

# Bird House Ornament

## Introduction:

I save small blocks of wood as I part them off or cut them off larger billets I prepare, just because I am so frugal or to be more exact, too cheap! I will cut these blocks up as described below and fashion small to medium size bird houses, some ornate, some like acorns etc. I will sell these at various vendor fairs from 25 to 35 dollars on a regular basis. They sell quite well at the Fall fairs for Christmas. I also have made some simple stands and will sell them with the houses throughout the year! I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the "Gateway Turners" for their unselfish sharing of ideas and methodology. I would be remiss in not making a special mention of my mentor Jim Silva for getting me started and being always a phone call away. Also Ian Manley for his patience and wealth of knowledge. These Bird Houses are quite simple; I have attempted to be as thorough as I can, not to bore you with detail but to include all. Good luck and Thanks Again!! JLwoods

## Blank preparations:

**Bottom Blank:** 1 ¾" x 1 ¾" x 3 ½ to 5" long in dimension.

Mark or scribe a line laterally down the center of the blank (from top to bottom). Find and mark the center of the top (*engrain*) of the blank with a pencil using intersecting crossing lines. See Fig #1

Now locate the centers for the holes that need to be drilled. See Fig #1

Top hole is to be ¼" in diameter, ¾" down from top of blank intersecting the middle on the centering line marked in the middle of the blank. See Fig #1

Bottom hole is to be 1/8" in diameter, 1 ¼" down from top of blank below the ¼" hole on the centering line marked in the middle of the blank above it. Drill both respective holes into the middle of the blank as shown in Fig # 1.

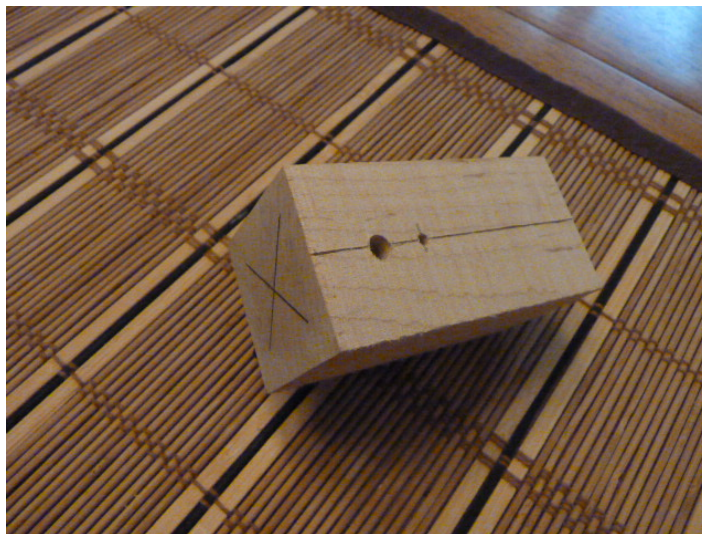


Fig # 1

**Top Blank:** 2" x 2" x 3 ½" to 4" long in dimension. Mark the center on the engrain.

There are no other specific preparations for the top blank other than to use a contrasting color of wood.

*Are we having fun yet???*

## **Turning:**

### **Bottom Blank:**

- 1.) Chuck up bottom blank with drill holes outwards towards the tail stock. Be careful to center the blank at the live center end using the “X” marked in the engrain. **Note:** *With standard 50 mm jaws I frequently chuck up square stock up to 2” square.*
- 2.) Turn bottom blank approximately  $1\frac{3}{8}$ ” –  $1\frac{1}{2}$ ” in diameter. This diameter can vary according to your desires but, DO NOT begin to turn the bottom of the birdhouse yet. Just turn your best finish diameter. See Fig # 2



Fig # 2

- 3.) Remove tail stock, insert a chuck with 1” Forstner Bit. Drill engrain approximately  $1\frac{3}{8}$ ” deep just enough to clear smaller (post)  $1/8$ ” hole. Again, if you make a smaller diameter house/bowl you’ll need a smaller bit. See Fig #3

