The Wooden Post, Inc. - (888) 595-7126

Using Shellawax for finishing end grain.

I get a lot of questions on how to finish the end grain that we all experience when working with the Ring Master. The product that I use almost all of the time is Shellawax, our #SWAX1 & #SWAX2. These products are liquid and work very well on our projects. The other Shellawax product, #SWAX, has a higher viscosity and is best used on turnings. The liquid form of this product seems to get into the wood more deeply thus making it the better choice when working with bowls and other vessels.

The main reason we carry this product is that it is not readily available in most places. You can't expect to buy this specialized product at your local lumber yard or hardware store. But it is one of the very best we have encountered.

The process I use is to apply the product when I have basically finished sanding the piece I am working with. Normally, I don't sand much beyond 180 grit, but on rare occasions I will go to 220 grit. When I have gotten that far with my project, I then shut the machine off and while the piece is still mounted on the machine, I wipe a coat of the Shellawax on both the inside and outside of the bowl.

Because this product is basically a shellac finish with some waxes added to it, it is alcohol based and will dry within about 1 minute. By the time I have closed the container and set it aside, I am ready to proceed.

I start sanding the finish off with 400 grit paper. Now if you are tight with your sand paper, this is not the process for you, as the shellac and wax combination will almost immediately clog the sand paper. You must keep turning the sand paper to present a fresh grit to the piece. We are trying to take most of the material off at this point.

As you sand, you are generating heat with the friction between the sand paper and the piece you are working on. This causes the Shellawax to melt down a little and it is the moved around the surface of the project you are working. As it is moved around the surface, it is penetrating into the end grain of your project, thus acting as a filler.

The nature of any friction polish is that it is designed to be finished y polishing the piece with the material and friction caused by rubbing it with a rag, but fine grit sandpaper works too.

I keep turning the sand paper, presenting a new surface to the piece until I am getting sawdust coming from the piece. As the shellac and wax is heated up, while in the end grain, thus further sanding forces some of that sawdust into the pores where is will stick to the material, thus filling the end rain.

One of the most redeeming parts of this process is that shellac based materials present absolutely no adhesion problems with any other type of finish you wish to put on your piece. You can use more Shellawax and simply polish your project with a rag to achieve a finished project. The more you put on with a rag and polish your project, the deeper the finish. You can finish with the Beall buffing system, spray lacquer or even apply polyurethane. Any finish will adhere with no problems. Just simply stay away from products that use alcohol as a base, and as far as I know – that would be shellac. You can use more shellac if you wish, just allow drying time between coats.

Of course, you don't have to stop with 400 grit. You can even of on using Scotchbrite pads. Finish as fine as you wish. When done with the inside & outside of the piece, I then remove it, plug the hole, and apply the finish to the inside & outside of the bottom of the piece and finish by hand. I have tried other shellac based products and they all work well, but the Shellawax does not change the color of the wood as much as anything else I have tried. Hope this helps.