

Using the Termite

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This is the Termite tip. You can see that the outer rim is slightly beveled. Both edges, upper and lower, are sharpened. The lower edge is much more aggressive due to the bevel, so most cutting occurs with the upper edge. All of the pictures that follow show this edge cutting.



This is a piece of red oak, about 10" in diameter and 3½" thick. You can see that the cut will be straight into the end grain.

The hole is plunged into the center using a 3/8" gouge. In this picture a slight hollow has been turned into the bowl. There's still a hole in the center, it just happens to be plugged with shavings.



The cut starts at the hole, dead center. The cutter is vertical when I place it into the hole, and then turned clockwise until the cutting edge begins to slice the wood. At this point I have the tool turned from 12 o'clock to about 2 o'clock, and I am pulling the cut from right to left with my left hand. The speed of the cut is directly proportional to how hard I pull.



Half way through the cut. You can see a sizable shaving coming from the cutter. Keep in mind that this is red oak. The lathe is turning fairly slowly, only about 250 rpm. The Termite does not like high speed, nor does it need it.

Note that the cutter is just above center.



Finishing up the cut at the rim of the bowl.

You can see that this was a fairly aggressive cut. There is no way I could hollow out this end grain as well with a bowl gouge. To get the inside of the bowl this far took less than 2 minutes, with Karen taking the pictures.



Flattening out the bottom of the bowl. This is when you might want to turn the cutter over and use the aggressive edge, but be careful. To use the "mellow" edge, as I have done here, you have to cut below center unless you raise the tool rest.



To thin the sides of the bowl, start where the bottom meets the side. Note that the Termite is vertical. It cannot cut in this position, nor can it catch.



Just starting the cut. The Termite has been turned to about 2 o'clock here, and I'm using a very light touch to begin with.



Once the tool begins to slice the wood, I bear down a bit on it to cut more aggressively, since the wall is still quite thick here. The cutter, at this point has been turned to between 2 and 3 o'clock.