit to BAWA.

If you haven't already done so, please consider registering with AmazonSmile and designating BAWA as your beneficiary. And encourage your friends and family to do likewise! We look forward to updating membership monthly on donations from this unique program.



# November Show & Tell



Jean-Louis Meynier-  
Bowl & Hollow Form



Cindy Navarro-  
Bowls & Boxes



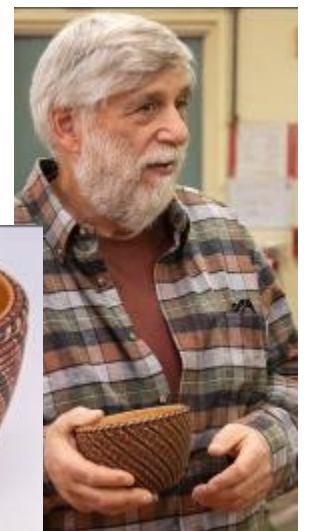
Michael Vergino-  
Bowls & Hollow Form



Joel Albert-  
Platter



Vern Stovall-  
Project



Charlie Saul-  
Basket Illusion

*Continued on following page*

# November Show & Tell (cont.)



John Cobb-  
Crotch Bowl



Mark Knize-  
Spoons & Jig



Hugh Bevan-Thomas-  
Bowls



Ed Steffinger-  
Bowl o' Ornaments



Gary Bingham-  
Beads



Michael Hackett-  
Bowls

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## November Show & Tell (cont.)



Steve Griswold-  
Hollow Form



Carl Mercer-  
Ornaments



Peter Nakatani-  
Bowls, Tops & Ornament



Robert Nolan-  
Ornaments



Corwin Jones-  
Sphere Development



Antique Wood Lathe

## Cutting Bowl Blanks from a Tree

Dale Larson

Photos by Randy Rhine, unless otherwise noted.



**Comparing grain patterns.** Both bowls were turned from flat-sawn blanks, centered on the tree's pith. Left: Bowl rim facing the trunk's center, resulting in a roughly symmetrical, or butterfly, pattern. Right: Bowl rim facing outward, as with natural-edge bowls, resulting in oval rings in the bottom. These patterns correspond to the bottom and top blanks, respectively, drawn on the log in *Photo 1*.

Right photo: Dale Larson

There are many ways to cut bowl blanks out of a tree, but the methodical approach that I take efficiently uses the tree and produces stable, aesthetically pleasing bowl blanks. If you have a chainsaw and are willing to put it to work, I will explain how to evaluate a tree to determine where the best bowl blanks lie in wait. On the other hand, if you buy bowl blanks, my approach will improve your

skill at evaluating the opportunities within the stock available for purchase. The goal is to predict what your finished bowl will look like before a gouge even touches the surface of the blank.

### Timing is everything

When I get green wood, it becomes my top priority until I get the subsequent blanks rough-turned. Unprocessed green timber never improves with

time. The longer the log sits, the more cracks it will develop, fungus will move in and cause discoloration and loss of luster, and insects will tunnel into the wood. For the log I processed for this article, I cut the blanks on a Thursday and rough-turned them the next day, and this was during a relatively cool and humid part of the year.

I use an emulsified wax solution (Sealtite 60) during warm weather to coat the endgrain as soon as I make the cut. I will also spray water on the blanks and cover them with a tarp until I can rough-turn them. In my experience, a cherry bowl blank cut in July will show visible cracks within an hour. If the blank checks, I will have wasted my time in locating the wood and cutting it up.

### Prioritizing the cuts

I almost always start by cutting up the most valuable—meaning highly figured—part of the tree. If the tree has burls, that is where I focus my initial efforts. I cut the crotch pieces next, followed by the lowest part of the trunk where it transitions to the stump. I then work my way up the trunk, leaving the limbs for last. Limbs are full of stress and typically have both the poorest figure and the poorest turning quality. My theory is that if the chainsaw gives up before I do, the best wood from the tree should already be in the back of the pickup.

### Dissecting the tree

The yellow poplar in the accompanying photos lies in my driveway, and knowing I have ample time to finish the task, I decide to cut the straight-grain blanks first. Measuring the tree's diameter, I decide to make 14" (36cm) bowl blanks. I slice a few inches from the butt of the log to remove any checking and to help clarify the grain pattern. I then cut the

## Chainsaw Safety

While the steps in this article rely on a chainsaw, detailed guidelines for the safe use of this both helpful and dangerous tool are beyond the scope of this article. Several articles related to chainsaw safety have been published in *American Woodturner*; for one, see "Play it Safe," by A.J. Hamler in the Fall 2008 issue (vol 23, no 3, page 56). The price of using a chainsaw without appropriate precautions can be high, even deadly, either for the saw operator or observers who are too close to the action. When I am using a chainsaw, no one is allowed to be close to me or to hold the piece of wood I am cutting.



