

Q. - - - What timbers do you recommend for O.T?

A. - - - you need fine-grained wood for best results; and end-grain usually gives the best reflective qualities. However, exotic hardwoods are expensive. The best for O.T. is African Blackwood and close followers are lignum vitae and boxwood; other good ones are pink ivorywood, m'pane, kingwood, tulipwood, etc. When you buy large pieces there is usually a lot of waste material and I use this for test pieces. There is nothing worse than ruining a great piece of wood while practising. If it is a technique or a pattern that I am unsure of, I just use a waste piece of high quality hardwood, with a bit of rot, a few holes or cracks; and I test my idea. I can throw away the failures and be happy that I have wasted only time. This waste material is also good for making work-holding chucks. You can also practice with cheap hardwoods like rock maple but you get a much better idea of what the result can be by using waste Blackwood etc.