

Carved For Attention

Anything I Can Do DVD Volume 12 – *Experimental Designs*

Power carving a hardwood bowl will get you in shape for Spring. There's nothing like hefting a power tool to tighten important muscle groups.

Materials:

- A "blank" - in this case, a 2" thick block of hardwood (we used poplar) measuring 12" x 24"

NOTE: Some people have nasty allergic reactions to the sawdust from different hardwood varieties. Make sure you wear protective gear - especially a dust mask! It also helps to work outside.

Tools

- [Carver's vise](#)
- Dremel Heavy-Duty Flex-Shaft Carver
- [Kutzall carving burrs](#)
- Angle grinder
- [Wood carving blades](#) - The Detail Mini Grinder and the Arbortech Industrial wood-shaping kit
- Sanding disks for the mini grinder
- Sand paper
- Sanding sponge pad
- Pencil
- Facemask or eye protection
- Ear protection
- Dust mask

Steps:



Buy a piece of poplar or other hardwood



Use a jig saw or band saw to cut out the desired shape

Draw the rough shape of a leaf (or whatever you prefer) on the blank.

Cut out the shape with a coping saw, jigsaw or band saw.



Attach a spindle for a carver's vise to the back



Attach the spindle to the vise

Next, attach a carver's vise to the front of the cut out piece. The vise will allow the piece to turn in any direction and hold it firmly in place while you use power carving tools.

If you don't have a carver's vise, clamp the piece of wood onto your work surface, and reposition it as often as required.



Draw the base on the blank



Cut along the base line with the mini grinder

On the bottom of the blank, draw a shape that will become the base of the bowl. It should follow the general lines of the outside edge of the bowl.

Use the Detail Mini Grinder to score the wood along the line drawn.





Be sure to wear dust masks and eye protection

Tip: Always use safety equipment and especially a dust mask because the grinder will throw a lot of dust into the air.



Use the larger wood grinding wheel to round off the edges



Use the Detail Mini Grinder for the fine work after the bulk of material has been removed

Use the Arbortech Industrial Wood-shaping Cutter to remove larger amounts of wood. It will take off the corners and carve out the large central depression in the bowl.

When you need more control for detail, use the Detail Mini Grinder. Experiment with the angle to determine how to best remove wood in tight areas. These tools don't readily kick back and can be used at many different angles. Use them gently at first, until you are confident in the amount of pressure required.



Turn the bowl over and use a drill bit marked for depth and drill two or three holes

When the back of the bowl is close to being finished with just sanding remaining, turn the bowl over and attach the carver's vise to the opposite side. Our bowl is in the shape of a leaf, which has a spine down the center. Draw these details onto the blank shape before beginning to remove wood.



Tip: To prevent yourself from removing too much wood and possibly causing a "blowout" (where the wall of the bowl gets too thin and your tool ends up bursting through it), figure out the correct depth of the finished bowl. Mark a drill bit with a piece of tape matching the correct depth and drill several holes in the deepest section of the bowl. You'll use the depth of the holes as guides while you carve. Once you've removed enough material to be equal with the bottom of the drill holes, STOP!



Use the Detail Mini Grinder to outline the features on the front of the bowl



Use the Mini Grinder to scoop out the inside of the bowl

Cut along any detail lines that have been drawn for guides and then begin to scoop out the inside of the bowl. Using the Detail Mini Grinder is probably best at first because it removes material at a slower rate so you aren't as likely to make a mistake.



Use sanding burrs to continue shaping the finer attributes



The sanding burrs can be used to curl the edge of the 'leaf'



Continue working with the burrs until all of the deep ridges and valleys are smooth

As the shape gets closer to completion, use grinding burrs on a flexible shaft tool like a Dremel or Foredom rotary tool. Choose burrs that best fit the shape and remove more of the wood, smoothing out the rough areas made by the larger grinding tools. Stay aware of the thickness of the areas where you're working to be sure that the wood isn't getting too thin. It shouldn't be any thinner than 3/8" anywhere when finished.





For the next stage, use a sanding disk on the mini grinding wheel



Hand sand for the final finish



Shaped and sanded bowl

Begin the first degree of sanding by using sanding disks on the mini grinder. As with all the power tools, let the tool cut by itself. Don't force it or use a lot of pressure. If the tool doesn't want to cut on its own, the sand paper probably needs changing.

When the majority of the deep valleys and ridges are smoothed out, start sanding by hand. Begin with 100 grit and work up to about 220 grit when using poplar. For harder woods, the grit can be even finer. The finer the grit, the more the grain patterns will appear in the wood, and the smoother the surface will become. A bowl this size takes several hours of hand sanding. Don't falter - it's worth it!



Use pure tung oil for a non-toxic finish

Apply two or three coats of finish. Pure tung oil is a good sealant and an excellent non-toxic finish. Between coats, sand out any raised fibers or imperfections.

