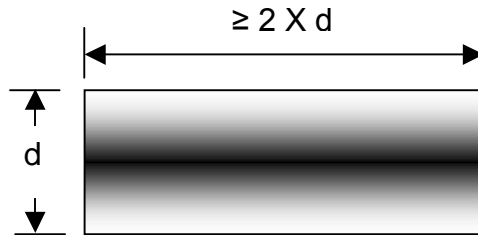


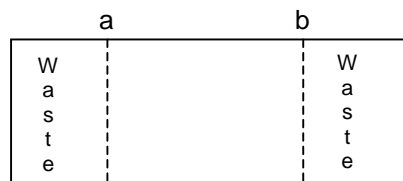
Selecting and Preparing Bowl Blanks From a Log©  
By Don Geiger

In the field- where a tree was felled- is often where limbs are removed from the trunk and the trunk is cut into manageable sections. At this point I prefer to crosscut the trunk into sections that are no shorter in length than two times the diameter. Example: if the trunk were 12" diameter, I would crosscut it into minimum lengths of 24".



This will usually result in a size that I can physically handle and a length that I can cut at least two good bowl blanks from.

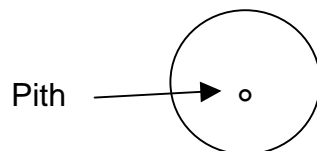
If the wood isn't to be used immediately, it will be drier at each end than in the middle. Waste areas, shown below, can be removed leaving the middle section, which has a higher, more-consistent moisture content, where I can usually get two bowl blanks.



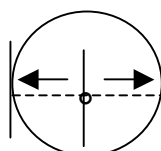
Note: It is important to make cuts a & b very perpendicularly to the side of the log.

To process the blanks for natural edge bowls, I usually crosscut the middle section 1.2 times longer than the diameter (ie: Ratio: 1.2:1). Example: If I had a 10" diameter log I would crosscut it to about 12". For cut rim (smooth edge bowls) I would crosscut the length closer to equal to the diameter.

After removing the waste ends, I will cut bowl blanks from the remaining section. Before bifurcating the log, I stand it on its end and locate the center of the log where the growth rings originate, commonly referred to as the "pith".

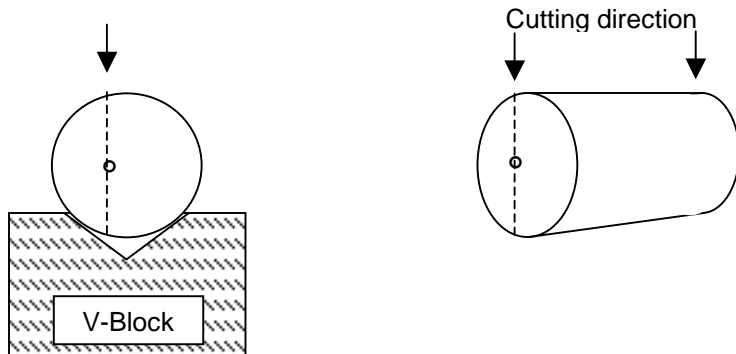


In a majority of cases, the pith will not be located in the center of the log. The log will need to be bifurcated along the pith to make two bowl blanks, but before doing so; using a ruler I will find the point where the distances from the pith to either bark edge are equidistant. Draw a line to serve as a guide for cutting.



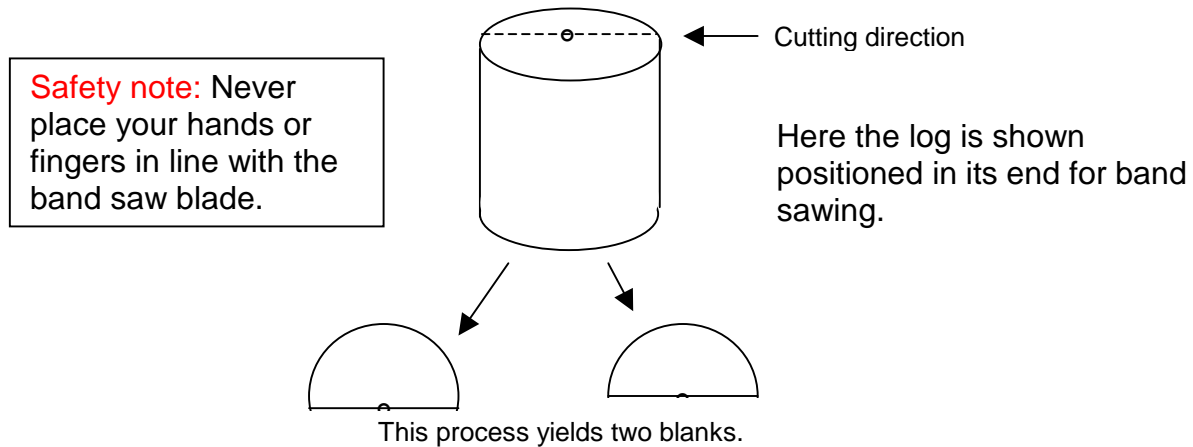
The log section can then be cut along the line determined above. A chain saw or band saw can be used to do this.

