

Making Flower Petals

By Bill Tilson

This demonstration will show the basic steps in forming and assembling pieces of thin wood or veneer into a form that represents a stylized flower that can be used as a bowl, vase, goblet, or sculpture.

Hopefully it will look something like this:

	<p>Supplies needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wood for petals, stem, and form• Dye for coloring and airbrush• Yellow glue or Heat-Loc glue• Veneer conditioner or water• Craft knife – pencil – cardboard• Iron - not the household iron!• Turning tools
	<p>Step 1 Mount a wood blank and turn it to the shape and size you want the finished vase to be. Remember that the thin wood usually only bends in one direction. Decide on how many petals you want and divide the blank by marking.</p>
	<p>Step 2 Identify the natural curve of the veneer by wetting it and noticing which way it curls up. Due to how the veneer is cut from the log, it will have a natural tendency when wet to return to that shape, which is round. You may need to soak some species of wood a little longer, put the veneer into boiling water, or use a veneer conditioner to get it pliable enough to wrap around your blank.</p>
	<p>Step 3 Using cardboard cutouts design and finalize the shape of the petal you want being sure to remember that you're going to have to glue it, so leave enough area for overlap. Cut out the petals using what ever you have in the shop: craft knife, fret saw, scroll saw. I don't recommend the scroll saw because it has a tendency to tear out and chip the burl. Always cut out a couple of extra petals.</p>
	<p>Step 4 Now is the time to sand the petals after which you may color the petals using a water based dye applying the lightest color first and progressing to the darkest using an airbrush. You can also apply the dye by hand or brush which will give a different look. Let the petals dry overnight.</p>

	<p>Step 5 Determine which sides will be the front and back of the petals and mark the glue area on the petal. Apply the glue and let dry per manufacturer's instructions. Flip the petals over and apply glue to the other side. I use Heat-Lock glue but regular yellow glue or contact cement will work.</p>
	<p>Step 6 If using Heat-Lock glue set the iron's dial to med-high cotton. Align two pieces on the form and use the iron to reactivate the glue by starting at one end and working to the other. Make sure that you heat each area evenly and do not stay long enough on one area to scorch the wood. I use a cloth to help minimize scorching. Align the next piece and iron, continue until all petals are applied.</p>
	<p>Step 7 After assembling and gluing the petals around the form, you should have the shape of a vase. Now is the time to finish the petals. I have used lacquer and wipe-on oil finishes. You need to make sure that the finish you use doesn't interfere with the glue or dye that you used; if it does you will need to seal with shellac prior to applying the finish.</p>
	<p>Step 8 Mount the blank you want for the stem and turn it round. Turn a recess that the base of the petals will fit into. Turn the outside of the recess to form a smaller rendition of your vase. Drill a hole in the center about 1/4" or so.</p>
	<p>Step 11 You can finish the stem at this time without doing any carving but if you want then use a saw, carving tools, sanding drums, files, or power burs – whatever you have - to design and finish the top of the stem to hold the vase. Finish turning the stem to desired length, shape, part off, and finish the bottom.</p>
	<p>Step 12 Turn a small button with a tennon to fit inside the petals and to fit into the hole drilled in step 8. Glue the button to the petals and then into the stem.</p>
	<p>Show your spouse and friends what you did ☺ and send me a picture.</p>

If you have any questions or need further help please contact me:

Bill Tilson

bill.tilson@sbcglobal.net

936-730-1865

I purchased these items from www.joewoodworker.com/catalog

- Better Bond Heat-Lock™ Veneer Glue
- Super-Soft 2 Veneer Softener/Conditioner

Fiber reactive dyes from Dharma Trading Co at: www.dharmatrading.com/