

Southern Turners Project Sheet

Drop Lid Box



A drop lidded box (or bowl) is a vessel where the lid sits lower than the rim. When making the vessel and lid from the same piece of timber they are typically turned from spindle blanks, as bowl blanks with enough depth are difficult to acquire, and usually cost prohibitive. That said, the vessel and lid can be made from different pieces of timber. The following procedure will focus on using a spindle blank to create both vessel and lid.



1. Start by mounting a spindle blank that, given the lid/opening will be a smaller diameter than the pot, needs to wide enough to suit. The length of the blank needs to allow for the lid and some waste, and to provide some wriggle room, is best to be around 1.5 the width.

2. Once you have the blank mounted, turn it to round and create a tenon/spigot at the end you want to be the lid of the finished product. Keep the tenon close to the minimum hold of your chuck, not only for a better hold, but also to give more working room when shaping the lid later on.



3. Mount the tenon in your chuck, and bring up tailstock support. Start roughing out the exterior of the base allowing room for a tapered top, to accommodate the recessed lid. Mark out the diameter for a mortice to fit your chuck. The closer you get this to the ideal fit for your chuck jaws, the better it will hold, and the less marking will be made by the jaws in the next step. Remove the tailstock and create the mortice. Sand, finish and/or embellish the bottom of the pot now, as you won't have easy access to it again.

4. Turn the piece around mounting the base in the mortice just created. Keep tailstock support and finish shaping/sanding the pot exterior. When determining the exterior shape, keep in mind how the hollowing of the shape will be completed.



5. It's now time to separate the lid from the base. At the top of your base section go in with a parting tool angled toward the base. Take it down thin enough that it can be separated by twisting the two pieces apart. The angled cut makes it easier when creating the lid, but makes it very difficult to saw through. Don't be concerned about tear out as where the join was will be turned away in future steps.

6. The base can now be hollowed, being careful to allow for the mortice depth. A shortcut here can be to use a forstner bit to take out the bulk of the material. In your design of the interior ensure you create a shoulder for the lid to sit on. Once this is done sand, finish and/or embellish as desired. Take care when sanding to preserve the shoulder for the lid. The pot is now complete and as the mortice still in place, can be remounted for re-working if required.



7. Mount the lid piece into the chuck. Create a tenon to suit the diameter/depth of your pot. This can be done by either measuring the required dimensions, or just 'sneaking up' on it with regular test fits. Keep in mind it will need to be somewhat conical to fit inside the flared top of the pot. This will be the underside of the lid.

8. Once you have your desired fit, shape as much of the lid as possible. When happy with the shape, sand, finish and/or embellish as desired. This will be the last time the bottom of the lid is accessible on the lathe. Be careful when sanding to maintain the fit of the lid. Now part off the lid.



9. Reverse the parted off lid and fit it into your chuck. In this picture paper towel was used to reduce any marking by the jaws, and they were set to a firm, but not overly tight grip. As there's not a lot holding it in place, complete the top of the finial/knob with light cuts. If you were careful when parting it off, it will only require sanding. Once satisfied with the shape sand, finish and/or embellish as desired.

10. You're done! Time to give your tools a quick resharpening, ready for the next project.