If using a chain saw: position the log section as shown on a wooden block with a V cut into the top surface to prevent the log from rolling and cut along the line through to the other side.



The log is positioned on its side in the "V" for chain sawing.

If using a band saw, position the log vertically, resting on its end.

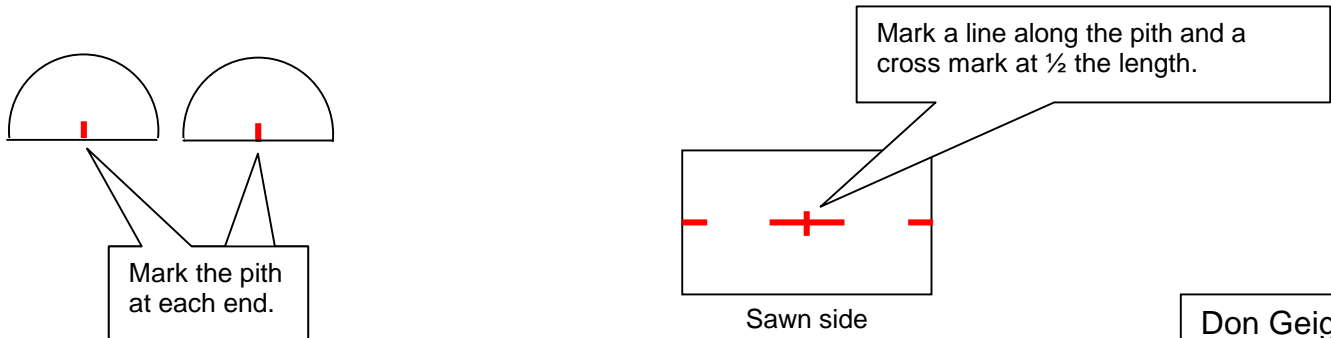


Here the log is shown positioned in its end for band sawing.

The above effort will result in two  $\frac{1}{2}$  log blanks; usually one is a little thicker than the other. The pith located at the cut line should be equidistant to either edge. This distributes the stress more equally during the drying process and many think the balanced look is aesthetically pleasing.

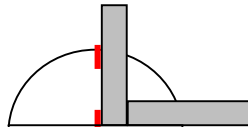
To further prepare the blanks for mounting onto the lathe:

- 1) Locate and mark where the pith meets the cut ends and on the flat sawn side of the blank as shown in red below:

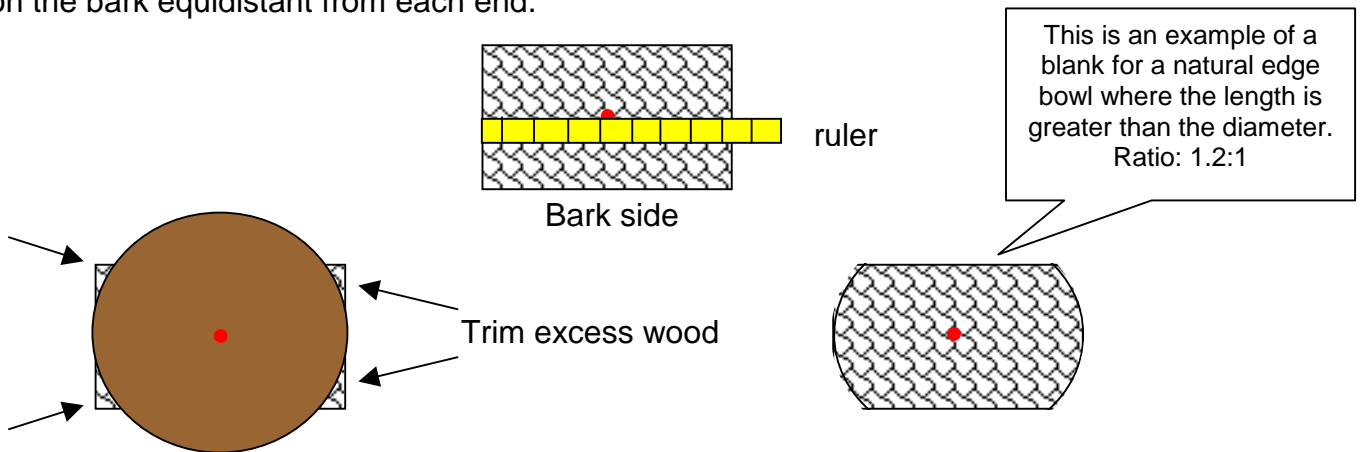


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2) Rest the blank on its flat sawn side and, using a framing square, mark the apex of the curved edges directly above the pith on each end as shown below:

