

# The Nutmeg

*Newsletter of the Nutmeg  
Woodturners League  
Established June 14, 1989*



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[WWW.NUTMEGWOODTURNERS.COM](http://WWW.NUTMEGWOODTURNERS.COM)

## **NEXT MEETING**

Monday, May 9, 2011

Program: **Cross Grain Bowls**

By: **Rick Angus**

Brookfield Craft Center

Route 25, Brookfield, CT

6 to 7 pm – Informal Gathering, Library Open

7:00 pm – Club Business

7:30 pm – Program (No Show & Tell)

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## Presidents Page May 2011

### 1. Learn & Turn.

- a. A Great time was had by all at Don Metz's on Apr. 2<sup>nd</sup>
- b. The June Learn and Turn will be at Jim Degen's on June ~~19<sup>th</sup>~~.

### 2. Finish Bowl Turning

- a. A big thanks goes out to the members that helped with the finish turning of the bowls for the Craft Center. We completed 56 bowls!

### 3. Jimmy Clewes is coming to Brookfield Craft Center

- a. We are pleased to welcome legendary woodturner Jimmy Clewes to our turning studio for a full-day demo on May 7th. Jimmy will share his outstanding (and highly entertaining) techniques with fellow turning enthusiasts, and allow them to get an up-close look at his bag of tricks on the lathe. Lunch is included during a mid-day break. Space is limited to 25 participants for this unique experience.
- b. Go to the Craft Center web site ([brookfieldcraft.org](http://brookfieldcraft.org)) or call (203) 775-4526 to sign-up.

### 4. Demo – Rick Angus on Cross Grain Bowls

- a. Rick has been working wood since high school, turning seriously for the last 15 years. He enjoys the Zen-like motions of the turning process and works with many styles of turning. In his work is a recurring theme: a passion for highly refined form. It is a quest for perfection that is bound to last a lifetime. While enjoys many facets of woodturning, bowls with simple graceful curves are his hallmark.
- b. Bowl-Turning Techniques Compared; Turning a Cross-Grain Bowl from Green Wood - This session will cover the envisioning of the grain pattern in the finished bowl before the log is first cut as one defining aspect of the grain balance in the final bowl is the ripping chainsaw cut that produces the log half-section. Two other aspects of controlling the grain pattern in the finished bowl occur on the lathe. Orientation on the lathe to maximize the beauty of the wood will be covered as the balance of the bowl is completed with an array of tools explaining the pros and cons of each.
- c. **NOTE:** Do to the length of Rick's demo there will not be a “**Show & Tell**” at the May meeting.

**KEEP A SHARP EDGE**

**BUSTER**

## **Maple**

### **Uses:**

Hard Maple is currently used for furniture, cabinets, decorative woodwork, flooring, veneers, cutting surfaces, bowling pins, utensils, and bowls. Ideal for ballroom and gymnasium floors as well as cutting boards and countertops. We think of fiddleback maple as the wood of choice for violin makers. It looks beautiful and resonates sound to perfection. The soft maples are often used as a cheaper substitute for hard maple moldings, or in applications where the trim is painted. It is used extensively in the box making industry, and often soft maple boxes are then covered with decorative wood veneers. Generally speaking maples are a great all round woodworking lumber.

### **The Tree: Acer Family**

There is some 200 species of trees and shrubs worldwide. Acer means hard or sharp in Latin, somewhat appropriate for many of the family members. The American species are actually divided into two groups: hard and soft. Sugar maple (or rock maple: *acer saccharum*) is the most common hard maple, the most commercially important and the most abundant type found in the U.S.

Silver, Red Maple and Boxelder are the most common soft maple species. They grow extensively across North America, on both coasts. The commercial species grow tall with relatively decent diameters. The farther north you go the larger the hearts are in the trees and the more color variation in the wood.

### **Wood Description:**

**Hard Maple:** Tends to have cream to white sapwood and light reddish brown heart stock, usually straight grained and sometimes found with high figured bird's eye or burl grain. Bird's-eye resembles small circular or elliptical figures and only found in sugar maple. Clusters of round curls that grow into balls on the sides of trees are known as burls. They are common in the big leaf maple of the west coast. Hard maple is heavy, hard, strong, tough, and stiff, close grained and possesses a uniform texture. It sands to a beautiful tight finish. Excellent resistance to abrasion, indentation and shock. Often the heart stock shows black mineral lines and darker grey streaking, particularly in wood milled in the northern part of its range. Commercially it is usually sorted by color.