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first round 15" (38cm) long, which will provide leeway to bandsaw the blank to its final 14" diameter.

A stable section for a utility vessel requires leaving the pith out of any blank. Checking originates from the pith, so excluding this area eliminates a reliable source of stress in the wood. With that in mind, there are three basic orientations for blanks from straight-grain wood (*Photo 1*). I have roughly marked the grain lines to illustrate how they are oriented in each blank. The blank on the bottom will yield my favorite grain pattern. It is flat sawn with the center of the bowl aligned with the bottom of the curve of the growth rings. This blank will yield a pleasing, symmetrical grain pattern mirrored in each side of the bowl—a pattern I call butterfly grain.

Quarter-sawn blanks lie on both sides of the pith. For the species of timber that I use, I rarely make quarter-sawn bowls because, to my eye, the resulting grain pattern is not as appealing—the grain lines run straight through the bottom of the bowl and show little or no curl, eyes, or any of the other variants that make wood visually appealing. The exception is when I can acquire a species with strong medullary rays such as our local Oregon white oak (Garry oak). The grain in quarter-sawn oak can far outshine its flat-sawn relatives.

The top blank in *Photo 1* can be used to make a natural-edge vessel, or the outer edge can be removed for a smooth rimmed bowl. The grain orientation running through this blank will produce an approximately round or oval grain pattern in the bottom of the finished bowl. I usually evaluate the blank and consider whether the outer (bark) edge will yield a balanced shape, and if so I will keep the outside intact for a natural-edge bowl. Here I decide against a natural-edge form.

Yet another orientation is possible, an arrangement I call slash-sawn, although the grain orientation approximates



**A secondary benefit of a rip chain is that when it is dull, it has half as many teeth to sharpen as a standard chain.**

rift-sawn dimensioned lumber (*Photo 2*). The slash-sawn blanks will distort significantly while drying, sometimes to the point of being unworkable, and the finished bowl will simply not be as attractive as the flat-sawn bowl. It is true that more of the log will be lost in taking the one flat-sawn blank instead of two slash-sawn blanks. Turner and teacher Lane Philips' mantra is, "Don't trade volume for beauty," and I too encourage taking the best blanks out of the tree, not the most blanks.

I balance the round on wood blocks to prepare it for cutting, ensuring the

round is stable and will not roll during the cuts (*Photo 3*). I orient the cut lines vertically, as cutting straight down is easier and more accurate than attempting an angled cut. Because most of my cuts are with the grain, I use a rip, or skip-tooth, chain on my chainsaws. These chains also work for cross-cutting and are less prone to clogging from the long curls generated by the rip cut. A secondary benefit of a rip chain is that when it is dull, it has half as many teeth to sharpen as a standard chain.

I make all the parallel cuts, stopping each cut short of exiting the log (*Photo 4*).>

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Before I make the first center cut, I mark the location of the pith on the far end of the round. This guides my cut to keep it running parallel through the block with the pith line. Having the

grain oriented straight through the blank is important to the appearance of the finished bowl. The prettiest bowl pattern has the grain parallel to the bottom of the bowl. If I have to choose

between making the cut parallel to the pith line and the bark line, I generally cut parallel to the bark line to preserve the desired grain orientation.

The quarter-sawn blank rests on my cutting bench, a 22" (56cm-) high jig that minimizes my stooping and saves wear-and-tear on my back (*Photo 5*). I cut outside the checks around the pith; I will get two quarter-sawn blanks out of the slab. I did not cut through the slab because the support blocks underneath the blank are in the wrong location. A through-cut in this situation could pinch my bar.

The three basic straight-grain blanks sit on the workbench, bandsaw ready (*Photo 6*). The flat top and bottom offer two stable surfaces for the bandsaw table. Trying to cut a round or irregular-bottom bowl blank on the bandsaw can lead to an unsupported and dangerous cut.

### Extracting the blanks



**5** The center section of the log, next to the pith area, yields quartersawn blanks. Depending on the size of the blank and your bandsaw, it may be possible to take the log section straight to the bandsaw for sectioning.



**6** With carefully planned and executed chainsaw cuts, the blanks are ready for the bandsaw table, where the bowl blanks are cut round from the square chainsawed blanks. From left: a flat-sawn, natural-edge-oriented blank (but in this case, with the bark eliminated), a quarter-sawn blank, and a flat-sawn blank.

### Cutting crotch section blanks



**7** As with the straight-grain log, the crotch section is cut apart vertically. Transferring the location of the pith to the top of the log on both ends, as well as drawing the vertical line to the pith, guides the central cut.



**9** The top two blanks promise the most figure, while the bottom blank will likely be fairly plain. The author decides to sacrifice the bottom blank to optimize the dimensions and location of the upper two forms.



