

Tiger Maple Finish Procedure

Created by Tony Profera and updated to incorporate ideas and feedback from Fred Miller (9/21/2011).

TEST ON A PIECE OF PROJECT SCRAP WOOD FIRST! USE GLOVES AND BE CAREFUL WITH THE VOLATILES - THEY ARE HIGHLY FLAMMABLE.

Remove any hardware from project and sand all wood surfaces through the grits to 180. The last sanding should be done by hand with the grain.

Sand end grain up to 400 grit. This helps limit the uptake of dye on the end grain to keep it from becoming darker than the faces.

Blow off sanding dust with compressed air, or brush surface with a clean bristle brush, or wipe with clean tack rag. Then, using a clean, lint free rag dampened with Mineral Spirits wipe surfaces clean. Let dry completely.

Brush on a thin glue wash (30% Wood Glue to 70% water) to end grain with a new acid brush, or small artist brush.

- Be careful to only apply glue wash on the end grain only.
- Note: throw out acid brushes when done (they are cheap). Clean artist brushes with hot soapy water before glue dries. Golden Taklon artist brushes of varying sizes can be bought at Hobby Lobby.
- Before glue wash is dry wipe any errant spills with a clean damp rag. If this raises the grain, sand that area again to 180.
 - Note: wiping the wood with mineral spirits at this point and taking a good look in strong light should reveal any glue spots that could cause problems later. Now is the time to deal with it.
- Sand edges with 400 grit and then 600 grit to smooth out the edges.
 - Note: for concave surfaces use sandpaper wrapped around a dowel matched to the cove size. Or, use manicure-type sanding sponges that flex into the concave zone. This protects against sanding the convex area of the shaped edge more than the concave area, and gives an even sanding to the overall shape.
- Clean off sanding dust as described above.

Dye the Wood:

- Apply dye (see solution below) to a lint free pad such as old T-shirt material or linen. Do not pour dye solution directly on the wood.
- Wipe dye on the wood until the color/darkness looks right. Try to keep dye even by using overlapping strokes.
- Uneven spots can be wiped with a pad dampened with Denatured Alcohol to blend before drying.

Dye Solution (can be scaled up or down as needed):

- 4 oz. Denatured Alcohol.
- 30 Drops Transtint Medium Brown (#6004)
- 25 Drops Transtint Dark Vintage Maple (#6009)
- 45 Drops Transtint Honey Amber (#6001)

Let dry completely (8 hours minimum).

If necessary, sand with very fine sandpaper or #0000 steel wool to even out any uneven dye spots or edges or to even the surface. A drop or 2 of Denatured Alcohol can be used while sanding.

Clean off any sanding dust/steel wool particles as described above.

Using a lint free pad wipe all surfaces with Boiled Linseed Oil (BLO) for 15 minutes. Do not let BLO pool (especially in corners).

- Optional: repeat BLO coats 2 or 3 times as needed to increase penetration (8 hours minimum drying between coats).
- Wipe clean and let dry completely (minimum 24 hours).

With a clean lint free pad apply a thin even coat of dewaxed shellac.

- Suggested: a 1 ½ lb. cut Blonde Flake Shellac, or fresh Bullseye Sealcoat.
 - Note: Be sure to use a dewaxed shellac or you may have problems with your topcoat.

Let shellac dry completely (minimum 4 hours).

- Note: If new shellac surface looks uneven in a strong raking light, apply a second coat of shellac and let dry.

Sand with #0000 steel wool.

- Be careful to not sand completely through the Shellac. You are working to smooth/level the surface and give some “tooth” to the topcoat.

Clean off sanding dust as described above.

With a clean, lint free pad wipe on a thin coat of Minwax Wipe On Poly (Gloss).

Let dry until surface is no longer tacky.

- Apply several additional coats as needed to build up the surface. Note: see Fred’s suggestion below.

Sand lightly between coats with #0000 steel wool as needed to smooth/level the surface.

Clean off any sanding dust/steel wool particles as described above.

Wipe on Minwax Wipe On Poly (Satin)

- 2 coats
- Let dry completely between coats.

From Fred: When applying the wipe-on varnish, I actually rub it in, rather than just wipe it on and leave it. Sometimes the spot I'm wiping on actually begins to haze over before I move on to the next area. Not so much as a French polish, but rubbing in as opposed to just wiping on. Also, for the build-up coats I use clear gloss varnish, then for the final one or two coats I use the satin version of the varnish. This prevents obscuring the wood grain with all the diffuser particles in the satin varnish for so many coats. Sometimes (depending on the grain) it takes up to 9 coats of varnish.

After at least a few days of drying time, wax all areas that might get touched by human hands with quality paste wax.

- Johnsons Paste Wax, Briwax, or Renaissance Wax are suggested.
- Lightly apply wax with a clean pad, let dry to a haze, then wipe off with a clean soft rag or old towel
 - (2 or 3 coats as needed).

Save test scrap wood sample with the procedure attached as reference for future projects.

Good luck and we look forward to seeing your results!

Tony Profera and Fred Miller.