

HOW TO MAKE A CORN COB PEN

by Patricia Lawson

I'm sure that others are more expert at corn cob pens, but its sooooo easy that there isn't much to tell. Just be sure that the cob is absolutely dry, with no corn kernels on it. Then just treat it like you would any pen blank of very porous wood.

Have plenty of water-thin CA glue handy. Cut the cob in half and drill it for the size tubes you are using. Pour some thin CA glue into holes and rotate it around until the glue is absorbed. Put some CA on the ends too. Glue in the tubes, use a pen mill or other device to square the ends, then put it on your mandrel and turn! I recommend you wax your bushings before turning, so further applications of CA won't glue your cob to them.

Once you get the "fluffy" stuff off the cob, you get to the woody part. Drench it with thin CA glue, turn it down a bit more, drench it again with CA, and if there are open spots/holes, rub some of the shavings into them and put more CA on it. When you're done turning it, sand and finish it as you would any other wood.

I added a light wash of yellow spirit dye to it to brighten up the color. After sanding to 12,000 Micro Mesh, I used 2 coats of Tung Oil Finish and after 24 hours, a protective coat of Renaissance Wax over that.



A couple of notes:

- Corn cobs have a natural taper to them, so the rows (grain pattern) narrow at the smaller end. This is neat when you do a pen that has taper that is similar to the taper of the cob, because the pattern matches between the upper barrel and lower barrel very nicely. This doesn't work as well on a straight barreled pen.
- When you cut the cob, mark it or remember how the "grain" should go together. Mark the large end for the upper barrel, and the small end of cob for the lower, or smaller barrel. The cut sides should meet in the middle, just as you would with a wood blank.
- If you want to have the rows match on a straight-barreled pen, use two cobs that are about the same size and make the straight pen barrels from the two thicker, upper halves of the cobs. That way there will be no taper and the rows will match up for a straight-barreled pen.

It's super easy, and you won't have to sharpen your tools in the middle of turning this pen!

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