# Ask the Pro
## Wood

*Between September 2009 and March 2010, the C.O.W. newsletter featured a forum in which members could ask the club's more experienced woodturners questions. What follows are two of the questions asked and the pros' answer.*

Q1: I have some real soft and punky wood that has a great grain pattern that I want to turn. I am having a tough time getting a good finish on the wood that doesn't show scratches. Someone suggested that I use Polycryl Wood Fortifier on the turnings. Have you any experience with this product or any other suggestions on how the fortify the wood?

Q2: What is your favorite wood to turn? Why do you like this wood?

### Floyd Anstaett:

Q1: Response: I am probably not a good one to ask for advice in this area as, generally speaking, if a piece of wood is not pretty sound I just simply don't mess with it. It will either go on the firewood pile or I leave it lying in the woods.

Q2: Response: I'm not sure if I really have a favorite species of wood to turn. Different types of projects can require different types of woods. Generally speaking, I like Cherry, Walnut, Oak and Ash, not necessarily in that order.

### Barb Crockett:

Q1: Basically I subscribe to John Jordan's policy that "Life's too short to turn crappy wood." However, on occasion I feel compelled to save a pretty piece of wood no matter how much trouble it causes me. I have had reasonably good success with MinWax Wood Hardener. I have found it locally at The Andersons. It is a thin acetone based product that requires good ventilation or a good respirator. You brush the solution onto the wood until it will not absorb any more. It dries to form a very hard surface which isn't always the easiest to cut. I have found it especially useful to keep the bark on a natural edge piece that has an especially thick and spongy cambium layer. The layer becomes solid as stone and the bark is there to stay. The downside is that this product is fairly pricey at $9.00 for a small can.

Q2: My favorite wood to turn is box elder with red in it.