



Wood required – branchwood, about 1½ to 2” diameter, preferably recently cut i.e. still green. About 7” long, to make a 5” Flower should be enough to start with, getting longer with practise. Beech is a good choice, avoid branches with pith in the middle which would seriously weaken the stem.

1. Mount blank between centres, and remove some of the waste in the middle section to improve the balance of the blank using a spindle roughing gouge. The bark is left in place on both the top and base of the Flower so avoid these areas.
2. Form a spigot to fit your chuck at which ever end of the blank was nearest the trunk in the growing tree, using a parting tool. Wood nearly always looks best if it is kept the right way up.
3. Square off the other end of the blank, again using the parting tool. Make sure that the tool is sharp so that it cuts through the bark cleanly.
4. Remove the blank from between centres, eject the drive centre, mount your chuck and load the blank into the chuck. Wind in the tailstock to support the blank centrally while you locate the blank and tighten the chuck.
5. Slacken the tailstock and move it out of the way. Shape the end of the blank to make the top of the Flower by taking light cuts with a spindle or small bowl gouge to form a shallow depression. Work from the outside in towards the centre. Position the gouge just outside the natural edge, point the bevel along the surface you want to cut, then move the gouge positively through the zone where the cut is interrupted. Press the tool down onto the toolrest rather than forward onto the wood. If vibration is a problem, take a finer cut with less forward pressure.

6. Bring the tailstock back in to just support the work with minimal pressure, placing padding between the revolving centre and the work to avoid marking the Flower.
7. Now to form the back of the Flower. Remove some of the waste from the top of the stem by cutting from left to right, then the other way. The cut to form the back of the Flower is a bit awkward for a right-handed turner. Position the gouge just outside the natural edge, point the bevel along the surface you want to cut, then move the gouge positively through the zone where the cut is interrupted. Remove some more of the waste from behind the Flower and re-cut the back of the Flower going further into the centre. The Flower needs to be about 1/8" (3mm) thick and an even thickness, otherwise it may crack as it dries.
8. Try to make the final cuts on the back of the Flower all the way from the outside to the centre in one smooth sweep. These will also define the start of the stem and the transition from the back of the flower to the stem. If your lathe starts up at full speed straight away, you may need to turn the rest of the project without stopping the lathe, otherwise there is a danger that the starting torque may break the stem.
9. Turn the stem step by step in lengths of about an inch (25mm). You can use a mixture of quite bold cuts to remove the bulk of the waste followed by delicate finishing cuts. A small skew chisel should give the best finish and put less strain on the stem, but use a spindle gouge if you prefer. Once you have finished a section of stem, move on to the next section and don't attempt to go back over a previous section. If the stem starts to move as it dries and goes off centre it may help to re-wet it with a spray of water or a wet sponge.
10. The top of the base is shaped in a similar way to the back of the top, but is much easier for a right-handed turner. Take care to achieve a smooth transition from base to stem.
11. When you start to part off, ensure that the base is a similar even thickness to the top of the Flower, maybe just slightly thicker. Part down as far as you dare then stop the lathe and complete the cut with a fine saw.
12. If you want to sand your Flower and apply a finish, leave it to dry for a few days first then sand and finish by hand. Sign and date the base and admire your handiwork !!