

# Fir post dyed green is popular Christmas tree

by Brad Dinwiddie

This 10" (25cm) Christmas tree was made from a 4 x 4 fir post. I have been making and selling these for several years now. Initially I made a few to display in my booth at craft fairs to help people to start thinking of Christmas. Well, people kept asking how much and so I made more. Being fir, it can be tough to get a super smooth finish, but the roughest ones have a rustic feel, which isn't so bad. The rough finish can be a challenge in sanding, so watch your fingers.

Start with a piece of 4 x 4 (10x10cm) fir or cedar cut to about 1" (2.5cm) longer than the desired tree height. Mark and punch center on each end of the blank and mount it between centers. Turn the tenon on the base, which will be used to re-mount the blank in a 4-jaw scroll chuck. You can rough turn the tree now, or wait until you mount it in the chuck jaws. Most of the tree will be about the same diameter, with just the top 2" or 3" (5-8cm) tapering to a point.

After creating the basic shape, I go from top to bottom forming its limbs. I don't measure the spacing, because real trees aren't regular. Be sure to leave enough space at the bottom for a base.

Light sanding from 120 to 240 grit is generally enough, then I apply a water-based green dye. Originally I was dyeing the base too, but now I usually leave it natural. With a 1" (2.5cm) brush, apply dye onto the tree rotating on the lathe at a very low speed. Then separate the tree from the tenon with a parting tool and pull-saw, and sand the base smooth.

I use a parting tool for making the tenon and



parting off the tree at completion; much of the shaping is done with a skew, the limbs with a skew and spindle gouge. A larger spindle gouge or bowl gouge could take the place of the skew, but I like the finish I get with the skew.

I make the trees in several sizes and they look good in small groupings. I've had several people buy them in consecutive years to increase their collections.

*Brad operates [frogpondwoodturning.com](http://frogpondwoodturning.com).*

□