

# Wooden Candle Holder

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## Intro: Wooden Candle Holder

A handmade tea light holder, crafted from a log.

I shaped a log from our firewood pile into a slab, and drilled holes for the tea lights. Its pretty simple really- but the most important part is picking an attractive piece of wood, and paying attention to nice finishing.

### You need:

a log  
a shaping tool. (bandsaw, hand saw, chainsaw, hatchet, plane, belt sander, mill, your teeth etc..)  
a large forstner bit (either 1 1/2" or 1 5/8" - I'll explain the importance later)  
drill

### Optional:

bike

**Disclaimer-** use common sense or succumb to evolution.



## Step 1: Aquiring Materials

Ok, so for the wood, you have a couple of different options, but in general you want a hard wood (i.e. not pine 2x4) with nice grain, points of interest, like a knot, or a rough edge with some bark.

It can be any shape or size you like, as long as it is wide and deep enough to fit a tea light with a little extra on either side, as for length, it could be long enough for 1 to 100 candles.. but I think odd numbers of candles looks best.

I made two, one from option 1, and one from option 3

- 1) Firewood from your woodpile. Make sure it isn't rotten, nor does it have woodworm or other defects unless you think they may look good.
- 2) Go to a lumber yard or equivalent and tell them what your trying to make, they can probably give you a scrap for very little or free.
- 3) I met a tree surgeon who was working on a street near my house. I asked him for a fresh log, that was in the back of his truck. I had to call him a number of times as he was an old guy who seemed to be hard of hearing- don't give up! He gave me a maple log for 2 bucks.

- This is where the bike comes in, I was riding home when I met him, so I carried the log home bungee corded to my bike. Be careful, as its impossible to steer, and you become a very nice projectile.



#### Image Notes

1. my lock acting as a sling
2. bungee cord

### Step 2: Shaping

Take a look at your piece of wood and look for your candle holder within the log. I kept one edge close to the edge of the log for bark, and picked a length where there was a knot.

To blank it out you need one of the shapers mentioned earlier, I would suggest a saw, but I had a go with the hatchet for my firewood log attempt, this left the final piece more rustic, as there were deeper gouges from the hatchet.

Once you have the basic shape done, you can work on it with progressively finer tools- like a plane, then sander, then finer sandpaper..

- You should have a go at using a plane if you haven't already- they are really fun, and they make a big mess of wood curls everywhere.

A belt sander is really helpful, but not necessary. I put mine upside down in the vise so I could bring the work to the tool, not the other way round, which is easier for smaller stuff.



**Image Notes**

1. be careful! or don't try to film an instructable without a proper tripod..



**Image Notes**

1. the culprit, a nail sticking out of the side of my workbench.



**Image Notes**

1. planing the firewood version..



#### Image Notes

1. bigger plane, this time with my new piece of maple.



#### Image Notes

1. finer sandpaper

### Step 3: Snack, and touchups.

OK, first things first, get something to eat. like a cup of tea and a cinnamon bun..

Look for any problem areas- Where bark is lifting up, really big gouges etc..

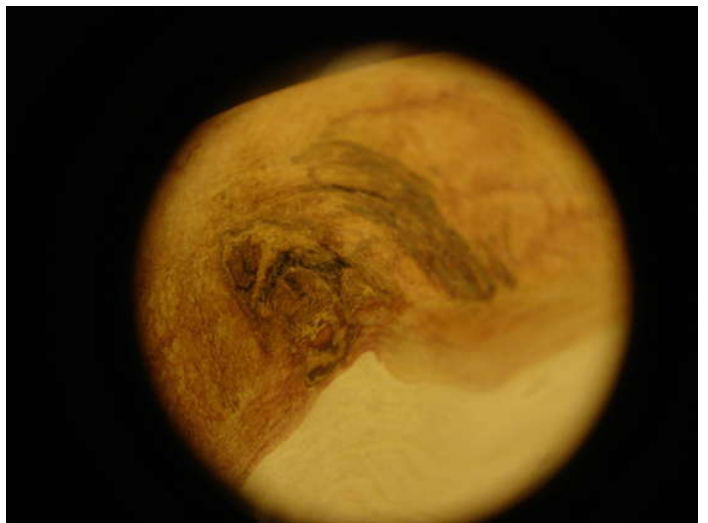
For bark thats lifting up, fix it right away, as when the break is fresh, the fibers connect back together better. Get some carpenters glue and squidge it into the crack with your finger or a scrap piece of wood. Put a clamp on it, and leave it to dry.

