

Whittling a Ball-in-Cage Rattle

Attractive rattle combines three classic designs

By Frank Egholm



This small whimsy features three elements: a loose ball in a cage, a captive ring, and a loose chain link. This is a simple project for someone who has carved a few ball-in-cages, but more challenging for a beginner.

When I'm teaching a novice to carve, I'll often use a project similar to this. The beginner starts out with a large piece of basswood clamped in a vise and uses a chisel to form the ball. The student finishes the project with a knife, while wearing a carving glove. The larger the project, the easier it is to carve, so I suggest a beginner uses wood at least 1" (25mm) thick.

I carved this piece from juniper, which is harder than basswood but softer than mahogany; it also smells nice as you carve.

Carving the Ball-in-Cage

Draw the design onto the blank. Drill $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm)-diameter holes where indicated on the pattern. Make stop cuts straight in along the cage bars, but don't remove any wood from the bars. Then, remove the wood around the ball, except where the ball connects with the bars. When the ball and cavity are

shaped, use the tip of the knife on the inside of the bars to free the ball. Carefully round the ball.

Carving the Captive Ring

Make stop cuts on either side of the ring, and carefully thin the handle around the captive ring. Use the tip of the knife to carefully remove the wood between the ring and the handle.

Carving the Chain

Starting with the hole drilled through the links, carefully remove the wood inside the links. Use the tip of the knife to remove the wood where the two links join until you can carefully snap the link free. Then, spin and move the link around as you finish smoothing and shaping the links.

Finishing the Project

Carve the finial on the top of the ball-in-cage. Sand the piece with progressively finer grits of sandpaper to remove all of the tool marks. Then, apply an oil finish and allow the finish to dry thoroughly.

materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- Juniper, $\frac{3}{4}$ " (or 20mm) thick: $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 4" (20mm x 100mm)
- Sandpaper
- Oil finish

TOOLS:

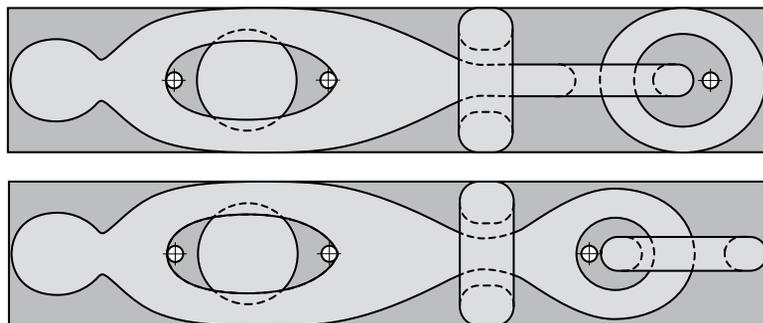
- Knife
- Drill with bit: $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) dia.

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.



Frank Egholm lives in Denmark, where he has taught woodworking in a school for several years. He has published several books. For more of his work, visit his website at www.snittesiden.dk.

Rattle pattern



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