



## **Working with green wood**

### **Choosing the wood**

We use green wood (it's in the name), this is unseasoned wood straight from the log, because it's still full of water it's softer and easier to carve. Any wood is worth a try. At London Green Wood we use mainly native hardwoods, our favourites are silver birch and sycamore.

Lime and alder are hardwoods that are soft and easy to carve. Fantastic for beginners. Willow is soft, but very sharp tools are needed to get a good finish. Poplar is soft and easy to work, but has a high silica content that will scratch your tools.

Cherry is also popular with our members, particularly for the colouring, but is more likely to split than other woods (so not suitable for cups, ladles etc. and more care should be taken in drying). Other fruit wood is also good and often has pretty colours and patterns in it. All are fairly dense, and therefore harder to carve but will give a brilliant smooth finish.

Very hard woods, eg. oak, are very hard to carve. So we wouldn't recommend it for starting out.

Ring porous woods, such as ash and elm (where there is a visible difference between the summer and winter growth) are not suitable for spoons or vessels that need to hold liquid.

Woods with poisonous berries, eg. yew and laburnum, best avoided for kitchenware. But most trees growing in the UK are safe to use.

### **Drying, using and caring for your work**

Once your work is finished dry it slowly, away from a heat source or sunny spot. The bigger, thicker and deeper it is the more important it is to dry it slowly to avoid cracking (a spatula is less likely to crack than a spoon, a bowl or a cup are more likely to crack than either). You can slow drying down by wrapping your work up in a damp cloth, or in a bag full of woodshaving.

Love your treen and use it. Wash up your spoons, bowls etc. as usual but never in a dishwasher and never leaving soaking in a basin of water. Dry thoroughly between use. Any time that you have differential drying (eg. a puddle in the bowl) you are likely to get cracking.

### **Oiling your work**

Oiling your work once dry will bring up the grain and keep it clean. Use an oil that is both curing and edible. Oils to use: hempseed, raw linseed/flaxseed, walnut, safflower, poppy, soybean or tung oil. NOT: olive oil (non curing, as are mineral, coconut, peanut, olive, rapeseed oils) or boiled linseed (not safe for consumption).

### **More information**

Recommended tools, books, events and video tutorials

<http://londongreenwood.com/resources/>