

Wildwood Bear's designs have appeared in Country Living, Dallas Ft. Worth Homes and Gardens, Texas Monthly and the Dallas Morning News magazines and various newspapers throughout Texas. Dean has appeared on the Texas Country Reporter and The Eyes of Texas syndicated TV shows about Texans.

Dean was recently accepted into the Craftsmens Guild of Mississippi, entitling him to display his designs in their galleries and special exhibits and to teach in their "*Continuing Education In The Arts*" program. Dean was selected by the Texas Forestry Association as the 1998 recipient of the *TFA 1998 Excellence In Wood Design* in the **Special Projects** category. "This was a double honor in that my furniture designs were nominated by Roger Martinez, Neiman Marcus Designer - Visual Planning and Presentation, as part of Neiman's ongoing support of the arts!"



Nanny Rocker

Wildwood Bear regarding famous customers, humbly says: "No person of fame has bought my designs yet. I have many customers in the architectural and engineering professions and they will always be my *famous customers* because they see my individuality and my self expression. We will always share a common sense of pride, both seen and felt, in the designs nature and I have co-created!"

Wildwood Dean began building furniture from several species of dogwood his dad referred to as "Mongrel dogwoods". "We found these dogwoods growing along sloughs and wet places in Red River bottom."

Learning later there are many species of dogwood; flowering dogwood or *Cornus florida* of which everyone is familiar, and the lesser known ones having clusters of small flowers, of which roughleaf or *Cornus drummondii* is the one I most often use. Dogwood became known, as such, in early England where a concoction was brewed from its bark and used in the treatment of mange dogs. The bark of the dogwood contains a quinine-like substance once used as an additive to toothpaste. American Indians obtained a blackish dye from the dogwood roots and preferred the new-growth shoots above all other material for arrow shafts. Other uses for dogwood in days gone by were; shuttles for cotton gins, wagon wheel bearings, golf club and mallet heads, treen wear and tool handles. Presently the dogwood is being used, by me of course, to build beautiful intricately designed "made to last" furniture!

Wildwood Bear Price

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Wildwood Bear

Stick Artificer



Shell-Back Rocker



ROUGHLEAF DOGWOOD
Cornus drummondii

Wet places: S. Ontario, Illinois,
and Nebraska to Mississippi
and E. Texas.

Wildwood Bear and his wife, Della, live near the Red River in North Central Texas where Dean's shop is and where their family of three sons were raised. Dean says "I still remember dad and me, as a little boy, gathering dogwood for net hoops; dad was a commercial fisherman of sorts". Dean still bends and cures the dogwood into hoops just as his dad did; but now "My hoops are used for furniture rather than fishing nets."

"As long as I live you can always find me close to the Ole Red River. I was born here, raised here, my heart and soul are here along the sand bars and swift waters of the Ole Red River listening to the wind whispering through the willers."

When asked what motivates him, Dean answers, "It is an addictive craving I have to see creations I designed in the solitude of my mind, created in the intimacy of my shop from nature's bounty, giving the beholder insurmountable admiration for the object nature and I have created!"

Wildwood Bear began building and designing natural furniture from wild un-sawn dogwood, willow, bois d'arc, cedar, rattan and anything else Dean could find growing wild along Red River in 1986. At this time he tagged "Wildwood" to his given name of Dean. When asked why "Wildwood", Dean explains, "In the beginning I built many things from many woods. Now that I only use dogwood, perhaps "Dogwood Dean" would be more fitting and as I have learned to love the dogwood for its excellence as a building material in the bent-wood medium of furniture designing; that would be just fine!"



Curved Setee

Dean likes to think of his designs as "Stick Art" and refers to himself as the "Stick Artificer". Artificer \är-tif-ə-sən A highly skilled craftsman, clever in devising or making things.

(Gen. 4:22, Isaiah 3:3)

Wildwood Bear says "My designs are more than just bent-wood; in my furniture, bent-wood hoops are utilized to form all the separate entities of the chair. The frame-work, back, seat and arm supports are all fashioned from shaped cured hoops, and the arm rests and trim work are overlaid for a striking accent."

Dean's designs and furniture building abilities are gaining nationwide recognition. "I attribute that to the fact my designs, incorporating bent-wood hoops, are the first ever to take into consideration all the aspects needed for heirloom quality furniture made from un-sawn natural wood; ergonomically correct for comfort, rock solid strength, aesthetic eye appeal and architecturally sound design. In the eyes of the traditionalist, Dean's techniques and designs are more modern; of course they are, anything designed in our time is modern. What Dean's designs are, is timeless."