

Southern Turners Project Sheet

Multi-Centre Christmas Tree

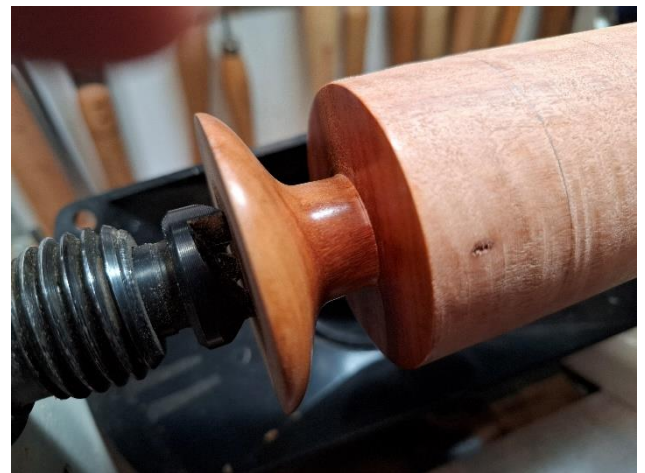


This project is a tree that is turned on multiple centres to create a leaning effect. It is entirely done between centres, can be made reasonably quickly, and make great gifts. You can use a square spindle blank, but this project also lends itself to starting with a bit of branch timber also, making it very cost effective, and allowing for a more rustic appearance if desired.



1. Start with a blank (between centres) around 50mm wide, by 150mm long, and turn to round. Once you have it round Mark out the sections of the tree with the base/trunk section at the headstock end, and the tree sections toward the tailstock. Mark each tree section a little smaller than the last, to accommodate the narrowing of the tree as it reaches the top. You're aiming for five (or more) sections above the trunk, with the last being waste.

2. You can now turn the base and trunk. If you cut a shallow tenon on the left (not done here), it will make it easier to sand off any drive centre marks at the end. Any friction sanding or finishes need to be applied at this time while the piece is centred.



3. Mark five different centre points in a straight line at the tailstock end, which is one for each section. They only need to be 3-5mm apart. The fifth one is unlikely to be used, but if the wood behaves you may be able to get an additional section out of what would otherwise be waste. The headstock drive centre uses the same centre point throughout the project, but for the first tree section mount it with the tailstock in position 1, and from there move through the others in sequence. Make sure everything is tightened up, as the drive centre will no longer be sitting flush on the base.

4. Plunge cut with a parting tool on the left hand side of the first line. This will be a little blurry as the piece is now very off centre. It looks best if you aim for this depth to be a little narrower than the trunk width before it. Now using a spindle gouge shape the first section to its final dimensions. A skew or carbide cutters could also be used. As in the previous step, any friction sanding or finishes need to be done now for this section.



5. Move the tailstock centre to position 2, and repeat step 4. This process then repeats as you work your way up the tree.

6. Once you reach tailstock position 4, a decision needs to be made as to whether to turn it down thin (as pictured), or attempt getting a fifth layer from the piece. The fifth layer is more difficult as there'll be a lot of pressure applied to hold the piece, with little support timber.



7. Part off the top and hand sand the very point. The base can be hand sanded, but should a linisher be available, it's a lot quicker. The two pictured without any finish were turned from branch timber. Time to sharpen the tools ready for the next project!