### Cutting the crotch

I cut a 15" (38cm-) round from the tree that includes the crotch section (*Photo 7*). In the area between the two limbs' pith lines will lie an expanse of interlocked feather grain, or crotch figure, and I have attempted to cross-cut the log below this region. A straight line connects the pith of the limb to the pith of the tree. As with the previous round, I orient this line vertically for cutting. I mark the pith at the end of the round and transfer the mark to the top of the log where I will use the location to guide my cut (*Photo 8*). I also mark any checking to be avoided around each pith, of which there is little in this log. *Photo 9* shows the approximate orientation of the three blanks I could extract. If this were expensive or rare wood, I would separate the bottom bowl blank first, but because that blank would be flat-sawn and straight-grain, I decide to forego extracting it.

I make the center cut first, stopping short of cutting completely through

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the log (Photo 10). Then I slice off each side before returning to finish the center cut. I always saw from the upper end of a crotch section where the most prized feather figure lies. The feather will taper off towards the bottom of the cut, so if my cut wanders a little, there is less likelihood of losing the best figure.

Figure 1 shows how the feather-figure bowls are oriented in the tree's crotch. The side view in this illustration shows the location of the pith, which I intend to bisect with my cut. The bowl bottoms are oriented towards the center of the tree, placing the feather pattern in the bottom of the finished bowl.

With the crotch section halved, I mark out the best patterns with my calipers and highlight the pith lines with red chalk (Photo 11). Cutting the blanks along the pith lines yields two bowl and two spindle blanks. The feather figure lies above the pith line of the limb and to the right side of the trunk pith line (Photo 12). This crotch did not have a big feather area. Harder to see in the photos is that the weight of the limb has compressed the wood at the junction with the trunk to create fiddleback figure, which I have shaded with a marker.

These blanks are now ready to be bandsawed and rough-turned. I will make my final adjustments to the forms for grain alignment as I rough out the blanks between centers, an approach I learned from John Jordan. Turning between centers gives me an opportunity to make final adjustments to the bowl blank and possibly correct mistakes made during chainsawing.

### Final thoughts

There are many advantages to working green wood, including salvaging local timber that may not be commercially available. Cutting one's own blanks offers the chance

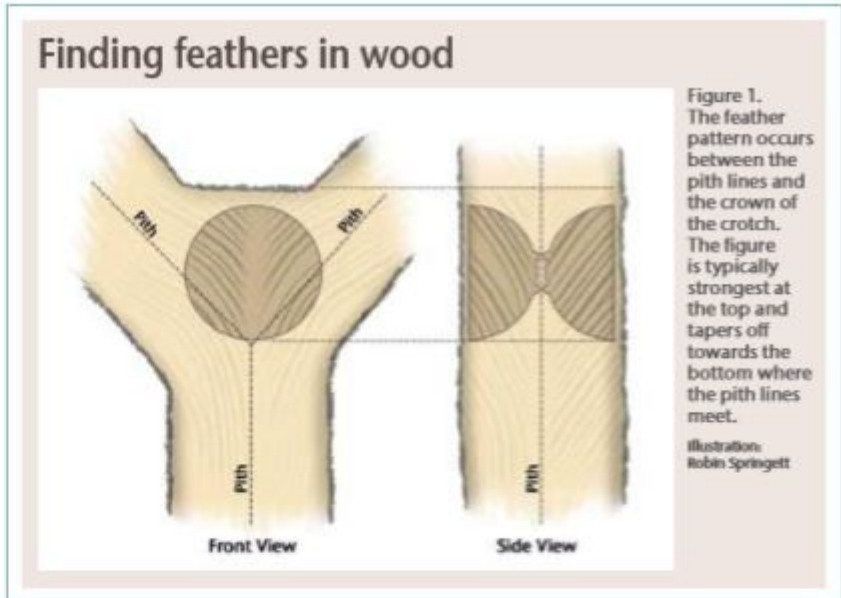


Figure 1. The feather pattern occurs between the pith lines and the crown of the crotch. The figure is typically strongest at the top and tapers off towards the bottom where the pith lines meet.

Illustration: Robin Springett



11 Because of the stability of quartersawn timber, the two spindle blanks opposite the limbs are worth coating with wax and setting aside to dry.

12 Although this particular log has little feather figure, the amount of fiddleback figure below the limb is a pleasant surprise.

to optimize blank size and grain patterns. Turning green wood also generates less dust and requires less physical effort than seasoned wood. Finally, when I rough out green blanks, I get to see colors in the fresh wood that no one else will see. Fresh madrone can be bright red, almost fluorescent, and black walnut can show shades of deep purple and green. Unfortunately, these bright colors fade as the wood dries. With experience processing my own trees, I rarely buy a bowl blank. I find I am

no longer willing to give up control of this part of the creative process.

For those who would like to dive deeper into this subject, I recommend two books: *Reading the Wood* by Michael Elkan and *Turning Green Wood* by Michael O'Donnell. ■

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(Article courtesy of AAW)