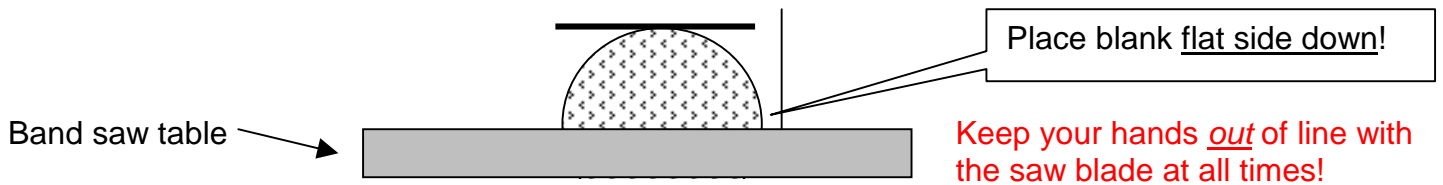


3) Align a ruler on the marks made at the apex of each curve at both ends of the blank and mark a dot on the bark equidistant from each end.

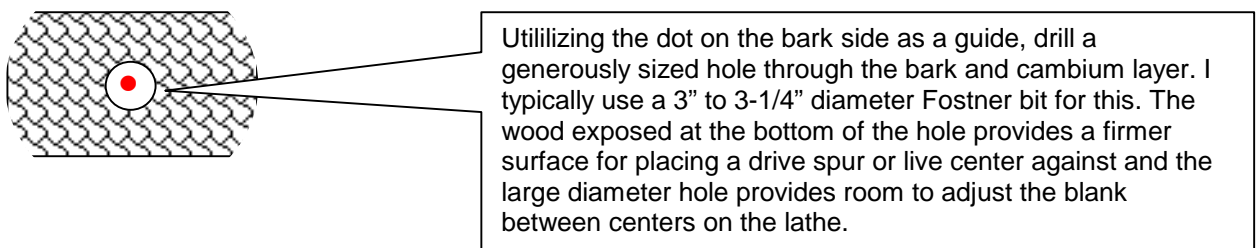


Cut a disc out of cardboard or some other flat material that has a diameter equal to the overall length of the blank and with a small hole in the center. Place a screw through the hole and secure the disc to the bark side of the wood exactly on the dot. Using a band saw or some other means, carefully trim the wood that exceeds the diameter of the disc.

**Safety note:** Always place the flat sawn side down onto the table of a band saw as shown here:

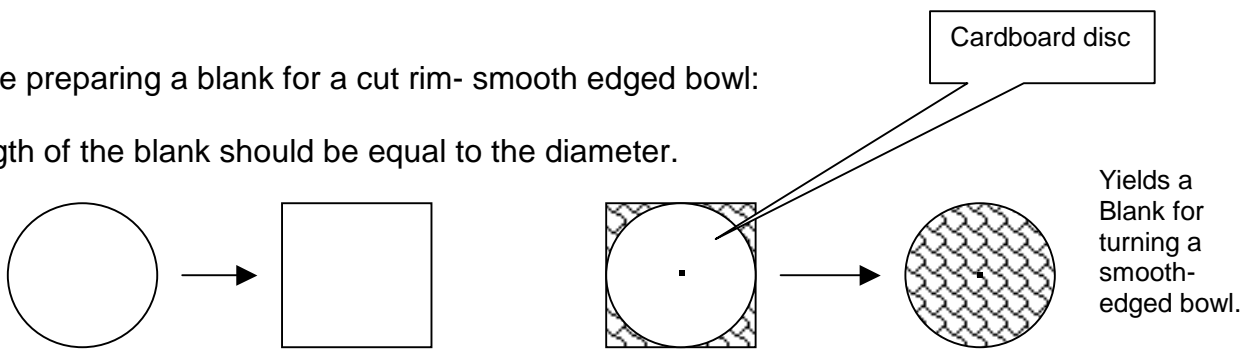


4)



If you are preparing a blank for a cut rim- smooth edged bowl:

The length of the blank should be equal to the diameter.



Make a cardboard disc equal to the length and diameter of the log to use as a guide when trimming off the excess wood.

What you should now have are two blanks ready to go on the lathe. The large hole drilled in the bark side should be pretty well centered above the cross mark you made on the flat sawn side along the pith line. Utilize these two points to guide you where to place the drive spur and live center against the wood on the lathe. The mass should be pretty well centered.

**WHILE STANDING OUT OF THE LINE-OF-FIRE and WEARING A \*GOOD QUALITY FACE SHIELD:**

Start the lathe at the slowest possible speed and slowly increase the speed. Tighten the tail stock quill/live center against the wood securely and re-check it frequently to ensure it remains tight.

Thank you!

Don Geiger

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[www.geigersolutions.com](http://www.geigersolutions.com)

\*A good quality face shield, at any price, is cheaper than a trip to the emergency room!!!

Safety equipment not being worn provides no protection.

I wear the Bios shield available from Paula Nicks: 239-822-6762 or [paula@dustbeegone.com](mailto:paula@dustbeegone.com)