

Acorn Box

by Ed Malesky

An Acorn Box has been one of my most popular small Christmas ornaments. They are easy to make in multiples as well. The slip fit joint does need to be tight to prevent the nut from slipping out of the cap or you can go to the next level and make a threaded closure.



Mount the cap blank in the chuck and turn a cylinder. In this case the stock is about 1 1/2" square of cherry. Make a little dimple in the center on the end to aid in drilling the cap.



Use a Forstner bit, mounted in a Jacob's chuck to drill a hole about 1/4 - 5/16" deep. The deeper the hole, the less likely that the nut will slip off the cap. For a 1 1/2" wide cap, use a 7/8" drill



To make the underside of the cap rounded, you can either use a round nose scraper, or use a 7/8" core box router bit, mounted in the Jacob's chuck.

Mark the drill depth so that as you turn the cap, you don't turn it too thin.



Forn the shape of the cap, including a small stem. Part off, leaving a nice stem.

If you have enough wood, create another cap, exactly the same way. I have made as many as four caps from a piece of wood, requiring no rechecking. This speeds up the production of multiple acorns.



Next, mount a lighter colored wood in the chuck. This blank is maple, about 1" thick and turn to a cylinder.



Rather than turn the nut right away, we're first going to turn the blank into a jamb chuck to finish the cap. Measure the inside of the cap with pair of calipers.



Turn a tenon on the end of the blank to just larger than the calipers. Put a slight taper on it and keep on refining the tenon until you get a tight fit with the cap.



Refine the cap, doing the final shaping on the stem and top of the cap and sand. Then begin the texturing process with the Wagner Texturing Tool.

Line up the tool with the centerline of the cap, turn the speed down to around 1000 rpm and push the tool into the cap quite hard, with steady, even pressure. Since you're pushing toward the tailstock when beginning texturing, you really need a tight fit between nut and cap.



After the first band of texturing, pull back the tool and move it up to the next band. Lightly press the tool to the wood and let it reengage in the previous pattern, then press hard. Repeat up to the stem.



Now begin to create the but by drilling a $\frac{3}{4}$ " hole about $\frac{5}{8}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep.



Just as in the cap, round the bottom of the nut, either with a scraper or a $\frac{3}{4}$ " box core router bit.

Don't reduce the size of the tenon yet, since the drilling process releases tenon in the wood and the fit with the cap often becomes looser. Once done hollowing, refine the fit with the cap. Remember you still want it pretty tight.



Roughly turn the nut shape and part off. Create another jamb chuck for the nut to fit on and refine the shape and sand.

Slip on the cap and you're done.

