

Pitch - Primitive Epoxy

by Cezanne Deraymond

I have read a couple of formulas for hardening pine pitch or other conifer pitch. One calls for a 5:1 pitch to hardener ratio, the hardener being wood ash. For starters, wood ash is the least reliable hardener. There are many other suitable hardeners. The main thing I find is make sure they are ground to a VERY FINE powder. Here, I've used powered stone dust. I've used soapstone, pipestone and some soft bluish stone from my front yard. The softer the stone, the easier it is to file the stone to make some hardener.



***Pine pitch and hardener.
I ended up needing 3x as much hardener.***

First, I put the pitch in a can. Primitively, I would use a shell heated on a hot rock. Then, when the pitch is fully liquefied, I add the hardener bit by bit while stirring it in completely before adding more. When it's done, the pitch solution will be a lot thicker and will not bubble anymore. It will also harden rapidly when a glob is scooped out on a stick. The pitch solution will not be as runny. Care must be taken because the hotter the pitch gets, the more brittle it

will become. If it spills onto the broiler, the pitch will catch on fire. It will be worse than an oil fire.



In this picture, I scooped out some pitch onto my pitch stick. About ten seconds later, it was touchable.

The red color is from a previous batch hardened with powdered pipestone that was remnants in the can.

The resulting “pitch stick”.

If done correctly, it is basically unaffected by body heat. It is a serious epoxy when used with a liberal coating. The pitch is incredibly strong. I have yet to do this, but I have been told the addition of beeswax to the liquid pitch will add a flex. Tallow may do the same.

***The hafting of a stone knife.
A scrub oak handle wrapped in buffalo leather.***