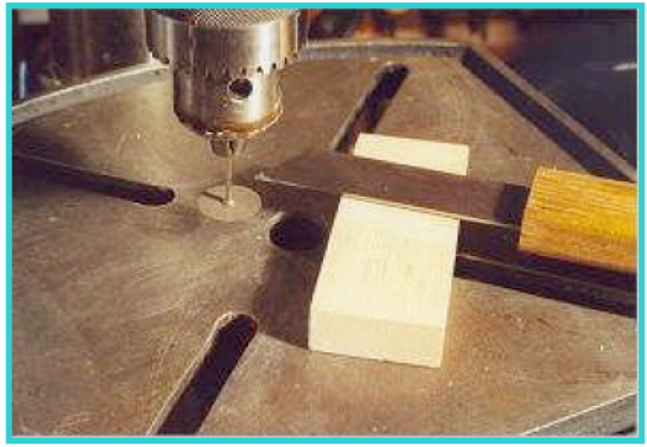


Fine-Tune a Thin Kerf Parting Tool

Contributed by
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Five or six years ago, the so-called thin kerf parting tool gained popularity. First offered by individual name turners, these are now available through virtually all supply houses. I made one early on and have been very pleased with the results.

In a recent issues of the *American Woodturner* (Vol. 19, # 3) Stacy Hagner shows us how to make his version of the tool. Being a confirmed scrounger, I also made mine from a discarded power hacksaw blade. This was high-speed steel, about 1/16" thick. I don't have a metal-cutting chop saw as he does, so I scored the blade on both sides on the grindstone and snapped it off in a vise with Vise-Grip pliers. (Remember gloves and eye protection.) At this point, I offer two more suggestions. First, do your scoring on the edge of a silicon carbide wheel (carborundum). Don't waste your good aluminum oxide tool-sharpening wheel. Second, put a handle on your blade before continuing.



Whether yours is a home-crafted tool or a commercial product, it will perform better with a slight modification. Specifically, this is to alter the bottom edge (long point) of the tool with a groove. The result provides exceptionally clean entry when it matters (Photo 1).

All that you need are a drill press, a block of wood, and a small carborundum or diamond disc (available from Wood Carvers Supply or Lee Valley). After you grind your tool to the desired angle, square off both the top (short) and the bottom (long) *edges* of the nose. With the disc mounted in the drill press chuck, adjust the height to that of the blade held flat on the support block (Photo 2). I set my drill press belts to provide about 1400 rpm. You are then ready to grind a short groove at the tip of the long edge. There is no need to groove more than about an inch of the long edge. The grinding is easy if you steady the blade on the support block with one hand and control movement of the blade with the other.