How to Make Pine Pitch

by Jamie L. Burleigh



I try to collect pine resin deposits that happen naturally, usually caused by a fracture in a limb by a storm, lightning, or animals scratching on the bark. I also gather resin that oozes naturally out of the broken knots in the pine tree. The runny clear resin, the dried up clumps of amber or the flakey white drips, dried from seasons past, are all good resin for making pine pitch.



Usually I collect my resin in some sort of metal container, such as a soup can or a little larger can with some pre-punched holes in the bottom of the can. The holes are about the size of a common finish nail and covers the bottom randomly.



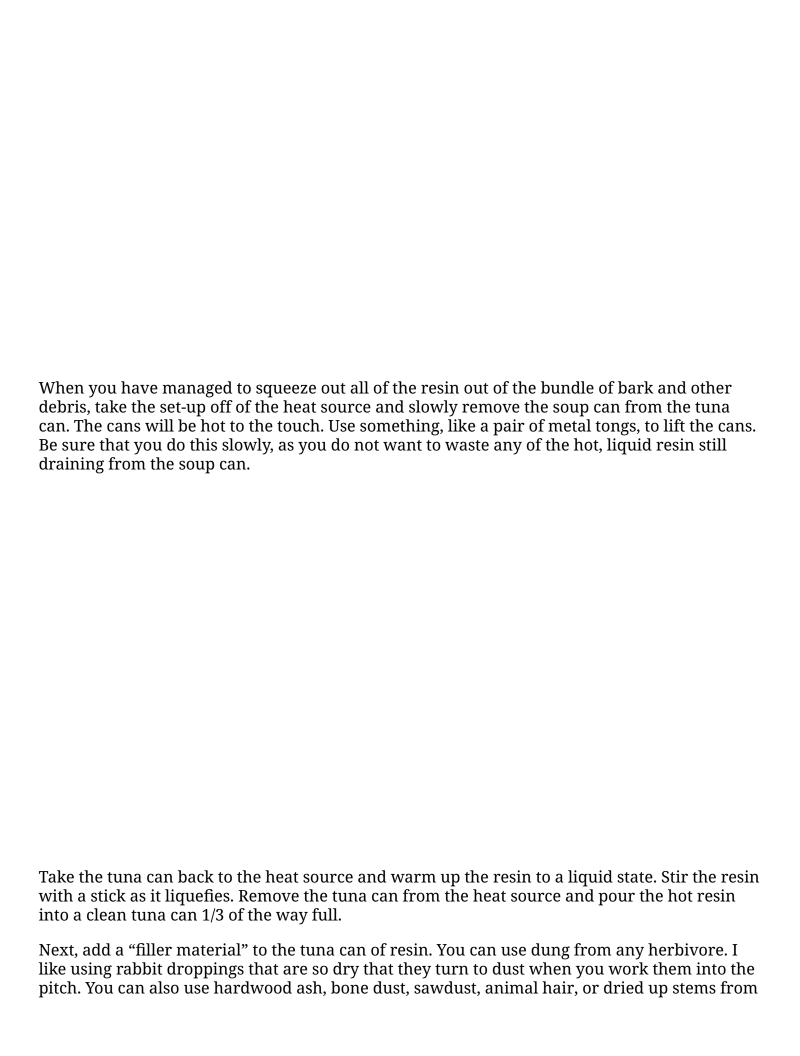
When I get the can, with the pre-punched holes, filled up almost to the top with resin, I take it home. I use a standard tuna can for the melting and semi-straining process. The soup can, with the pre-punched holes that contain the resin globules, will fit inside the tuna can. This acts as a double boiler. Place the tuna can, with the soup can inside, on top of a fire. Pre-heat the resin before you start.



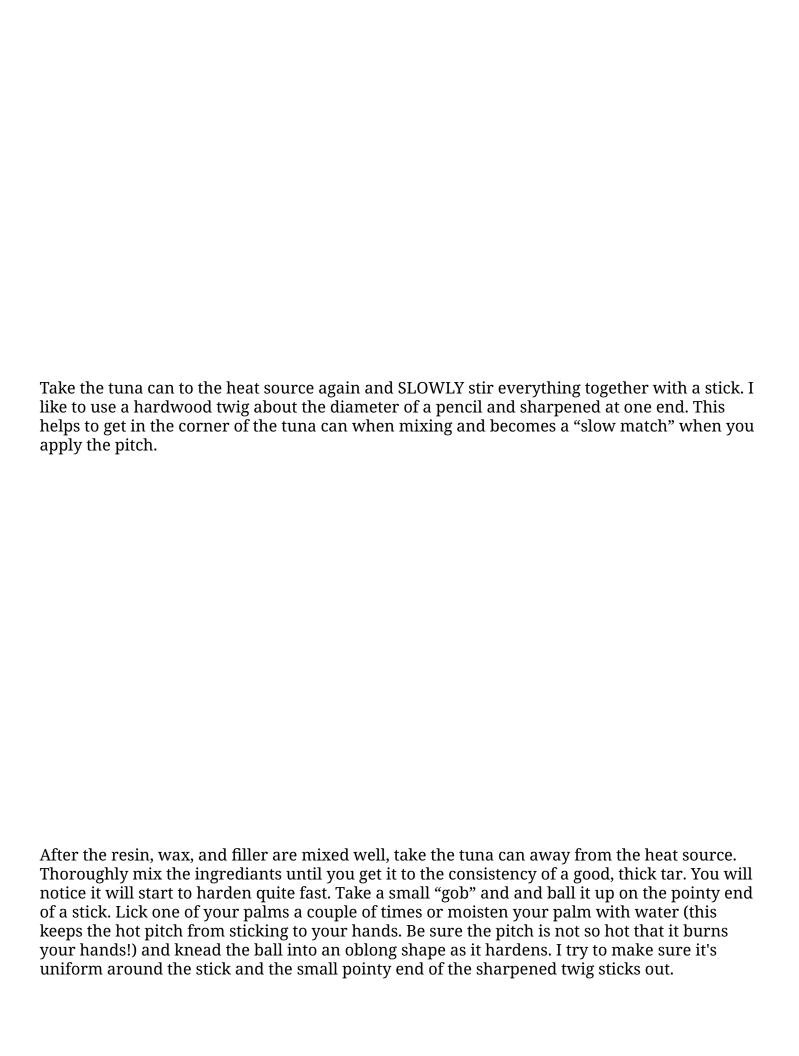
The resin is very volatile. If not careful, the resin will ignite into a 6 foot flame. Take the set-up over to a heat source, like a grill, camp stove, or campfire and heat it up.



The resin will start to smoke heavily, but do not be alarmed. Carefully take a stick and push the bark and sediment slowly down to the bottom of the soup can. Push the pine resin out of the straining holes into the tuna can.



hearty plant stalks. The "filler material" is something that the resin will bind to and help further strengthen the pitch.
There is really no secret formula for pine pitch. Trial and error is how I came about a "consistently" good recipe. Tutoring from some Native American friends also helped me out tremendously.
For now, we will just say that for 1/3 of a tuna can full of resin, we will add 2 pinches of "filler material".
The last in modicut to odd is fat tallow, on becausey. This is an additive to be an the final
product workable without getting too brittle when in it's dry state. The amount of the "flexible" ingredient will vary from person to person, depending on their particular need for the pine pitch.
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Light the sharpened end in a fire. Take it out of the fire and it will stay lit. The lighted end will slowly heat up small amounts of pitch for use. If you need more, you just tilt the pitch stick at an angle over the lighted fire and more pitch will melt free. The sharp point will help you direct the pitch to whatever you are working on.

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