If you made a big gouge, either make it part of the rustic look, or fill it with wood filler. Follow the directions on the packet.

Now you'll need to do more sanding to get rid of excess glue/filler. Doing lots of sanding with finer and finer grits is really worth it.

- Notice I'm sanding before drilling. The forstner bits make a really clean cut into the piece, so its easier to sand before you have holes to negotiate.





#### Step 4: Drilling Holes

Decide how many candles you want. Here you can see it with 3, and then 2. I went with 3.

For any odd number of candles measure to the middle, and place a mark, this is where you will drill for the middle candle.

The rest of the marks are a little harder to explain, but you want an equal distance between the edges of your candles, not between centers, so you will need to know the radius of your drill bit. Then draw it around your drill mark with a compass. Now you can measure from the edge. Position the remaining candles equal distances apart, and mark for holes.

Or make a jig from scrap material, like I used for the firewood piece. First Drill a hole in a board for the jig, then move the edge of your jig to the edge of where you just drilled, and drill a hole through the hole in the jig. Keep moving it up, then cut off the end when you can't make any more holes.

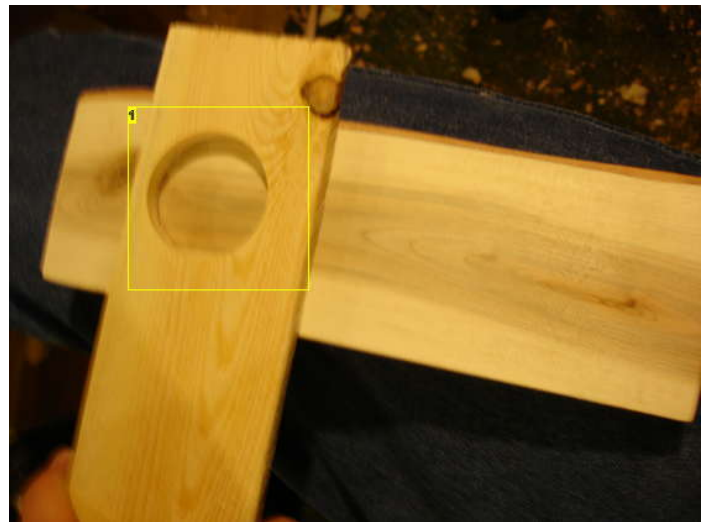
Drill Bit: The most expensive part of this project was the forstner bit, at around \$30cdn, But its worth it to buy a quality tool. You can make lots more candle holders. I even have a few other projects that use the same bit.

I found that a 1 1/2" forstner bit was the largest home depot sells, but this only fits the tea light, without the cup.

If you want to fit the cup (which I suggest, so you don't set fire to the candle holder, or have a waxy mess to scrape out) you will need a bigger size, which I found at and old school hardware store, Preston Hardware in Ottawa. They gave me a 1 5/8" which fits the cup.

\*Note- All tea lights are not created equal. Mine are from IKEA. I found some others that are smaller, and may fit into a 1 1/2" hole. Check what candles you have or can get before you buy a bit.

If you have a drill press, this will be much easier. You can set the depth stop for the size of a candle. Then just start making wood chips. A hand drill would work ok, but clamp your piece securely, and make sure you drill straight.



#### Image Notes

1. Jig







## Step 5: Finish Up

If the edges of the holes are ruff, give them a little sanding.

Finishes: Think about finishes- there are many you could do. My favourite is tung oil, Which I used on the chopping board. I left the maple candle holder natural. I treated the longer log made holder with liming wax, which brings out the grain in a big way. You could also stain it. Be careful about using potentially flammable finishes.

Buy some nice candles. I got beeswax tea lights from a an environmental/organic shop called Arbour in Ottawa. They smell great.

Wrap it up, and give someone a piece of firewood instead of a lump of coal...

Now you've bought the expensive bit, make a few more, or have a go at making a chopping board..

Merry Christmas.





Image Notes  
1. the happy recipient

