

“Everyone is looking to save money and this mallet is a nice project to turn...”



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Turn a carving-style mallet

Mark Baker turns this carving-style mallet from a piece of European ash and lignum vitae

Everyone is looking to save money and this mallet is a nice project to turn, but is also something that will last a lifetime and prove to be invaluable in any workshop. It is a typical carving-style mallet but all woodworkers can use it. The mallet head is lignum vitae, a traditional timber for this style of mallet. I used an old lawn-green bowling ball, but you can use a lignum end-grain block, should you choose. Lignum vitae is very dense, close-grained, naturally oily and has the ability to withstand heavy impact blows with minimal damage to the mallet head. The handle is made from European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and contrasts very well with the lignum. This timber is resilient and takes shock loads well, so is a good choice for a mallet handle. Just make sure when you make it to shape the handle to a form that fits well in your hand.

I chose to sand the item and didn't apply any finish. The project was sanded down to 400 grit and the naturally oily lignum was left to effectively self-finish.

The handle, in my opinion, is better

unfinished as it feels nicer in the hand. But if you prefer, you can apply a finish if so you choose. The choice is yours.

I also used wedges to lock the mallet head in place and I didn't use any glue. I chose to very gently taper the bore of the mallet head in order for the wedges to lock the shaft in place securely. You can leave it parallel, but the hold is not as good and a bit of glue may be required if you do so.

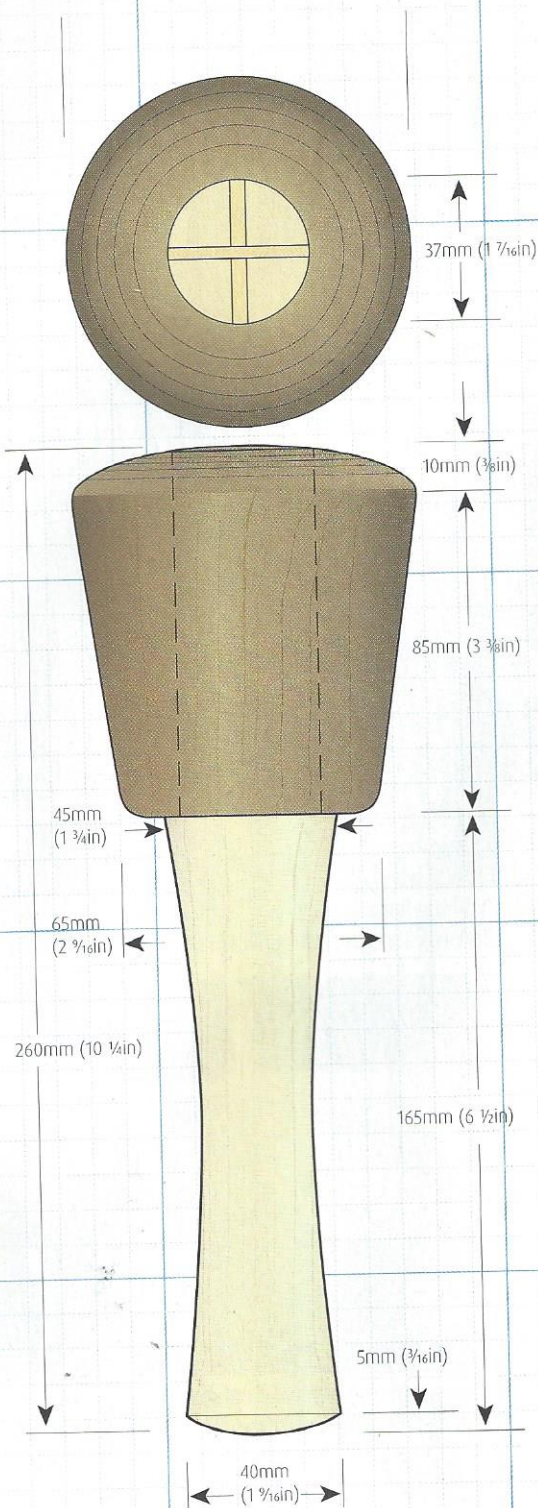


Handy hints

1. When cutting any round item use wedges or create a supportive cradle to prevent the item from rolling or twisting in the cut.
2. If you are using a glue on oily timbers, wipe the surface of the timber with denatured alcohol before gluing to remove surface oil



