



Sand and finish

You must sand the honey dipper before separating it from the lathe. Start with 150 grit and finish with 220-grit sandpaper.

Use paper towels to apply a coat of mineral oil and burnish it into the wood. At the lathe, I never use rags. A single thread from a rag can wrap around your finger in a slit second, causing serious injury.

Add a light coat of beeswax and buff with paper towels.



Separate the ends

After buffing, continue to pare down each end of the honey dipper with the $\frac{3}{8}$ " spindle gouge. Reduce both ends down to just under $\frac{1}{8}$ ", then cut through the right end while cradling the honey dipper in the left hand. Reach under your left forearm and separate the left end from the lathe.

Sand and finish the tiny nibs on each end of the honey dipper and find yourself a pot of honey and a fresh, warm biscuit. ■

Egg Cups

By Nick Cook



Photo: John Hetherington

The egg cup is an ideal project to develop turning skills and have a little fun at the same time.

During the past 25-plus years, The Great Egg Cup Race at the Utah Woodturning Symposium has become a spectacle of sorts for woodturners from all over the world. The event matches individuals and duos of woodturners against each other and the clock to see who or what team can out-turn the rest. Richard Raffan holds the record—an amazing 18 seconds.

According to English turner Bill Jones, “You can watch heaps of really good wood being totally ruined by some of the world’s finest woodturners!”

I have always avoided the temptation of this event. I just hate to ruin good wood! Most of the end products just barely resemble

Humpty Dumpty
sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty
had a great fall
...NOT!

If only Humpty
Dumpty had been
in an egg cup,
this never
would have
happened!

what we know as an egg cup, but everyone seems to enjoy watching world-class turners make fools of themselves.

An egg cup is a worthy project for both beginners and intermediate turners. In addition to incorporating spindle technique into a practical project, it introduces end-grain turning without the pressure of turning a lid (as many boxes require).

Many new woodturning students enjoy choosing a profile or coming up with their own design. Several profiles are shown on the next page.

Youth attending the symposium in Louisville will have a chance to turn egg cups during afternoon sessions in the Youth Turning Room. Please join us!

Get started

This project requires three lathe tools: a $\frac{3}{4}$ " or $1\frac{1}{4}$ " spindle roughing gouge, a $\frac{3}{8}$ " spindle gouge, and a parting tool. In the Youth Turning Room, we'll turn with the smaller $\frac{3}{4}$ " spindle roughing gouge.

You may also prefer to make finishing cuts with a roundnose scraper. You will also need a scroll chuck to hold the blank for end-grain hollowing.

For turning stock, select a $4\frac{1}{2}$ "-long piece of $2\frac{1}{2}$ "-square soft maple.

Prepare the blanks

With a straightedge or centerfinder, locate the centers on each end of the blank. Use an awl or centerpunch to make a dimple at each center. With a mallet, tap the drive center into one end of the blank and place the drive center into the spindle of the lathe.

Bring up the tailstock with the live center to the other end of the blank. Lock the tailstock in place and turn the hand wheel to apply pressure to

the end of the blank. Lock the quill in place.

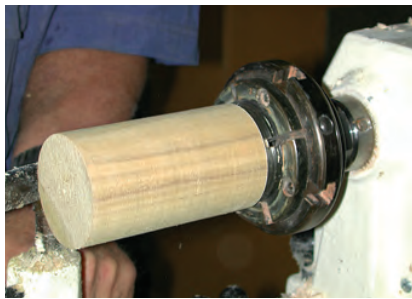
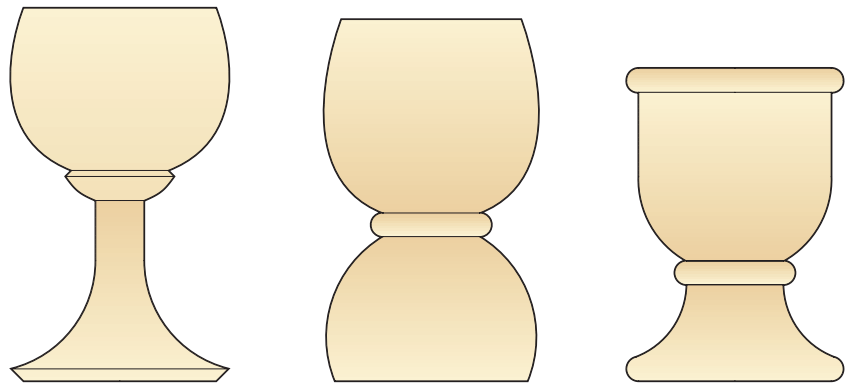
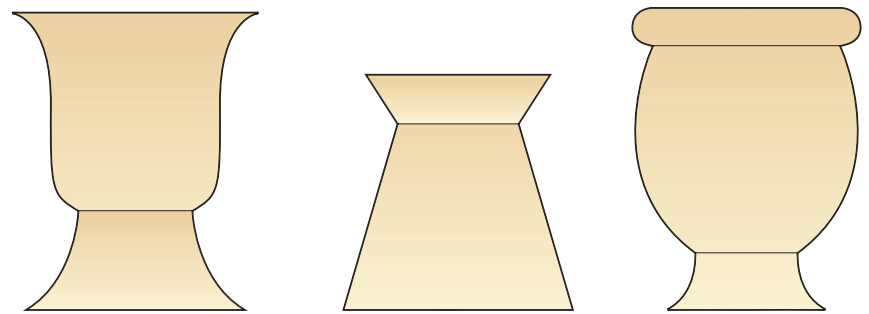
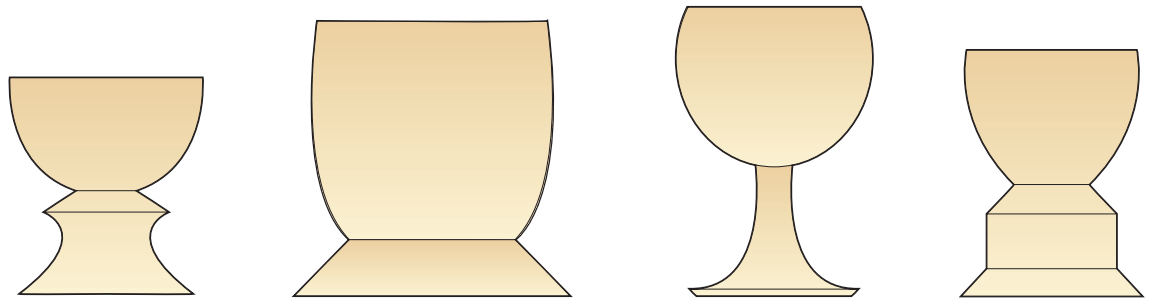
Place the tool rest parallel to the blank, about $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the corners and just below the centerline. Lock the tool rest in place and rotate the spindle by hand before turning on the lathe.



