

Hoffman uses a 3D printer and spends up to 100 hrs. per scale model.



His Hobby Is Making Small Scale Tractors

Eston Hoffman's mechanical engineering company designs industrial machine parts and blueprints using sophisticated software. As a hobby, he uses the same equipment to create parts for and build scale model garden tractors, lawn mowers, snowmobiles, and other equipment. "It started as something I thought would be fun, and it's turned into quite a sideline hobby," Hoffman says.

Eston's Hobbies and Restorations makes just 100 serial-numbered models of each piece it produces. "We manufacture detailed replicas with size-matched parts right down to fuel lines and dipsticks," Hoffman says. "The process takes about 100 hrs. per item. I start by pulling a tractor, mower, or snowmobile from my collection to the engineering company, then measure and design every part and component. I do a 3D model in SolidWorks CAD, and the next step is programming and laser 3D printing each part, all in extreme detail. We have thousands of parts, including engines, pulleys, oil filters, seats, hoods, wheels, and tires for the tractors and other items we produce. Most parts are spray painted, and all the detail painting is done by hand. When they're completed, we assemble and package them for delivery."

Hoffman puts several images of his builds on the business's Facebook page, and when they're done, items are listed on the company website. "Normally, all 100 sell out immediately, and then we move on



Just 100 serial-numbered copies are made of each piece produced.

to the next one," Hoffman says. "We only produce 100 units because that maxes out our production area. Each numbered batch usually sells for \$100 to \$120 each, which funds the next replica. We do this as a hobby, not a business."

Hoffman has had the engineering business for 6 years and started making the 1/25-scale replicas a year later. "It's just my wife and I, and even though it's time-consuming, it's a fun business."

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Wooden bowls range in size from 4-in. to 2-ft. and are used mostly for home décor.

He Carves Bowls With A Chainsaw

Micah Henry enjoys making bowls out of burls and interesting blocks of wood. In the spring issue of Backwoods Home Garden magazine, he shared detailed directions about his process.

"I'm in western Pennsylvania, and we have cherry burls and some oak burls. Also, I've used ambrosia maple with spectacular, interesting designs," he says, noting that he's made bowls on a lathe but likes the irregular shapes of bowls he carves with a chainsaw. Over the past 8 years, he's learned how to dry his roughly carved bowls without cracking before sanding them down with special tools.

In his article, Henry shows the cuts he makes to shape the inside and outside of the bowl while keeping it secure and connected to a block of wood.

"Thickness is crucial, and I've learned how to watch the blade," Henry says. His goal is to saw the wood down to 1/2 in. thick or less and to keep the depth fairly uniform. Doing that and removing sapwood makes the wood less likely to crack. He also carefully measures the bowl before cutting it off the stump to ensure he doesn't cut a hole in the bottom.

He puts the rough-cut bowl in a brown paper bag, seals it, and puts it on a high shelf in his garage. Henry typically carves the bowls in the winter and leaves them in the bags through the summer. By fall, they're ready to sand.

"Sanding is the most tedious," he notes, but a couple of tools save him a lot of time. He uses a right-angle die grinder with a 2-in. disk and a 2-in. orbital grinder to get inside



To grow varieties that get 12 hrs. of sun in the tropics, Karl crossbreeds with northern varieties. He often chooses tropical varieties that grow in fewer days.

His Colorful Corn Is Picture Perfect

Jason Karl wants to share the wonders of tropical corn with the world and make it feasible to grow them in cooler climates. The Cornell University genetic engineering graduate has been collecting and breeding/crossing all types of corn to grow in New York State and photographing his colorful harvests.

Varieties come from the 20,000+ USDA collection of seeds.

"I went through tons of photos and got some amazing ones," he says.

There's a rainbow of lustrous colors, including green, purple, and pink. Kernel sizes vary from pinhead tiny to 1-in. diameter. Shapes can be claw-like or round.

Besides being beautiful, the corn is edible, from flour and flint to corn that can be popped or eaten as sweet corn when soft.

To grow varieties that get 12 hrs. of sun in the tropics, Karl crossbreeds with northern varieties. He often chooses tropical varieties

that grow in fewer days. It's labor-intensive work, with hand pollinating and covering tassels to avoid cross-contamination.

Though he's not sure where his work will lead him, he's found a way to share the beauty of the corn.

"It's like artwork, and an artist friend suggested going through the Fine Art website," Karl says.

Artists provide images that the online business can print or put on mugs, phone cases, puzzles, T-shirts, or other apparel—perfect for people who grow corn or just appreciate its beauty. Customers click on the image they want and are given options.

Karl invites anyone interested in tropical corn varieties to contact him.

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the bowl. Finally, he hand sands to get the wood as smooth as he wants.

He keeps bark on burl and live-edge bowls, eliminating the need to sand the outside. But sometimes, he says, that bark falls off during drying.

Henry finishes most bowls with food-safe shellac.

"My guess is that most customers buy them for décor," he says.

His bowls have ranged in size from 4-in. to a walnut bowl that was 2-ft. across the rim. He carves bowls as a hobby and sells them at a couple of local shops for between \$65 and \$100.

"I've had a few customers who emailed me that they loved their bowls. That makes me feel good, and seeing them prominently displayed is fun," he says.

Besides bowls, Henry has tried carving bears and other animals but decided he's better at bowls.

"I wrote the article to offer advice," he says, to people interested in making their own bowls. "Just try it, and don't be afraid. You'll get better."



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