

Divining for Fun and Pleasure

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Every April I take a one-month break from the strain of researching, writing, and editing a bevel cut submission for the guild website. This month, with all that free time, I decided to test some advanced turning tricks and techniques to make myself a new divining rod. My old one, which I purchased on Amazon, kind of wore out and became unreliable even after I replaced the batteries.

As most guild members know, a divining rod is used for dowsing, a sport to be introduced in the 2024 Winter Olympics. Dowsing itself is a pseudo-scientific athletic endeavor employed in attempts to locate a variety of both real and imagined objects, including ground water, gemstones, Danish oil, hide glue, and gravesites of missing people. In the USA, dowsing is largely limited to searches for ground water, leaks in indoor plumbing, and fraudulent election ballots.



Figure 1. A classic divining rod turned and sanded but before the final topcoat, courtesy of Woodpeckers Imaginary Resources



Figure 2. Photo of the author dowsing for tiger maple with his latest, home-made divining rod.

The obstacles to making a divining rod stem from two basic design elements - the need to have a rod that fits into two hands while also retaining a third fork that can point to the target. Whether you form a Y-shaped rod from a single piece of red oak, curly maple, or dark walnut, or you fashion one from two L-shaped pieces of ash, chestnut, or black oak, you are going to need a lathe with a very special turning attachment. Coming to the rescue recently is Ohio-based MetalPeckers with their new lathe chuck dubbed "the douser" that is designed for turning Y-shaped rods and bowls.

After modifications to the lathe and a successful turning experience, the challenge, as is the case for most woodworking skills, involves learning to use the divining rod safely and accurately. Kickback is a well-known problem and can lead to serious injury. Popular accessories for the dowsing enthusiast include infra-red goggles, Kevlar vests, helmets, ground penetrating radar equipment, and moisture meters.