

Morning Glories

By George Witzke



The curse of custom work is that you have to take the projects as they come. Initially, landing a canopy bed project with a morning glory theme was exciting. That is until I realized that the customer wanted the flowers to resemble real morning glories. Imagine that! My first twenty attempts to emulate a morning glory flower were maudlin at best. As luck would have it, I went to a blacksmith gathering and lo and behold someone had brought a morning glory flower on pipe that they had done in a class. Thank you Susan Frary of Las Cruces.

For those of you who are familiar with morning glories, you may also recall that there are a gazillion flowers and leaves on those vines. I have perfected Susan's technique and am averaging 4.8 flowers per hour. Thirty-eight point four down, only 96 bazillion to go!

To make start with 1/2 inch ID schedule 40 pipe. Over several heats, alternate between upsetting the end of the pipe and working the edge over the anvil horn to create the flare. The corner edge of flat dies on a power hammer can make short work of flaring the petals once started, but it can be done just as well with a little more work over the horn. Next using a V shaped spring swage

clamped in the vice, or with a chisel and V swage, cut 5 proportionately distanced veins in the flower face. Back at the anvil curl the petals to give dimension between each vein. Then with a fullering gulletine swage the neck of the pipe down about 2 inches away from the flared end. Finally, hammer that down to a gentle taper and twist the flower off the pipe.



