

Making Whistles

By: Keith Taylor

Something for the children. Well yes, but not only for children. I make whistles for the ladies as well. By fitting a key ring on the end, this then becomes a useful article, and to some extent a piece of safety equipment. If the whistle is made correctly it is capable of producing a very loud piercing sound so a warning. If you do intend to make these and give them to the children, make sure the children live at least two streets away. If you make them longer, and the hole deeper, the sound will be more mellow and if you want to advance further a block of wood with four holes drilled to different depths will make a sound more like a diesel train whistle, or you could even go further, and make a pan flute.

Enough of this dreaming let's get started. Choose a piece of timber carefully, a good dense timber with perhaps an oily base, would be best; but any reasonable timber will be OK. Remember moisture could be blown into the whistle. The size, is not very important, about 25 mm (1 inch) square and as for the length, as long as it's more than 40 mm (1.5 inches) long you are in business.

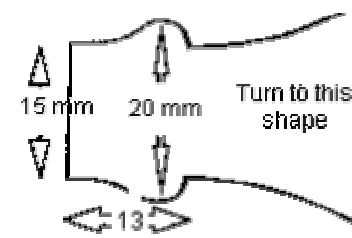


Mark the centers on each end of the timber. I use an engineers automatic punch to indent the center spot, it gives a starting spot for the drill and the tail stock {see photo}. Drill the hole, using a 3/8 inch drill to the depth of 35 mm. (That sure is mixing up the measurements; but that's the way it goes). Because I have a piece of 3/8 inch brass rod I use a 3/8 drill, but if you have a piece of 9 mm brass or steel you must then use a 9 mm drill. Wrap a piece of tape around the drill at 35 mm as a depth gauge and drill the hole as per photo. I find this method the most accurate way to drill

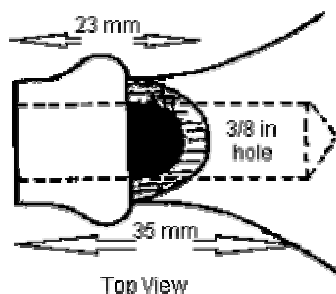
holes in the end. Front the drill up to the center pop mark and the tail center pop mark to the tail stock's live center.

With a brass rod replacing the drill, push the timber on the rod and bring up the tailstock. When you have almost finished the shape, withdraw the tailstock and finish the end off. If you want to make it as a key holder, turn a small knob on the end and later drill a small hole in the end, from each side at an angle to suit the key ring.

Now is the time to be creative (as all wood turners are). Beyond the mouth area is YOUR design, but the mouth area is best if you follow the diagram.



Using a fine saw cut the mouth to the shape of the black area



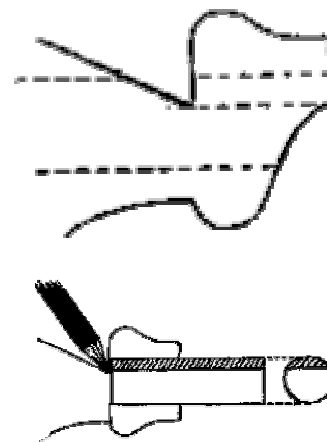
Although I don't measure the size anymore the whistles still work well.

So there is some latitude there somewhere. Before removing the whistle from the lathe, sand the surfaces and using your favorite polish finish off. Then remove the whistle from the lathe and follow the instructions on cutting out the mouth.

HINT Using a length of dowel, insert it into the hole and place the protruding end in the vice. This will hold the whistle while cutting the mouth. While still in this position and using a fine file clean up the saw cuts

IT IS NOW TIME TO MAKE THIS WOODEN WHISTLE WHISTLE

First, a piece of dowel about 35 mm long that will be a snug fit into the hole. Insert the dowel into the hole as far as the saw cut and with a pencil draw a line across the end of the dowel (see diagram), now remove the dowel and remove the small amount of wood as shown shaded.



Reinstall and test. Blow into the mouth piece and adjust the dowel in and out for best results. Mark the final position of the dowel, remove, put a little glue on the dowel and reinsert to the mark. TEST and leave to dry. When dry cut the excess dowel off sand and polish FINISHED.

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