Turn the egg cup

Set the lathe speed at 1000 rpm and turn on the machine. Use a spindle roughing gouge to turn the square down to a cylinder, as shown *above*. With a parting tool, turn a $\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$ " tenon at one end of the blank. A gauge like the one shown *below* will speed the sizing.





Remove the blank from between centers and remove the drive center from the spindle. Slide the tailstock to the right end of the bed and remove the live center.

Mount the blank in the chuck and screw the chuck onto the spindle. Position the tool rest parallel to the blank, $\frac{1}{4}$ " away and just below the centerline.

Lock the tool rest in place and rotate the spindle by hand to ensure clearance.

Turn on the lathe and make a peeling cut across the end of the blank with the spindle gouge.

Stop the lathe, measure from the right end back to 4", and make a mark. Make another mark at 2". Start the lathe and make a $\frac{1}{4}$ "-deep parting cut at each mark.

The center mark defines where the bowl meets the stem, and the left mark defines the bottom of the finished egg cup.



Now, shape the outside of the egg-cup bowl. Use the spindle gouge to create your own details at the rim of the bowl and at the base of the bowl. Leave enough stock at the bottom of the bowl to support hollowing the interior. *Above* are 10 profiles for idea starters. ▶



Take the fear out of catches

Part of the woodturning learning curve is experiencing catches and learning tool control to avoid them. You can help your turning student overcome the fear of catches by selecting a cup drive (also known as a dead cup center or safe driver) for spindle projects. And it's not just for beginners!

Instead of a nasty catch, a cup drive—when coupled with light tailstock pressure—will stop the spindle. This method also minimizes damage to the turning stock.

The cup drive allows the turner to take a piece on and off the lathe without centering problems and reduces the probability of a piece being thrown off the lathe.

Experience end grain

Stop the lathe and position the tool rest across the end of the blank and about ¼" below the center. Hold the spindle gouge level and perpendicular to the end of the blank and push the tip of the tool about ¼" into the end grain.

Next, rotate the flute of the gouge to about 45 degrees to the left and push the handle to the right. This will push the tip of the tool toward the rim of the blank. Work to within ¼" of the rim (about 1½" inside diameter). Repeat until you reach a depth of 1½" to 1¾". If necessary, refine the surface with a roundnose scraper. Aim for a uniform wall thickness of ¼".

Reposition the tool rest to fine-tune the outside of the egg cup. Use the parting tool to reduce the top of the stem down to the finished diameter. Create transition details with the ⅜" spindle gouge.

Continue turning with the spindle gouge to reduce the rest of the stem to the desired diameter and detail the foot of the egg cup.

Sand and finish

Before parting the egg cup from the chuck, sand and finish all exposed surfaces.

Always remove the tool rest before sanding at the lathe. Start with 150-grit sandpaper and finish with 220 grit. Remove all sanding dust with a paper towel.

With the lathe turned off, apply urethane oil with a paper towel to all exposed surfaces. Allow the oil to penetrate for 5 to 10 minutes, then wipe off the excess. Turn on the lathe and burnish the surfaces with a clean, dry paper towel.

Use the parting tool to separate the egg cup from the waste in the chuck. Make the cut slightly angled toward the top of the cup to create a hollow in the bottom.

Sand the bottom by hand and apply oil. ■

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What about lefties?

It's believed that about 10 percent of the population is left-handed. Even though many right-handed turners learn to become ambidextrous at the lathe (and certainly capable of working to the left and right), there's always a little fear the first time you assist a left-handed student. Buck up!

Here are three suggestions:

- *Teach students to use the right hand as the back hand.
- *Assure the leftie student that he or she is a step ahead of right-handed students because of the ambidextrous skills most lefties acquire in this right-handed world.
- *Remind all your students that turning is about control—not strength.

—Nick Cook

How to photos: Cathy Wike-Cook