

**MARCH 2017 DEMONSTRATION
TEA LAMP HOLDERS WITH CHAD DAWSON**

Members and guests of the Central New York Woodturners assembled on Wednesday, March 23rd for their monthly meeting and demonstration by **Chad Dawson** on tea lamp holders. With our meeting postponed a week and original demonstrator unable to make it, Chad willingly stepped up to present a great demo on a topic that produces some great projects.

Candles are a mood setting and romantic decorating addition to a dining room table or any room—provided that the candle setup is safe against accidental fire in the home. The placement of the candle holding location in wood requires some thought about whether the flame can touch wood surfaces, at any time, during the process of the candle burning from start to end.



Consider using battery powered tea lamps which are readily available from various stores for added safety in the home.

Turning a tea lamp holder is fairly simple and straight forward. Tea lamp holders are easy to make and are a good beginner project or a creative project for the more experience turner. Tea lamp holders do not need to match because



using various heights and diameters together in a collection of 3 or 5 candle holders makes a great center piece on a table. The design of each holder is open to much creativity of design – size, shape,

wood species, coloring, texturing, or accent markings. Turnings can be tall, short, or off center. An important consideration is that the holder is stable and does not tip over easily.

Wood scraps of any species around 4" by 4" square and from 1.5" to 4" thick are a good size to start with on this project. Prepare several pieces in advance so that you can follow through with each step on each piece and, in this way, practice each step several times before moving onto the next step. Also, making more than one tea lamp holder is practical since they tend to

look best in groupings and they make great small gifts. You will likely never have too many ... and you probably always have some scrap wood to use!

First, decide if you are turning in spindle orientation or bowl orientation. Spindle orientation is when the wood grain runs from tail stock to head stock. In this instance, either spindle gouges and bowl gouges can be used in



turning. Bowl orientation is when the wood grain runs perpendicular to the line that extends from the tail stock to head stock. In this instance, only bowl gouges can be safely used in turning since the cutting crosses end grain twice as the wood piece rotates.

In the process of making the tea lamp holder, you need to have a secure means to alternately hold the top and bottom of the piece once each during the process. Probably the easiest way to start out is to mark the center for the wood piece (top and bottom) and put the piece between centers on the lathe. Make a 1/4" to 5/16" tenon on the top end of the piece. Then secure the top end of the piece in a chuck using the tail stock to hold it while you start to round the piece.



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Next pull the tail stock out of the way and round the bottom of the piece according to your design. Cut a tenon in the bottom that is also the final base or foot for the piece – either an inside or outside tenon grip for your chuck will work. Sand the bottom of the piece and the base.



Turn the piece around in the chuck so that the bottom tenon is now secured and pull the tail stock up on the top to hold it while you begin rounding the top. Pull the tail stock out of the way as you finish rounding the top.



When the design is what you want, it is time to drill a hole in the top for the tea lamp. Drill the top of your piece to the diameter of your lamp (usually about 1.5”) and the depth of your tea lamp height. A Forstner drill bit cuts the best clean hole for this step. Measure whatever tea lamps you will be using as they are all different heights. The hole should match that height of the tea lamp for safety. A hole that is too deep can allow a flame to catch the top of the hole on fire

– an unsafe situation that can be remedied by putting a 1.5” in diameter wood disk into the bottom of the hole to raise the tea lamp up to match the top of the tea lamp with the top of the hole.



Now final sand the sides and top of the tea lamp holder. If you want to add any texturing or burned lines to the side of the tea lamp holder, pull up the tail stock so that the tail stock point goes inside the drilled hole. This will allow you to put pressure on the sides of the lamp holder as you add texturing. Pencil line were you want to texture a band around the lamp holder and turn the speed down to whatever the manufacturer requires for that texturing tool.



Try using two different tools for added texturing. When the texturing looks like you want it to look, cut a defining narrow groove on each side of the texturing to set it off and define that portion of your design. If interested, you can burn the small groove black by holding a piece of wire to the curve while turning at a relatively high speed to cause enough friction to heat the wire and burn the groove for decoration.

Use a tooth brush or fiber pad to clean up the texturing and final sand the piece. Use a finish that will be hard (such as wipe on polyurethane) and make it easy to clean later. Clean up wax drips on the side of the lamp holder immediately.

Demo and write up by **Chad Dawson**
Photos by **Greg Potter, Heather Muckley & Doug North**

Texturing Can Add Interest to Your Tea Lamp Holder

Use a Wire Burner or One of the Many Tools on the Market.

There is a great Article on page 34 of the December 2013 *American Woodturner* which is available to all AAW members.

Or make one yourself—check out this [link](#)