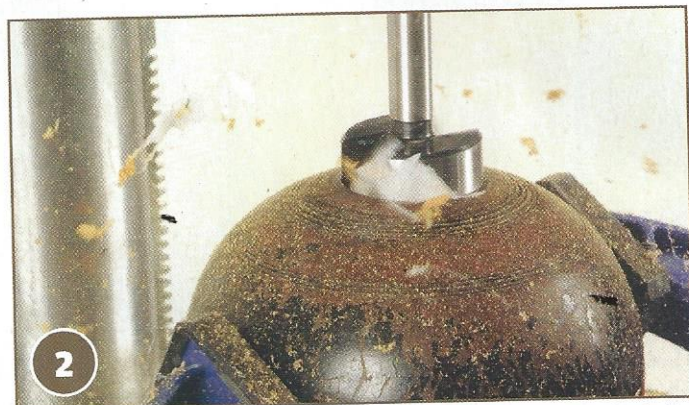
MALLET DIMENSIONS WITH PARALLEL BORE



“Lignum vitae is very dense, close-grained, naturally oily and has the ability to withstand very heavy impact blows...”



The handle is a pre-dimensioned piece of ash and the mallet head is from lignum – either an old bowling ball or a billet bought from a shop



Drill the central hole in the ball. Note: the use of clamps to hold the ball securely. The size of shaft needs to be large enough to take the shock of use. A ream was used to gently taper the parallel hole



Mount the handle between centres, use the spindle roughing gouge to create the handle form and use a beading/parting tool to create the round tenon. Then, use a skew to create the shoulder



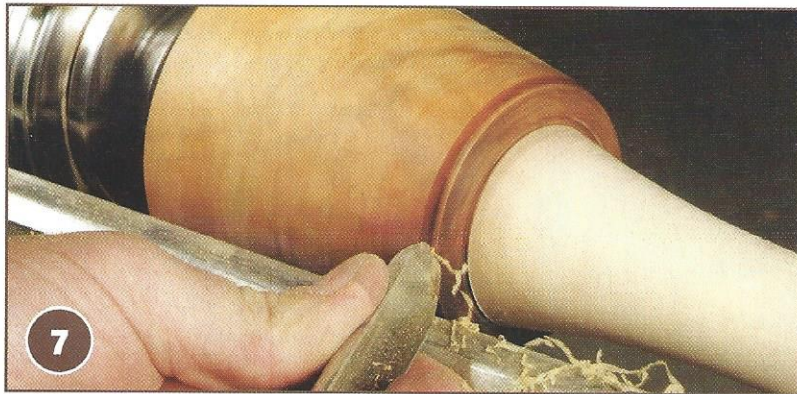
Remove from the lathe and cut the slots for the wedges. The slots should be cut at 90° to each other. Note: the clamp holding the item securely in place

