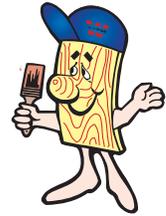


HOW TO AGE WOOD OR THE ART OF "WOOD PICKLING" USING VINEGAR, STEEL WOOL & TEA



Naturally aged wood develops a faded patina from oxidization; usually by leaving the raw wood outside and exposed to the elements. Depending on the type of wood and weather this can take months and with mixed results. However, there is a classic woodworking method to achieve almost the same results in just a few days and with just three household ingredients: distilled white vinegar, grade#0000 steel wool, and tea.

1. Pull apart the steel wool and fully submerge in a container of vinegar for at least 12 hours or until the steel wool disintegrates. Strain out any loose pieces of steel wool using cheesecloth or a paper filter. When steel wool is combined with an acidic acid (vinegar) it causes the steel to oxidize (rust), making iron acetate.

Safety note: Making iron acetate produces hydrogen gas. Do not seal containers and keep in a ventilated area.

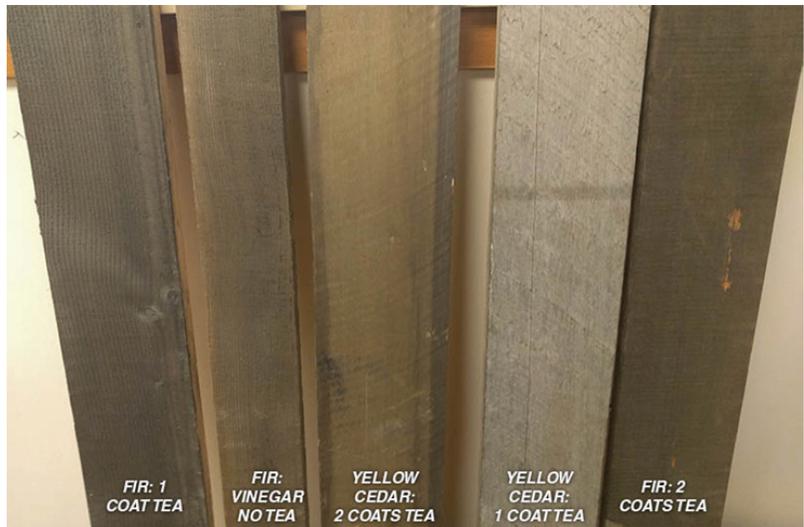
2. Steep tea for at least 1 hour and brush steeped tea onto bare wood to saturated it. Let the wood dry completely.

3. Brush your vinegar & steel wool solution (the iron acetate) into tea-saturated wood.

Why does it work? Tea contains tannin (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tannin>), a bitter astringent that occurs naturally in many plants and organics such as wood. Brushing wood with tea adds more tannin, allowing the vinegar/steel solution to have a stronger reaction. The iron acetate reacts with the tannins and turns the wood a dark colour. Different woods have various levels of natural tannin content so results will vary by wood species. See our photo below for some of our experiments. You will notice that whenever wood comes in contact with water, the wood fibers swell and the wood will feel rough after it has dried. This is called raised grain. To keep a smooth surface you will need to sand the surface again very lightly using dull sandpaper, just enough to remove the raised grain but not exposing new wood. Always sand in the direction of the grain. Don't use steel wool to remove the raised grain as small pieces of the wool will break off and lodge in the wood pores, which will then rust and spot the wood when you apply the stain or finish.

We recommend experimenting with a sample piece of wood. Try multiple coats and different teas until you get the look you want. There are many tricks and recipes for achieving different finishes.

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