

WC Forums: Turning

"Frog Bumps Texture" - It's EASY *PIC*

(By charlie belden)

In an earlier post, I described an old method of exploiting two of wood's characteristics

- that its grain can be compressed/crushed
- that it expands as it absorbs moisture

If you compress/crush the wood's grain

- such that you create a depressed pattern
- then remove wood down to near the bottom of the depressed pattern
- then steam the wood

your pattern becomes raised above its background.

Turns out the Japanese woodworkers have been exploiting this idea for quite a while, long enough to give it a name - Ukibori.

Thought I'd give it a try - since I had the chasing hammer and ball end metal punches. Found the bottom of a small lidded box I never finished. Chucked it up, punched some hemispherical depressions, turned the surface down to near the bottom of the depressions and put the piece in a little vegetable steamer.

Here's what I got, along with a pic of the "punches" and chasing hammer used. Took about 5 minutes of tapping and should have only taken a minute or so with the wood exposed to steam.



I should have

a) sanded to at least 600 rather than stopping at 320. Better yet, should have done a light shear cut on the last pass rather than scraping

b) steamed the piece just long enough for the "frog bumps to rise" instead of steaming for 10 minutes and having the grain split apart in some places. The "frog bumps" appeared within less than a minute of encountering steam - but I figured More Is Better (which often is totally not true)

I've since taken a curved, polished agate burnisher to the surfaces and smoothed the raised grain. Piece got shinier - without losing the bumps.

Interesting possibilities with this thing. Tear dropped punches, with rounded edges, concentric circular ridges punch, flat cone punches, heart shaped punches. Lots of possibilities.

If you decide to play with this technique PLEASE post what you find and how you used it - with photos of course.