

Christmas Tree Ornament

by Jake Niedling 7-5-2018



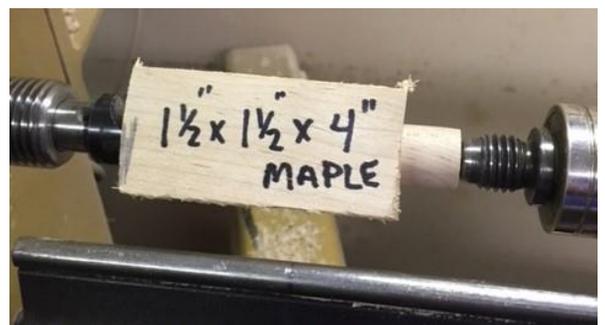
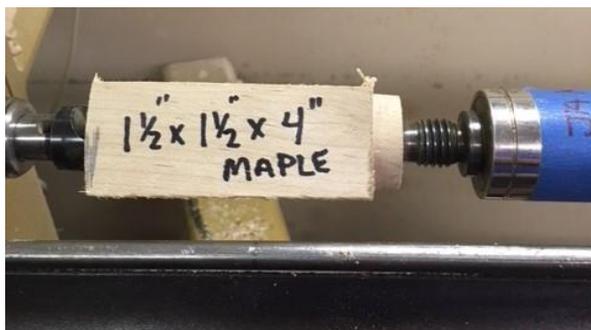
This Christmas Tree style ornament is an easy and quick project. Time to complete should be around 30 minutes. Hopefully, you will enjoy making them for your family, friends or local charity. Also, fun to make a bunch (unpainted) and let your children or grandchildren paint them up for a special memorable ornament.

I have taken photographs of the steps, so you can see how I make these ornaments. Of course, if you have questions, call me at 865-607-4808 or email me at jakej@frontiernet.net.

Lets get started:

Remember to wear your safety equipment whenever the lathe is on, such as eye and dust protection.

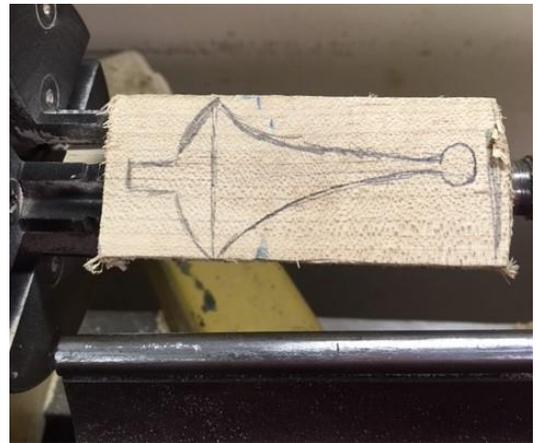
Step 1 – Mount a piece of wood that is at least 1.5" x 1.5" x 4" long between centers on the lathe. A light colored wood works best for coloring. Turn a tenon on one end to fit your scroll chuck. I turn the tenon down to about 1" diameter to fit my pin jaws. If you don't have a scroll chuck, you could continue to turn the ornament between centers or glue the tenon into a glue block mounted on a face plate.



Step 2 – Mount the wood blank in your scroll chuck.



Step 3 - This is not necessary, but wanted to give you an idea of what we are going to make and its layout. It might help you determine where the largest diameter of the ornament will be located. I usually don't do this.



Step 4 - I use a spindle roughing gouge to round up the piece and develop the rough shape of the tree. I will use a tail center to help support the wood during this stage.



Step 5 - Now is the time to turn and shape the ball on top of the tree. I use a 3/8" detail spindle gouge. Of course, other tools will work such as a skew. You will want to pull back the tailstock center to finalize the ball shape. The ball should be about 1/4 to 5/16" in diameter. (Note - If you are turning between centers shape the bottom half of the ball near the top of the tree and wait till the end to finish the top half of the ball.)



Step 6 - Drill a hole in the ball for a screw eye. I like to use a skew on its side and use the long point to make a starter hole. Drill 1/16" hole for 217-1/2 size screw eye. If you use a larger screw eye size, then use the appropriate size drill bit. I use a drill mounted in a block of wood and hold it by hand. You could use a drill chuck, pliers or pen chuck to hold the drill bit. (Note - if you turn between centers, this will be done off the lathe after you finished turning the ornament).



