

*Jim Tanksley - Natural Edge Bowls*

[Tanksturnings@att.net](mailto:Tanksturnings@att.net)





Jim Tanksley will be demonstrating how to turn Natural edge end grain bowls from Mesquite Logs.

#### About Jim Tanksley

I began woodturning in 1969 in 9th grade woodshop. All I can remember is we laminated maple and mahogany together to turn a lamp. I don't remember if I used a gouge or a crow bar. My mom loved it. I didn't turn again until 1995 to turn some 6" diameter white oak legs for a dinning room table. To turn the table legs I purchased a lathe from Big Lots. The lathe had the capacity but not the power; I ended up burning up 3 lathes before they told me to not come back. To finish the project I purchased a Sears lathe at a garage sale. The experience wasn't that much fun because the lathe shook all over the place and was constantly staling. My next opportunity to turn happened in 2005. I worked at the same company as another club member and noticed he had a good-looking pen. I asked him where he got the pen and he said he made it. He told me all I had to do was to go to Rockler or Woodcraft and buy a mandrel and pen kit to make my own. I wish it were that easy and cheap. It turned out the Sears lathe didn't have a number 2 morse taper so I couldn't make a pen without buying a new lathe. I bought a Jet Mini and was making pens in no time after attending a few club meetings and getting some tips from the old timers. It wasn't long and I was getting bored with turning pens. A member was selling his Nova 3000 for \$800 to buy a Powermatic. I purchased the Nova to turn bowls. The Nova is a good variable speed lathe with 1 ½ hp DC motor. I especially liked the rotating head to make it easier turning bowls. At first I did everything wrong and scrapped over

50%. It took me the longest time to learn the lingo, in fact I could turn a bowl before I knew a live center from a banjo. The Nova 3000 would turn up to a 16" bowl and my wife loved everything I turned. I became inspired to learn more. Instead of taking lessons I bought a bigger lathe, thinking a bigger lathe would allow me to turn better ha ha. The first day I got the 3520B I turned the biggest log I could find, a piece of Sycamore approximately 18" by 12". Within 90 days I broke the banjo on the Powermatic. I called them up and told them what had happened (a bad catch) and they replaced it for free. I continued to go to club meetings, asked questions, paid attention during the demos and took lessons ever year when the club brought in professional demonstrators. My turning has continued to improve over time. The most impactful lessons I have taken were from Stuart Batty. In 2015 I purchased the Robust American Beauty to have 25" capacity between centers.

I primarily use the push cut with 5/8" or 3/4" bowl gouges. I prefer turning green wood. Mesquite is my favorite but have turned large bowls out of Silver Maple, Bradford Pear, Oak, Pecan, Black Walnut and Hackberry.

### **Previous Demos and Exhibits**

November 2016 – How to turn Christmas Trees from Mesquite. I have a unique way of turning Christmas Trees from Mesquite that gives the appearance of snowy branches.  
Dallas Area Woodturners

August 2015 - How to turn a Large End Grain Natural Edge Mesquite Winged Bowl.  
SWAT

September 2014 - How to turn Christmas Trees from Mesquite. I have a unique way of turning Christmas Trees from Mesquite that gives the appearance of snowy branches.  
Woodturners of North Texas

October 2012 – Large Bowls. I discuss how to cut the log and techniques on turning a natural edged mesquite bowl (end grain and side grain). Woodturners of North Texas

October 2016- Displayed a collection of large turnings at the Fort Worth Arts Goggle

December 2014 - Exhibit at Fort Worth Community Art Center. Held Reception with 7 other wood turners and discussed displayed turnings, methods and materials to a large number of visitors