

Prescott Area Wood Turners

Salt Pig Demo

Bill McDonalds notes

The wood:

You need a piece of wood 4-6 inches square for the optimal size Salt Pig. You can make it to whatever outside dimension you want, but remember the salt pig will need to be easily picked up for use so 4-6 inches is optimal.

2 inch thick lumber will yield a top and bottom of 2 inches each before turning on the lathe.

You can use a 3 inch thick piece to yield a 1.5 inch top and bottom.

Making the blanks:

Cut circle blanks on a band saw to the desired dimension. Then turning between centers, I make a tenon and or mortise on each end. If using dimensional lumber, I use a screw chuck and turn a tenon on each end.

Turning the inside centers and drilling holes for magnets and pins:

Decide which blank will be the top. At this point you may attach the pieces to the lathe and turn out the inside centers before you drill the magnet and pin holes. You can drill the holes first and then turn out the inside centers after you install the magnets, bearing and pin. If you do it this way, do not glue the pin in the hole. *You do not want the pin attached while you are turning the center out or while sanding. The pin will be a dangerous item spinning around if it is attached.*

Drilling the holes

Drill two 1/8th inch holes approx 1/4 to 3/8ths in from the edge, approx 1/2 inch deep. These holes must be exactly opposite from each other and must be drilled with the grain. Cut the pointed ends off of two nails so they are 5/16ths inches long. Insert dull ends into the holes you drilled. Line up the grains of the blanks and mash them together so the sharp ends of the nails mark the locations opposite. These marks will be where you will drill a 5/32nd hole for the brass tube (bearing) and the hole to fit the magnet. The magnet holes will depend on the size of the magnets that you acquire. The hole opposite the brass bearing will need the brass pin installed, leaving approx 1/2 inch of the pin exposed.

At this point you should have two identical blanks with magnet holes drilled opposite each other and a brass rod and pin that line up for insertion. You may have to ream the edge of the brass tube before inserting the pin for the first time.

CAUTION: Make sure that the magnets "Attract" each other before you glue them into place.

Turning the outside:

At this point, attach the top and bottom, place between centers on the lathe and turn the outside to a true, even dimension. **CAUTION,** do not remove too much wood or you will expose the magnet edge. This is the time to shape and or embellish the outside of the salt pig.

Finishing the pig:

Sand the Salt Pig while it is on the lathe and use whatever method you like to remove the tenon and finish the mortise.

The Finishing touch:

Wipe on Poly is a good finish and when fully cured will resist the elements that are stored in the pigs ie Salt, pepper and chili flakes.

Addendum:

There is a method you can use to make a swinging lid without a brass pin and bearing. Bruce Butler saw it on Youtube. Simply use the magnet as the hinge. You start the same way as discussed previously but only drill holes for the magnets. You can have a thinner top this way as you do not need to drill to the depth of the brass pins.