Step 7 - Turn the final shape of the tree. I like to use a 1/2" spindle gouge. Make sure you skinny up the top of the tree so it is just a little bit smaller than the ball on top. The top of the tree should be 1/4" diameter. Add a little vee groove between the tree and the ball at the top. Shape the bottom side of the tree as well. I like to make this a slight curve rather than just a straight cut.



Step 8- Once the bottom is shaped, then use a parting tool to shape the trunk of the tree (1/4" diameter x 3/8" long). After this, I like to sand the piece starting with 180, 220 then 320 grit.



Step 9 - I lay out some lines with a pencil, These are not measured, just use your eye. Then using a point tool or the long point of a skew on its side to create the grooves.



Step 10 - Texturing the ornament is fun, but not necessary if you don't have a tool. I am using a chatter tool, but other types of texturing tools will work as well, but will have a different pattern. I only do the texturing on the large bands and the bottom of the tree (green color sections).



Step 11 - Now its time to color the ornament. I like to use India Ink, they dry fast, have more pigment to show off the color and are not typically effected by the spray on finish. You can use other methods like color Sharpies, acrylic paint or dyes. Just be careful that the colors might run when you use a spray or wipe on finish. I get the India ink at Hobby Lobby. I run the lathe at slow speed and apply the color with a small brush.





Step 12- Part off the ornament using a parting tool. Add a screw eye that fits the hole you drilled. If needed use a drop or two of CA glue to hold the screw eye in place. I like to use a brass plated 217-1/2 size screw eye because they are nice and small.



Step 13 - Finish – I use spray can Lacquer (gloss) for the final finish. I will give it 3 to 4 light coats before it is completed.



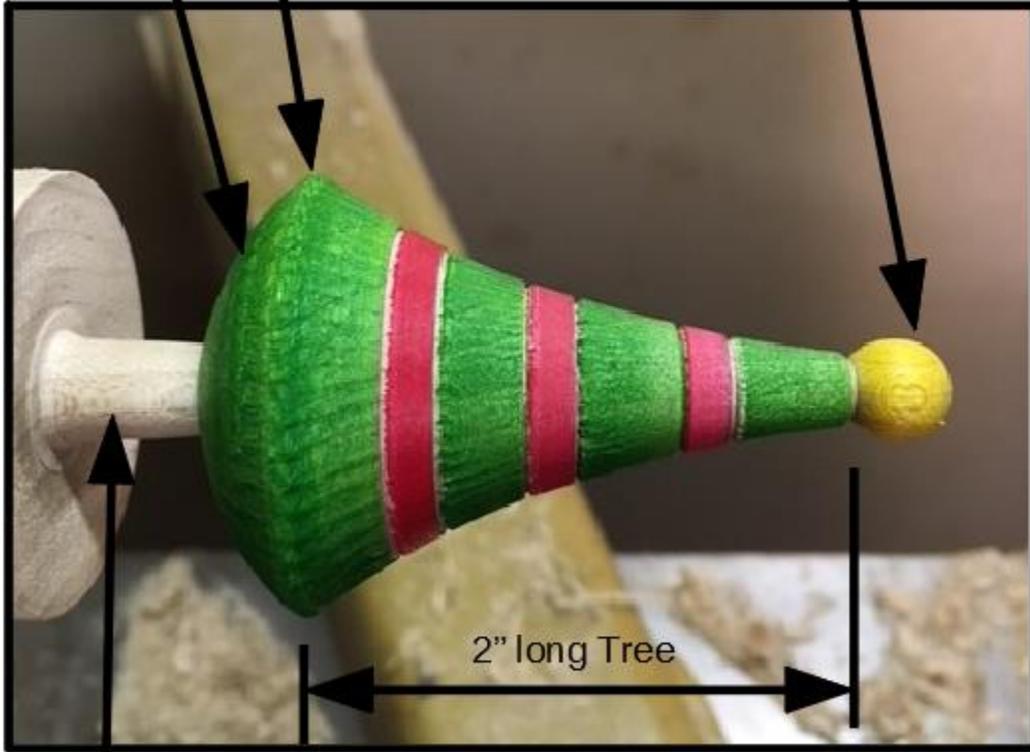
Dimensions - I usually don't measure anything, just turn these ornaments by eye. To help you, below are the approximate dimensions of the ornament. Turn some and enjoy making some chips.



Bottom of tree is about $\frac{3}{8}$ " long

$1\frac{1}{2}$ " Diameter

$\frac{5}{16}$ " Diameter



2" long Tree

Trunk – $\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter x $\frac{3}{8}$ " long