

## **COLORING AGENTS FOR VARNISH**

### **COLORS - GENERAL OVERVIEW**

Coloring is used on the wood below the varnish -- usually a deep yellow color is desired. Then one or two uncolored layers of varnish are applied, followed by layers of colored varnish. Each layer has a color that is adjusted for that layer. The different colors on the different layers add to the appearance of depth of the varnish.

Historically, natural colors were used according to what would dissolve in the varnish. Sometimes one dye would produce different colors depending on the solvent and other factors such as pH.

In general, dyes go completely into solution, while pigments remain as particles. However, since solubility can vary according to the solvent, this is simplistic. Filtering dye preparations help ensure that only completely dissolved coloring material remains in the final varnish.

### **COLORING VARNISH WITH ANILINE**

Aniline dye powder is a convenient way of coloring varnish. The powders are available from the manufacturer ready to use. At least 3 - 4 colors should be mixed to give a warmer appearance. Single colors give a flat, lifeless appearance. A china bowl and a pestle are used for mixing. The amount of aniline used depends on the desired color. Generally yellow, a little less orange and far less brown are used. A very, very little bit of black might be added to give the colors a less aggressive appearance. Then a little bit of varnish is added and mixed with the colors to receive a mushy mixture. It has to be stirred until no color remains underneath the pestle. Then the mixture is added to the clear varnish.

### **COLORING VARNISH WITH NATURAL DYESTUFF**

Coloring with natural colors is more complicated than the use of aniline dye. The process of preparing the natural colors may take up to 1 week.

The prepared natural colors should be boiled to make a concentrate so that the process does not have to be repeated each time the varnish requires color.

A larger surface area improves the dissolving. Therefore gums are prepared by being crushed or powdered, and dye wood is prepared by being rasped, or shavings are used. During the dissolving process the mixture has to be stirred frequently.

Heating the solution shortens the process. A metal pot is one-third filled with sand (arenaceous quartz), then the glass container is set into the sand, and the pot is heated underneath. The foam of the alcohol will settle into the sand and will not catch fire. Also a double boiler can be used.

After the material is dissolved, the solution is filtered and is ready for use.

There are so many natural colors available that the use of artificial colors is not necessary.