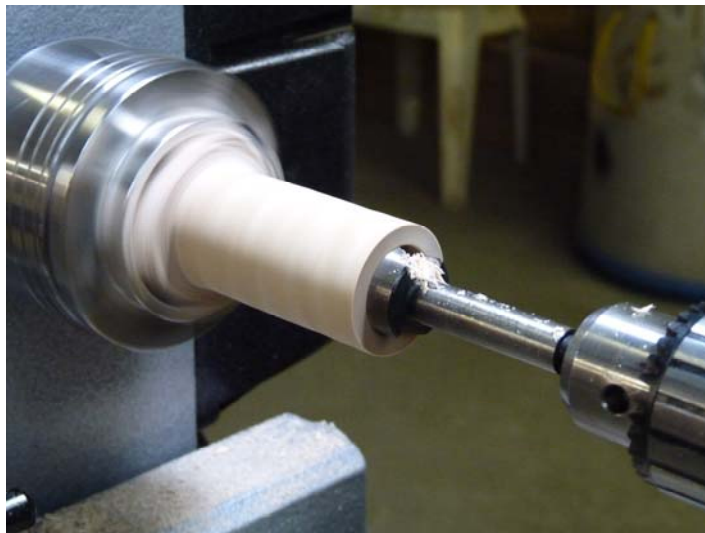


Fig # 3

- 4.) I cut a small square tenon out at the top of the opening to accommodate the top. Turn the bottom bowl of the Birdhouse as desired with or without a finial. Before parting off, sand and finish as desired. See Fig #4

**NOTE:** If a friction polish is going to be your desired finish, NOW would be the time to apply it!!!!



Fig # 4

- 5.) Part off the house/bowl. I use a large cone center positioned inside the hollowed out bowl and with slight pressure from the live center I part and finish off the bottom with a detail gouge. A parting tool is the other option.
- 6.) Now make a 1" jamb chuck out of the remaining stock or a piece of scrap. Place the open end of the birdhouse on the jamb chuck. I save and keep several of these around just for this purpose. I also have made a flat blunt cone that fits over my live center to move up and put slight pressure in the tip of the bottom of birdhouse if a more refined tip is needed to be cut. Also helpful for a friction polish. Finish off the bottom of the birdhouse. See Fig. #5



Fig # 5

- 7.) Now I chuck up the 2" square top stock and turn the desired diameter – In this case  $1\frac{3}{4}$ " –  $1\frac{7}{8}$ ". True up the engrain and make a mortise to receive the tenon you made and left on the body. Fit the body into the top, a tight snap fit is not necessary as this will be glued later. See Fig #6



Fig # 6

8.) Turn the top to your desired shape, sand, finish and part off. See Fig #7

**NOTE:** If a friction polish is going to be your desired finish, NOW would be the time to apply it!!!!



Fig # 7

9.) For the Post, I use a branch from a tree or twig however I have also turned small 1/8" diameter post. However, I think they look too contrived and I prefer the look of the twig. Your choice that's why they have black, red, blue, yellow etc. Assemble the top to the bottom using medium CA glue and the post to the bottom 1/8" hole of the birdhouse.

10.) I now put a drill chuck in the drive of the lathe and with a number # 56 drill bit I drill a hole in the top of the roof of the bird house to receive an eye. See Fig # 8 & 9. I use an Eagle Claw plain shank # 2 hook (084F-2). Cut the hook at the bend and fit the eye into the hole drilled with the #56 drill bit and secure with medium CA glue. I finish by dipping the entire birdhouse in 1/2 lacquer and 1/2 lacquer thinner, 3 times a charm. **Thanks Ian for the finishing solution and fish hook thingy!!**

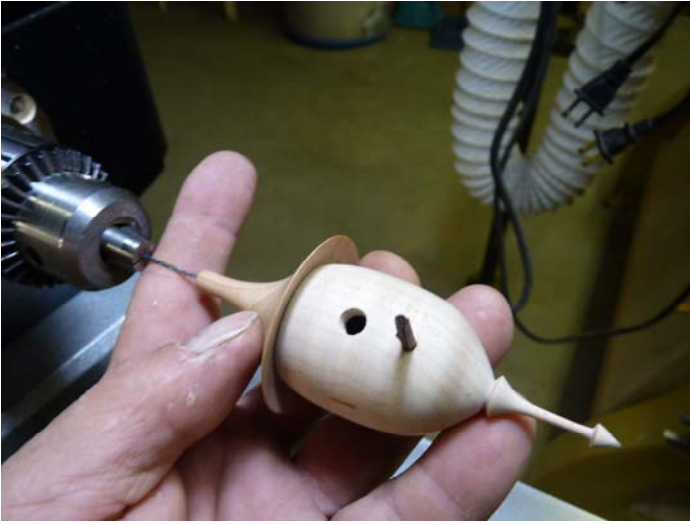


Fig # 8



Fig # 9