

Southern Turners Project Sheet

Carver's Mallet



A carver's mallet is generally used to strike carving chisels; however, they are handy for numerous applications around your workshop. The plans here show how to make a mallet from several pieces of wood, thereby reducing the size of the blank required. The mallet head should be a of a close-grained hardwood, but the handle can be made of pretty much anything, although the use of a contrasting-coloured timber will produce a nicer looking mallet. For the head of the mallet in the plans here a blank of 70mm x 70mm x 100mm was used, and the handle was from a piece 30mm x 30mm x 250mm and has produced a very usable sized mallet, however carver's mallets come in many different sizes and weights, and you should adjust the timber sizes to suit yourself.

Mount the blank for your mallet head between centres.



Rough the blank to round and create a tenon on each end to allow for mounting in a chuck. Don't be too concerned with the shape of the head at this stage, as we will remount it later to complete.



Mount your blank in a chuck, ensuring it is centred. Using a 25mm forstner bit or similar mounted in your tail stock, drill through the centre of your blank. If you can drill all the way through from one end, take care not to drill into your chuck. If your drill bit is not long enough to go completely through from one end, drill as far as possible and reverse the blank in the chuck and complete the hole from the other end.



Remove the blank from the chuck and mount a small piece of scrap wood. Form a short tenon to suit the hole in the head blank. Using a cone live centre in the tail stock, remount the head between centres.



Shape the mallet head as desired and sand to complete. Design considerations: Carver's mallets are better if they can stand up on your work bench as they don't roll away and are easier to grab, therefore a flat top is beneficial.



Mount the blank for your handle between centres and rough turn to round. Mark a line slightly longer (2-3mm) than the length of your mallet head.



Turn down the marked section to form a long tenon that will fit into the mallet head. It does not need to be an overly tight fit, a snug fit that can be pushed on by hand is ideal.



Test fit the head onto your handle, ensuring that the handle pokes slightly through the head. Adjust your handle if necessary.



Shape the grip section of your handle as desired, sand and part off.



On a bandsaw and using a V block to support your handle, cut a slot along the centre of the tenon end of your handle. Cut approximately half the length of the tenon section



Glue the head onto your handle



Cut a thin wedge from the same timber as the mallet head and glue into the handle slot. Hammer it in gently to knock it in tight.



Once the glue has fully dried, carefully cut off the overhanging wedge and handle protruding from the mallet head and sand smooth.



Apply a finish to complete.

Just a thought: Varnish type finishes will sit on the surface on the timber and will damage quickly and easily when your mallet is used. A penetrating finish such as an oil is ideal as the finish will soak into the wood and be much more durable.

