

Instructions for the Crown Chattertool

Many turners say that they get enough accidental chatter on their work already, without doing it deliberately! However the Chattertool allows for an extra decorative option that can make a flat or domed surface far more interesting than it might be, if left plain. Think of it as a Poor Man's Ornamental Turning!

Chatterwork is most effective on endgrain, and will work on most hardwoods. If used on a bland wood (i.e. Beech or Maple) the effect can be greatly enhanced by colouring the patterns. On a darker wood, lighter colouration (such as gold, silver, or white creme) works well.


There are a number of factors that vary the degree and nature of the effect created by a Chattertool. This is a scraping action and the tool rest is best raised slightly allowing the tool to trail slightly. It takes some time to get the hang of it, and it may be helpful to produce a set of samples with details recorded on the back, to act as a reminder. It would be wrong to say that there is an infinite variety of patterns, but there are certainly many patterns created by the many variable factors involved in chatterwork.

Sometimes "less is more" with chatterwork, the temptation to cover every flat surface is best resisted!

FACTORS AFFECTING THE TYPE OF CHATTERWORK CREATED

1. The speed of the lathe is one of the most significant factors. I apply chatterwork at speeds from 100 to 3500 RPM. At lower speeds the pattern is tighter and more restrained.

2. The distance that the blade protrudes from the tool holder. The more it protrudes the more it chatters. Experiment to find a setting that works best for you.

 Be sure to always leave enough inside the tool holder for it to be properly gripped!

3. The distance from the work piece to the toolrest. 1 3/4" - 2" (45mm - 50mm) is a good distance at which to start.

4. The cutter used; and the angle at which it is used. The V cutter can be used on its side or the point can be presented.

5. The speed at which the cutter is drawn across the wood.

6. Whether the cutter is presented to the wood at centre height, or above centre or below centre.


7. Whether the cutter is drawn out from the centre to the outside; or from the outside in towards the centre.

It is also worth remembering that a pattern on the outer part of the surface will be different to that in the middle, because the outer part will be revolving at a higher rate of speed.


SHARPENING THE CUTTERS

The cutters should be sharpened before use, and should be removed from the tool holder by loosening the grub screw.

A burr will be raised during sharpening and it is important that this burr should be put uppermost in the tool holder.

 The cutters are best ground at 90 degrees.

The function of the brass slug is to "pillow" the cutter.

 It is important to always use the tool right way up!

c Guy Ravine 2004.