

## Cutting Simple Leaves

Woodcarvers call this 'wasting,' and it's how a flat shape becomes a leaf.



*From A Manual of Wood-carving (Leland, 1891) · public domain*

*"Edge to stem, short cuts, smooth last."*

1

### Practise and Take Care

Practise cutting on waste wood before you start the pattern, and keep your implements well sharpened. Take the greatest care never to turn the point of the tool towards yourself, lest an unwary slip should produce a wound. Never rely on splitting, digging, prizing up, wriggling or rocking with the gouge to remove wood.

2

### Cut the Pattern

Begin with a simple conventionalised leaf rather than an elaborate one, and cut it with great care.

3

### Round the Leaf

Use a flat gouge to gradually round and carve the surface, starting at the outer or lower edge and working up to the stem.

4

### Waste the Wood

Chip the wood away little by little with straightforward cuts, the same way for the raised parts and the hollows. Take it off in short, sharp touches, not long, deep cuts, and don't smooth the surface until the leaf's form and modelling are finished.

5

### Cut the Veins

Cut the ribs or stem running through the leaf using a fluter, large veiner, hollow gouge, V tool, or flat gouge, whichever suits the spot. Undercut the edge of the leaf a little with a V tool or small veiner to give it relief.

6

### Finish the Surface

When the leaf is correct in form, use flat gouges to remove the tool marks. Hold the tool very firmly and incline it to an angle of about 45 degrees.

