

Making Beeswax Polish

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This recipe is based on the formula published in Norman Chapman's book *Constructive Beekeeping*. I have adapted it to suit a batch of polish made using a 500ml bottle of turpentine spirit, which will fill six 100ml polish tins.

Ingredient	Proportion by Weight	Weight Grams	Weight Ounces
Turpentine Spirit (500ml)	69%	425	15
Beeswax	27%	168	6
Carnauba Wax	4%	25	1

For this recipe you should use **Turpentine Spirit** sometimes called **Genuine Turpentine**. Turpentine spirit is made by distilling the sap from pine trees, which is done without harming the tree. It is therefore an organic substance from a sustainable source.

Carnauba is a wax with a high melting point that is derived from a Brazilian palm tree. It makes the polish a bit harder than a straight beeswax/turpentine mix. Increasing the proportion of carnauba to beeswax will increase the hardness of the polish. If you don't want to use it at all then just use 31% (193g) (7oz) beeswax.

These instructions assume you know the basic technique for melting wax, have the equipment and are using 100ml polish tins.

Make sure your mixing container will hold the whole mixture.

WARNING Heating wax and turpentine is a fire hazard. It is recommended that an electric hotplate is used to heat the mixture rather than anything with a naked flame such as a gas burner. There are health hazards when handling Turpentine that will be detailed on the bottle.
If in doubt, seek advice before attempting to make polish.



Six tins of newly poured polish standing on a level surface to cool

1. Prepare seven polish tins without lids on a flat level surface. I suggest you do this first as once you have melted wax and added turpentine you don't want any delay while you fiddle with wedges and a spirit level to make sure your containers are absolutely right. The seventh tin is just in case you have a bit of polish over or get into a mess with one of the others.
2. Loosen the cap and stand the turpentine in a basin of boiled water to warm it up
3. Melt the carnauba wax. This takes a bit more time and heat than beeswax. Adding some small bits of beeswax may help.
4. Add in beeswax until all wax is melted.
5. Remove the wax from the heat and pour in the warm turpentine. Stir gently to mix thoroughly. Your turpentine should have warmed enough not to cool the wax too much but if you find the wax is beginning to set you can warm it up again **but put a lid on it and be aware that the mixture is now more of a fire hazard**.
6. Pour the mixture into the tins as soon as you can. Fill the tins to the brim, which is why it is important that they are dead level. Watch the tins for a while as the polish may start to shrink as it cools; if so, as long as the polish is still liquid it is possible to top them up. If you try to top them up when the polish is skinning over you will have a wrinkled uneven surface that doesn't look good if you want to sell to the public.

Knowing just when to pour molten wax is a bit of an art; if it's too hot it will shrink a lot; if it's not hot enough it will start to set as you pour and will look wrinkled like a lava flow. If it's steaming/smoking it's too hot. I usually wait until I see a hint of the wax setting at the very top edge in the container, but before it starts to skin. If you are using plastic pots you should take care that the mixture is not too hot as this could warp the pot so that the lid will not fit properly.

Do not be tempted to make too many tins more than you can use or sell in a year: Turpentine seems to be able to evaporate even in well sealed containers and your polish will shrink. Also turpentine can distort plastic pots over time and lead to rusting of metal tins.
If you intend to sell your polish then you must have a hazard warning label on the container by law. The label must look like the one below and have the same wording.



These labels are available from the major beekeeping equipment suppliers. Alternatively you could make your own.

[N.B. I believe the required labelling is due to change in the near future. Check with Trading Standards if in doubt]

Ref: **Constructive Beekeeping** by *Norman Chapman* published by CMI Publishing Ltd.