Micro faceplates for the job at hand

It can be challenging to mount small objects on the lathe when all you have is a large lathe and faceplate. My lathe spindle has M33 threads, and the smallest faceplate currently available for it is about 4" (10cm) in diameter. My solution is to use either a spindle adapter or the much rarer Morse taper adapter to reduce the spindle size to ¾" (19mm), 16 tpi. It is very easy to find 2" (5cm) faceplates that will fit this spindle size.

These smaller faceplates are much less expensive than larger ones. Or you can make your own at no expense. I have filled a basket with permanently mounted fixtures, like jam chucks and pin chucks, and I have several more with pre-mounted wasteblocks at the ready.

—David Staeheli, Alaska

A Morse taper adapter (left center) and spindle adapter (right center) allow for the use of small faceplates on a larger lathe.

Tailstock and banjo storage

I often have to remove the tailstock and banjo from my lathe to create space for sanding and finishing. In order to store these heavy lathe accessories safely, I converted an old rolling cart into a custom holder. In addition to the tailstock and banjo, there is storage for a straight and curved toolrest. The size and configuration of the cart could be adapted easily to accommodate different accessories.

When the items are not needed at the lathe, it is easy to place them securely on the cart and roll them to a safe location.

—Dex Hallwood, British Columbia, Canada

Finish saver

It can be frustrating to open a partially used can of finish to find the contents skimmed over. To prevent this, I seal the surface with a thin piece of plastic before closing the can. Next time I open the can and remove the plastic, I'm assured of a skim-free liquid finish.

—Tim Heil, Minnesota

Octagonal template cuts corners

Lots of people use circular templates to mark and cut out turning blanks. When I make a plate or shallow bowl out of dimensional lumber, I just cut the corners off my blanks before turning. I have found that an octagonal template allows me to mark several blanks quickly, showing where the corners need to be cut off.

After marking the blanks, I use a simple jig that allows me to cut the corners off my blanks at the table saw. The jig is just a piece of ¾"- (19mm-) thick plywood that safely holds the blank at 45 degrees and rides along the saw fence.

—Carl Ford, New York