

## **CA Glue...The Woodturners Friend**

**By Wally Dickerman**

Cyanoacrilate glue, commonly called CA glue is used by woodturners for a variety of reasons. To attach glue blocks, to fill voids and cracks, to attach collars to hollowforms, to firm up bark on natural edge bowls, as a durable finish for bowls, pens, bottle stoppers and more.

CA glue works well to bond wet wood. Yellow and white glues do not. For that reason, it's almost universally used to attach glue blocks to bowl blanks.

Not all CA glues are equal. I stick with the glue brands that are sold in wood stores rather than those sold in craft stores. CA comes in several forms. Thin, med. and thick. It comes in flexible and in black.

CA glue has a shelf life. When I buy CA I put the date on the container. If it's been opened and is past 6 months old I toss it. If it's not been opened and has been stored in a refrigerator for over a year I toss that too. I want to be able to trust the glue to bond well. I buy it in small quantities so that doesn't happen often.

The fumes from CA glue are potentially harmful to your health so it's a good idea to use it in a well ventilated area.

Cotton and CA used together causes a chemical reaction creating heat and toxic smoke so don't use cotton cloth or cotton swabs to apply CA.

Storing unopened CA in a refrigerator will extend its shelf life. When I open a new CA container I toss the cap. I find that I get fewer plugged spouts, and it doesn't seem to affect the life of the glue. Acetone is a debonder. I keep a small glass jar handy and when I get a plugged spout I put it in the jar. After I've collected a few I fill the jar with acetone. in 24 hours all the spouts are clean. I keep some on hand to replace clogged spouts. Debonders are available and I keep a bottle on hand. I seem to always get some glue on my fingers when using CA. The debonder helps to remove it.

When using CA to fill voids and cracks it tends to stain the area around the crack,

especially when using thin glue. In order to eliminate that probability, I apply some brushing lacquer to the area. It seals the wood, avoiding the stain.

When using accelerator the glue often tends to foam up. I find that waiting for 30 seconds before spraying accelerator helps to avoid that.

When using CA for applying a glue block (I use medium) I make sure that I apply enough for a glue squeezeout. Almost all glue block failures are because not enough glue was used. I apply accelerator, then firm hand pressure when attaching the glue block. No clamps.

Yellow glue doesn't work well for gluing strong endgrain joints but CA does. However, to be on the safe side, when gluing a glue block to a large endgrain blank I cut a small tenon on the blank, with a corresponding hole bored with a forstner bit in the glue block. Makes a stronger joint.

Some turners claim that CA bonding isn't long lasting. I don't know if that is myth or fact.

