Turning
A
Natural Edge Bowl

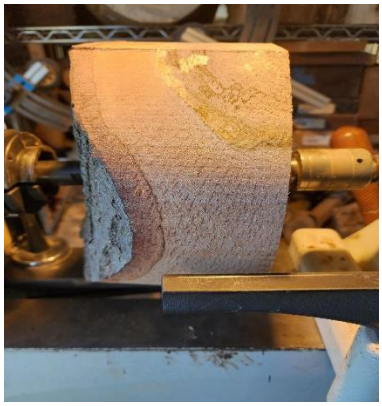
Don Roetker
November 1, 2022

Tools Required
Spindle Gouge,3/8” Bowl Gouge,
¼” Parting Tool,Round nose scraper

1. Determine and mark center point on each end. Spot drill through the bark for spur drive.

2. Mount blank between drive center in headstock and live center in tail stock (1). Center both ends as close to center as possible. Mark tool rest or use end to align lowest part of cambium layer on one side of blank. (2) Rotate blank to other side to see if cambium layer is in the same position as the mark. If not move tail stock end of blank until both sides are approximately equal.

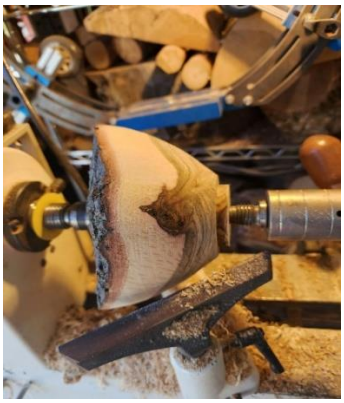
(1) 

(2) 

3. Using a 3/8” bowl gouge, begin turning blank from tail stock end, roughly shaping to a bowl shape to remove bulk wood and help balance blank so speed can be increased without vibration. Do not turn past cambium layer. (3) Now start turning blank from bark end until blank is round (4), Turning from bark end toward tail stock will help keep the bark from peeling from blank. Continue turning outside shape of bowl and build a tenon about 2 ½” in diameter and ½’ long. Use parting tool to ensure corner of tenon at bottom of bowl is square and 90°, no radius in the corner.(5)

(3) 

(4) 

(5) 

4. Remove turned blank from between centers and mount in chuck using tenon. (6)
5. Using the 3/8” bowl gouge, begin removing center of bowl working toward edge only going about half of the depth of the bowl. (7)
6. Slowly remove wood to bark edge to desired wall thickness to a depth about ¼” to ½” below the cambium layer. (8)

(6)  (7)  (8) 

7. Once desired wall thickness is achieved from bark to below cambium, you will not turn this area again due the green wood being flexible and will move without the supporting wood below. (9) Continue removing wood from the center of the blank. Remove wood only about 2” in depth at a time from center to edge. (10)

(9)  (10)  (11) 

8. Finish removing center wood and try to maintain uniform wall thickness around the entire shape and bottom of the bowl. This will help maintain the bowl shape while drying and reduce the likelihood of cracking. (11)

9. Using the round nose scraper remove any tool marks left from the bowl gouge.

10. Sand interior of bowl by hand or with power sander using 60 to 80 grit paper with the lathe NOT running. Do Not Turn lathe on While Sanding. Sand exterior of bowl also at this time. Power sander can be used, but only with the lathe turned off.

11. Remove bowl from chuck. Mount reverse chucking fixture in chuck and check to see if it is running true. If not loosen and retighten. (12) Use foam sheet between chucking fixture and bowl interior. Bring up tail stock with live center installed and align the center with center point in bottom of tenon. (13)

(12)  (13) 

12. Using detail gouge or bowl gouge begin removing tenon taking very light cuts from end to bottom of bowl, until tenon is about 1" in diameter. Using a very light push cut face the bottom of the bowl until desired thickness is achieved. You can remove and check with calipers, if necessary, then remount and continue. Once desired thickness is achieved continue reducing tenon to about 3/8" in diameter. The remaining tenon will be cut off by hand with a saw.

(14)  (15) 

13. Sand bottom of bowl with power sander rotating bowl frequently so bottom has a uniform flatness with a slight concave.

14. To help reduce cracking and keep uniform diameter, place bowl in paper bag with wood shavings and let dry for several days to a few weeks depending on bowl wall thickness. Once bowl is dry, hand sand and finish.

15. Sigh and date you project and display proudly.