

Notes from

Alan Noel Wood finishing seminar

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RECIPE FOR DIY DYE USING TAR

Tar can be used as both a stain and a glaze. Use thin Non-fiber tar (asphalt) with mineral spirits (paint thinner). Make consistency of regular stain. 1 quart of tar makes about 2 gallons of stain. NOTE: Any oil base can mix to tar. This "stain" does a very rich job of enhancing the wood grain and leaves a very rich finish look.

TIP FOR PAINTING

Roll paint on first then brush it out with a brush

STAINING

Finish sand from 180 to max of 220.

Prior to finishing, add a yellow dye color to enhance the light color of the wood. Placing a red object next to the wood help to determine the hue of the wood, and which shade of yellow to be used. The lightest part of the wood will either have a red or green hue, as these are the two primary colors that make up the color brown. Use an appropriate color stain to enhance this hue. Minwax "Puritan pine" is on the red side of yellow, while Minwax " Golden Oak" is on the green side of yellow. These two "stains" can be used, as they are really dyes and not stains. Stains have pigment in them and are semi-transparent. What they really are weak paints and are not recommended. Dyes have no pigment and are a clear concentrated color. Dye's go from clear to black as you add layers. Pick the appropriate color based on the hue of the wood.

On Maple use puritan pine for pre-stain and mix with mineral spirits for just a pinch of yellow look. Always mix in something white so you can see how much of a yellow cast you have. The lighter color in walnut has a reddish hue so you would use puritan pine. You can also use very thinned tar for your pre-stain. With Mahogany you can use tar to cut down on the red color. Mahogany looks good with puritan pine. Potassium Dichromate on mahogany helps look but must make sure you get it all washed off afterwards. Pine has an orange hue. Cherry has a yellow hue.

Oxalic Acid can be used to remove the black rings caused by water damage and once you use it make sure you wash it off with water using gloves and make sure you get all of it off. It is bad on your lungs.

After pre-stain put on lacquer sanding sealer then a coat of glaze which could be tar or any dye you choice to enhance woods color. You can do this several times. Do not sand after sanding sealer. Then put on coat of lacquer and this is where you will sand between coats of lacquer. Use paste wax on wood to polish not regular spray polishes since they do nothing to protect the wood.

FINISHES

There are three types of finishes:

1. Waxes (i.e. bee wax) are the longest lasting
 - Non-reversible finishes such as Oils, Varnishes and polyurethane, all of which are very durable
 - Reversible finishes such as shellac and lacquer

Shoe wax (black or brown) can be used to polish furniture and it is much cheaper than regular paste wood wax.

Non-reversible finishes are varnishes. Must sand between coats of varnish or polyurethane since each coat needs something to bind to. Polyurethane is nothing more than regular varnish with a few drops of polyurethane added. Regular varnish has a softer look than polyurethane. Any oil finish or varnish begins to set up as soon as the can is opened and exposed to oxygen. Should throw it away once you have used it since deteriorates once it is opened.

A reversible finish uses alcohol to re-melt or dissolves the previous coat, thus allowing scratches and other surface blemishes to be repaired invisibly.

Shellac will stick to almost anything. Use shellac when you want to put a finish on a lathe turning. It dries real fast.

Lacquers can be used over varnish if the surface is ruffed up. Lacquer is one of the most forgiving finishes. Mineral oil can be added to lacquer to slow down the drying process during hot weather. Alcohol dyes can be mixed with lacquers to add color if desired. Always use same brand of lacquer and lacquer thinners. Once you have established how much thinner to mix to the lacquer to either slow or speed up drying it will always be consistent when using the same brand. When weather is hot put in $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of mineral spirits to make lacquer lay out smooth. In winter use automotive type fast flash thinner. Use only pre-catalyzed lacquer not post catalyzed, post is added pre is all ready added for you.

FRENCH POLISHING

You may want to French polish either old furniture or new. You can French polish over shellac, lacquer and varnish.

You can not polish over sanding seal lacquer. French polish uses shellac thinned with mineral spirits. The brand Mohawk "Loc French" is special formulated for French finishing. To finish, ball some cotton within a cloth rag. Soak the cotton with Mohawk Loc French shellac as well as the rag so that if you tap the ball on you hand, it leaves a light film. Not so much it will run. Apply by tapping and stroking over the surface. Do not rub on. You must always be moving cloth on furniture do not stop.

French Polishing gives furniture a patina look, but should not be used on table tops since finish would be too soft. It is well suited for use on chairs etc.

Keep your French finishing pad in a covered jar when not in use.

GOLD LEAF

Take mineral spirits and with steel wool (0000) clean wood you are going to use. If new wood primer with something like auto red primer so wood is smooth. Brush your background color on which should be black, red or white. Use quick drying varnish called gold seizer. Apply varnish to wood in a light coat. Let dry 35 min. to an hour. If it gets too dry before you get back to it just reapply. It should be slightly tacky to the touch. Lay gold leaf over wood and use brush or cotton to smooth. You can use make up brush to put leaf on. Use cotton to polish gold leave. Wipe a mix of very thin tar over gold leave to age and can also use Van Dykes Brown brushing glaze on it made by Masters Magic. Once done spray a coat of lacquer on the project. You can touch up gold leaf with bronze powder and shellac. Mix a little shellac with the bronze powder. Apply with brush and can use to fix cracks etc.

Can use gold leaf mixed with shellac to highlight your projects such as stripes on chairs etc. But remember less is best. You can touch up projects with clear finger nail polish since it is lacquer. Must use spray over glazes can not brush over glazes since will smear.

Alkaline Dye will absorb through skin so always wear gloves. Shellac least toxic of finishes. Do not use automotive lacquer on wood since not flexible. Use catalyzed lacquer where you want a hard finish. Always bevel inlays.

CRACKLE FINISHING

You will need to colors of paint with a good contrast between them. Paint white latex on your project and work with brush or roller until very smooth. Let paint dry. Put hide glue (Tite-Bond) on over paint and let it get almost dry (tacky). The thicker the layer of glue will produce wider cracks. Put your second paint on when glue is tacky and brush only in one direction as quick as possible. Do not use roller for this step only brush. Crack will develop as the glue sucks the moisture out of the final layer of paint. If you want to paint a picture on your project then varnish while paint is still wet and then paint with acrylics or watercolors.

RESOURCES

"Understanding Wood Finishing: How to Select and Apply the Right Finish" by Bob Flexner, is considered the bible for wood finishing. "Classic Wood Finishing" by George Frank is also a good book.

Wood Finisher Supply in Atlanta is a source for supplies at 770-429-5656

These notes are the combination of Barb Keen & Jim del Toro