**Soft Maples:** These trees tend to be very similar to the hard maples but much lighter in density. The sapwood can be very white and often show nice curl. The heartwood is tan to gray in color, often with extreme color changes on one board.

Soft maple is almost never sorted by color.

Both species are relatively stable once dried correctly, but can pose problems in their green state. Maples are notorious for staining when they are first cut. Most mills cut maple and then immediately dry it before it has the chance to stain.

**Weight: Hard maple: 42-45 lbs. /cuft. Soft: 35 lbs/cuft.**

### **Finishing:**

Maple is a beautiful wood to apply a clear coat. The tight grain makes pore filling unnecessary and it is easy to get a glass like finish if you have taken the time to work down the grit and sand with the grain.

Staining maple on the other hand can be a nightmare. It just doesn't like to accept stain uniformly, especially dark stains. Fanatical sanding to 400 can, I'm told, eliminate many of the problems, I'm not sure that I believe it though.

The wood can look perfect and then with the application of a little stain a blotch can appear for no visible reason right smack in the middle of a wide plank. It has been commented on extensively but little understanding of its cause or appropriate solution. Some suggest that the use of a conditioner may make your results more consistent. Try aniline dyes. Many of my customers use a combined spray on stain or top coat + stain combination to try to avoid these strange maple habits.

Soft maple is less likely to do this.

### **Machining:**

Hard Maple is probably the most difficult North American species to work with. It is dense and difficult to cut without good sharp carbide tools. If it has not been dried properly the wood can have a lot of tension in it and be very inclined to pinch your blade as it goes through the saw.

It has high dulling affect on most tools. Prebore for nailing and remove shavings frequently. Watch for burn marks with routers. They are hard to remove after the fact. Always note the direction of feed on planers and jointers. If it tears out, reduce the depth of cut and change the feed direction. Reduced cutting angle for planning or molding on quartered surfaces. Maple, is though, an excellent turnery

wood and requires little sanding if cut with sharp chisels.

Soft Maple on the other hand, works much like cherry. It is relatively easy to machine but can tear out on boards that exhibit curl. It sands beautifully. Soft maple holds edges well for corner joinery.

Birdseye and other figured maples never like to be planed and always work better with sanders rather than planers. Always move with caution with these woods. All Maples glue relatively well, but the hard maples are so hard that they do not absorb the glue easily, so use a "thick" high viscosity glue that you are less likely to squeeze out of the joint on clamping. If you tighten excessively, it forces the glue out of the joint and causes "joint failure".

## **Tree Identification Workshop**

**June 11, 2011 - Southbury, CT**

The June Learn and Turn is going to be a unique opportunity to learn how to identify the type of wood we are turning. Michael Wojtech, the author of the newly released book "Bark – A Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast," will be conducting a Tree Identification Workshop at my house on June 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. The workshop will consist of an hour or so of inside lecture/discussion/photos followed by a couple of hours of actual practice identifying trees in the woods of Southbury.

I took a tree identification class at Mt Tom State Reservation in Massachusetts a few weeks ago and I learned about this new book called "Bark." Most tree identification books talk about leaves, terminal buds, leaf scars, etc. some or all of which are not available certain times of the year, or may be too far up in the air to study. "Bark" is different since it only relies on being able to see the bark of the tree to identify it. Another unique aspect of this guide is it discusses and pictures how bark on many tree species change dramatically as the tree ages. I find the book to be extremely helpful and Michael is anxious to share his expertise with us. He also expects to learn some characteristics about how different trees react when we turn them.

An attendance fee of \$20.00 will be charged. This will replenish the club's treasury for the cost of the workshop. Due to the nature of the workshop it is necessary to limit the attendance to 12 – 15 people. I will have a signup sheet at our May meeting and will accept names on a first-come first-serve basis.

I highly recommend acquiring a copy of the book. Michael will have copies for sale at the workshop at the normal price of \$24.95, but Amazon has them for \$16.47.

Jay Hockenberry

**Date - June 11, 2011**

**Time - Coffee - 9:00 a.m.**

***Workshop - 9:30 a.m.***

**Location - 140 Pond View Drive**

***Southbury, Ct 06488***

***(203)262-6664***

**Cost - \$20.00**

**Book - "Bark - A field Guide to Trees of the Northeast" by Michael Wojtech**

**- ISBN - 978-1-58465-852-8**