

## What we turn - Cherry Wood

by *The Mad Woodturner*

North American Cherry is and has been for a long time a staple in fine furniture making. It has a strength and stability sought out by woodworkers everywhere. It's also known for its figured nature and the color of it as it ages. It warms quite noticeably with time. It is fairly easily found in the mid-western and eastern United States.

**Characteristics:** Relatively strong for a domestic, common wood. Also quite hard but machines well. Known for its ability to burn if dull tools are used. Has a fine grain that is seductively wavy at times and feels satiny. Resistant to decay. Sapwood ranges from White to light reddish brown. Heartwood is reddish when freshly cut. Can warp quite severely when turned green but once dry, is very stable.

**Working Properties:** One of the best domestic woods to turn! It is easy to turn but is still hard enough to not crush. The grain is usually close so there's little tearout and no ridging as in softer or wider-ringed woods. A sharp tool will give you gleaming wood left behind! It takes a shine very well. Sanding is hot and goes slow. You can go very thin with this wood.

**Durability:** Strong, fairly light, and is mostly bug resistant except for some furniture beetles in the sapwood sometimes.

**Smell:** Smells like Mom is making pies!

**Danger:** Cherry has a minor but still serious potential for danger to us, as woodworkers/ woodturners as well as the recipients of our creations. A chemical called Prunasin is sometimes, usually during the autumn, found in the wood of these trees. It's quite frequently found in the foliage and seed pits during this time though. It can combine with our stomach acids to produce cyanide. That's not good. Take precautions in how you work it as well as what it's intended use is.

