

Shellac Flake

Seed Lac:

Warm Neutral Brown, unprocessed, excellent for older antique restorations and repairs.

Button Lac: (*Genuine Buttons*)

Golden Light Brownish Amber on darker woods - least refined, used on old antiques.

Garnet Lac:

Deep Rich Brownish with a warm cast.

Dewaxed Garnet:

Deep Rich Brown-Red cast.

Lemon Yellow / Orange:

general purpose light yellow creamy colour.

Dewaxed Lemon Yellow:

general purpose rich yellow-orange colour.

BLONDE Dewaxed:

Light Pale Transparency.

PLATINA Dewaxed

Extra LITE Pale Platinum Blonde Transparent.

Needed for mixing:

high grade Denatured Alcohol.

To Aid Brushing:

*Shellac Retarder to slow drying
& to help eliminate brushmarks.*

Shellac is an excellent quick drying, non waterproof, finish. Shellac requires experience in order to be able to use it to its full potential. Flake form allows fresh quality shellac to be prepared and avoid waste. Use shellac to seal in sap, resin, grease or oil marks after cleaning and prior to painting or lacquering. Thinned shellac makes an excellent stain barrier coat or hold out coat especially on soft woods and difficult or end grain prior to staining. Test all mixed shellac for drying if several months old. If the surface stays tacky after 8 hours and does not sand freely without gumming, the shellac is old and will not dry and must be discarded.

Dissolving & Mixing

Mix in a dark plastic or glass container with a tightly fitting lid. Store in a cool and dark place if a clear container is used. Soak the flake shellac in about 1/2 of the total alcohol to be used for 24 hours or longer (cool room temperatures will slow the process; pulverize the button shellac to speed dissolving) stir occasionally and when dissolved add the

balance of the alcohol. The consistency of shellac is determined by "cut". A 3 lb. cut would be 3 lbs. of shellac flakes per one gallon of high quality Denatured Alcohol solvent. If you have never worked with shellac before it is recommended that you start with a light consistency, preferably about a 1 lb. cut (*1 lb. of flake to 1 Gal.; -- or [1/4 lb. in a Qt.] of Denatured Alcohol*).

To mix 1 pint of 1 Lb. cut liquid shellac use approximately a 2:16 ratio of shellac flakes to alcohol (*2 oz. of shellac flakes dissolved in 16 oz. of alcohol*). Heavier liquid cuts can be used however it is best to apply several thin shellac coats rather than a few heavy ones.

After the shellac is fully dissolved, it should be strained through a fine mesh cheese cloth to remove any impurities. Shellac is made from the lac bug and a few bits of bug carcass are often left particularly in Seed Lac. Before the liquid shellac is used, it should be shaken or stirred thoroughly and allowed to stand for a few hours. After dissolving, the different flake colours may be intermixed to obtain various colours or shades of shellac.

Application

(For padding application see: French Polishing information)
When applying as an undercoater prior to other finishes use a dewaxed shellac. Shellac should be applied in long strokes with the grain. On larger projects or in hot weather a little shellac retarder will help flowout and minimize brushstrokes. Dip a good natural bristle brush about half way into the shellac and gently clear excess shellac against the side of the container, this gives a reasonably filled brush for full strokes without incorporating air in the shellac. Shellac should be sanded between coats. Allow each coat to dry thoroughly. If the shellac is dry, sanding will produce a fine powder on the surface. If the shellac is not dry it will be somewhat tacky to sand and the paper will clog. After sanding, wipe the piece thoroughly with a tack cloth and recoat. Depending upon temperature and humidity conditions, allow from two to four hours drying for each coat. Some craftsmen prefer to do their finish sanding of the raw wood after first giving it a coat of shellac since this stiffens the wood fibers and allows any rough portions to be fully sanded off.

After the desired number of coats has been applied, the finish can be rubbed with #0000 oil free & long stranded Steel Wool or fine pumice with paraffin oil. Rubbing should always be done with the grain. 48 - 96 hours after the final rubbing, to protect your shellac finish, apply a thin coat of cabinetmakers paste wax. Allow the wax to dry completely and buff with a soft cotton cloth.