SKILLS & PROJECTS

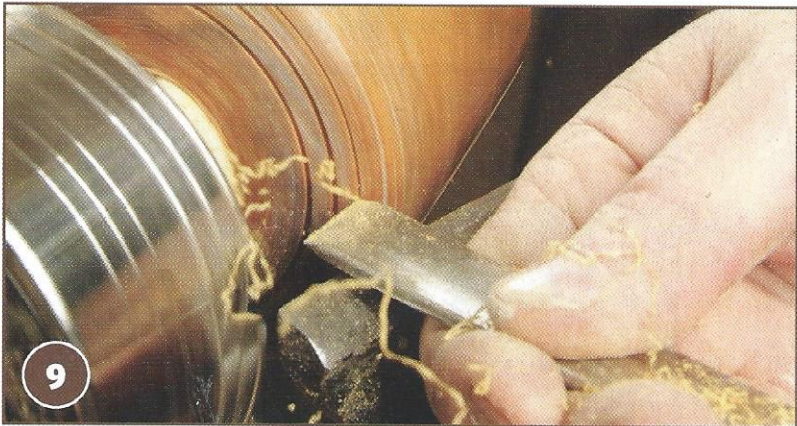
Turn a mallet



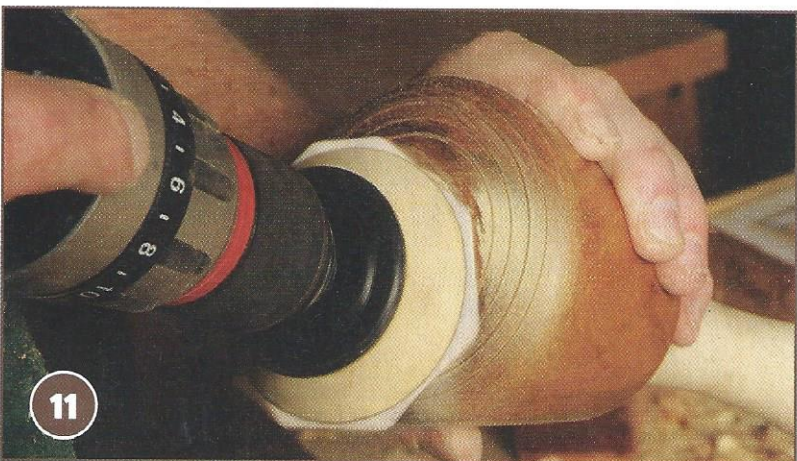
5 Push fit the head onto the handle and remount between centres. The drive spur fits nicely into the centre of the slots cut. Finally, rough shape the head



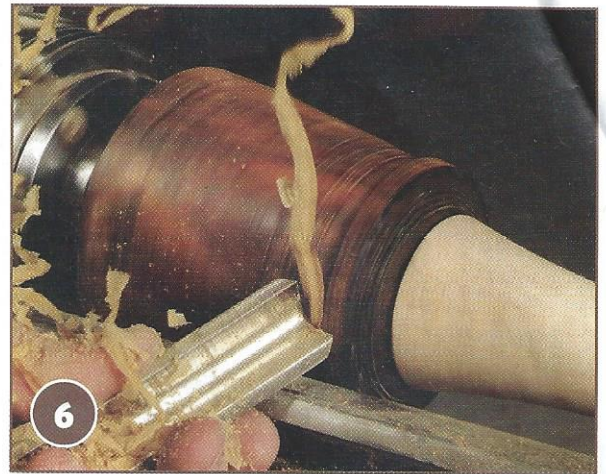
7 Clean up the underneath to blend into the handle. I created a slight domed shape, which blended well with the curved form of the handle



9 Once sanded, clean up the top of the head and put in any detail. Here a few grooves are created with the skew



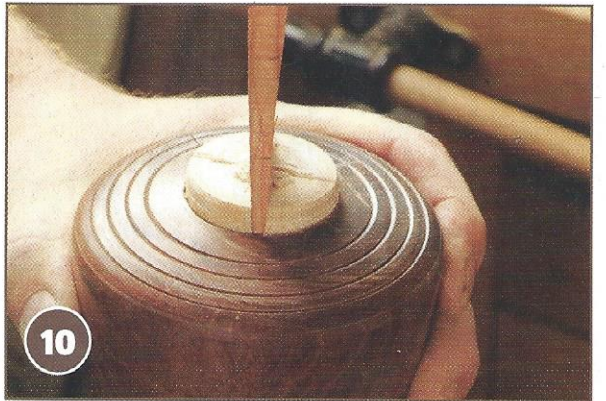
11 Cut off the wedges and the pip at the end of the handle and sand to a fine finish



6 Continue to refine the shape until you are happy with the form. Note: there is a slight curvature on the taper



8 Sand the handle and head. As mentioned, I used no finish for this project as the sanded form sits comfortably in the hand



10 Remove from the lathe and create the wedges – a contrasting colour in this case – and drive them in. No glue is necessary for this as the wedges will lock the handle in place



12 The mallet is now complete ●