

## From lumber to leaves

BY JONATHAN BINZEN

To build the slender-legged organic base of his tilt-top table (see the back cover), Greg Brown started with some hefty planks. The front legs were sawn from 8/4 boards, and the back leg and the two arching stretchers required 10/4 stock. Brown did the shaping and carving in stages—nearly all of it before final assembly. For the tilting mechanism (right), he adapted a period technique, in which round tenons pivot in round mortises cut into the battens attached to the underside of the tabletop.



**Carving comes to life.** A vine of carved ivy climbs the table's branchlike base.



**1** **Join, then saw.** Brown cut the mortise-and-tenon joints while the blanks were still square, then bandsawed out the legs.



**2** **Chamfer layout.** The shaping will begin with chamfers chiseled along the length of the parts. Here, with a leg and stretcher dry-fitted, Brown lays out lines to guide the chamfering.



**3** **Rasping it round.** After rough-shaping the parts with chamfers, Brown refines them with a rasp. Because the parts swell at the junction to mimic branching, he added gunstock miters to the mortise-and-tenon joints to avoid problems with short grain.



**4** **Climbing ivy.** Brown carved the ivy before final glue-up so that the parts could be worked on dry-assembled or separated. He drew the leaves freehand, but used an old carver's trick to establish a natural-looking line for the stem, winding string around the parts and tracing it.