

Soapmaking_7_Pgs_1995.txt

From ewhitevhp@aol.com Mon May 15 23:06:14 EDT 1995

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From: ewhitevhp@aol.com (EWhiteVHP)

Newsgroups: alt.folklore.herbs

Subject: Soapmaking 7 pgs

Date: 11 May 1995 12:07:17 -0400

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Here are about 7 pages (printed) of soapmaking instructions and a
shameless

plug for my book. Hope you enjoy. These are the same instructions
available

>from America Online's library. Feel free to pass the information along to
others. Just keep the copyright information included and I'll be happy.

Best regards,

Elaine

So, you want to make soap? Good! I'll try my best to tell you how. I'm
Elaine

White, author of "Soap Recipes: Seventy tried-and-true ways to make modern
soap with herbs, beeswax and vegetable oils" These instructions are very
condensed and cannot possibly contain the details included in "Soap
Recipes."

Nonetheless, I believe you will have a good overview after you read these
instructions. Once you learn basic safety precautions, soapmaking

procedures

and terminology, you will be able to make soap from any recipe. The outline

for these instructions is:

- A) Safety precautions in handling lye, lye/water and freshly-made soap
- B) The equipment list
- C) The procedure of combining ingredients and molding soap
- D) Herbal soap
- E) Superfatting soap
- F) US Soapmaking suppliers
- G) Soap recipes

Once you read these instructions and if possible, join the soapmakers at America Online. Go to "The Exchange" click on "Crafts and sewing" then

"other

crafts" and you will find "soapmaking." AOL gives me free time online to help

soapmakers and I often join the discussions. I am glad to help you in any way.

A) Locating lye and safety precautions in handling it.

(The following may frighten you, but I promise that thousands of people make

soap everyday without mishap. You need to know all the dangers present in order to avoid trouble. If you can get past the following warnings--you are

destined to make soap!) Look where drain cleaners are sold and buy 100% lye

(Red Devil is one brand). Don't bother looking at liquid drain cleaners and

don't try Drano (it contains metal). If you aren't sure the product is 100%

lye, then order lye from a soapmaking or chemical supplier (addresses listed). Most good soap recipes list lye by weight for accuracy: lye in granular form (drain cleaner) measures differently than lye in flake form

(the form of lye from laboratory chemical suppliers, pool chemical suppliers, etc). Scales are a necessary part of successful soapmaking and allows you to use any type of lye. Lye can be nasty if handled improperly. Lye (sodium hydroxide) is also known as caustic soda. Upon opening a container of lye, the lye crystals absorb water from the air, which can weaken the strength of the lye and cause it to form a solid lump. When not in use, keep lye closely capped. Lye reacts with some metals: aluminum, zinc, and tin. Safe containers include heatproof stoneware, glass, enamel, stainless steel and plastic. Lye can be fatal if swallowed. Lye can remove paint. If lye, lye/water or freshly-made soap splatters onto a painted surface, wipe it off immediately. Wash the area with water and detergent; wash it with clear water, then wipe it dry. Lye, lye/water and freshly-made soap can burn and irritate skin. You'll notice itching before burning. Lye/water on skin is first noticed by a slippery feeling. Rinse your hands with vinegar and immediately rinse them with running water. Since lye can burn skin, you can imagine what it does to eyes. It's difficult to rinse your eyes while they're burning and you can't see. This painful and dangerous situation is entirely avoidable. Always wear eye protection! You may wonder why anyone wants to bathe with soap that contains something as harsh as lye. Well, the good news is that soap is *made* with lye, but soap doesn't *contain* lye. Lye reacts with fats, creating roughly three molecules soap and one molecule glycerin. The lye is no longer present--only great soap and glycerin.

*NOTE: If you have small children, keep lye (and essential oils) in a

locked

cabinet. Lye/water sitting at the edge of a counter can easily be reached by children and even swallowed. Drinking lye/water is like drinking liquid fire

and anyone ingesting lye/water should immediately be taken to an emergency room for treatment! Like I said: everyday, thousands of people make soap without mishap. In order to do so, you must be aware of all safety hazards.

Children and feeble-minded people should not be in the soapmaking area or have access to stored soapmaking ingredients, especially lye and essential oil.

B) The equipment list:

- # one 4-to-6 cup mixing container made of lye-resistant material

- (I use a stainless steel mixing bowl)

- # one heatproof container that holds at least 2 cups

- (I use a Pyrex measuring cup)

- # stainless steel, plastic, wooden spoon or a rubber spatula

- # two thermometers made of glass or stainless steel

- (candy and meat thermometers work well)

- # eye protection (wear sunglasses if you have to!)

- # rubber gloves (optional)

- # scale to weight the fats and lye

- # soap molds (any flexible plastic container works well)

- # a clock with a second hand or other type timer

- # wire whisk (optional)

- # pot holders or oven mitts

- # measuring spoons

C) The procedure

- 1) Put the fats in a lye-resistant container and place a glass or stainless

- steel thermometer into the fats. Be sure the thermometer doesn't touch the

bottom of the container and give a false reading. Heat the fats and optional

ingredients to the temperature specified in the recipe.

2) Put on eye protection and rubber gloves.

3) Use a heat-proof container to measure the amount of cold water (70 to 75

degrees F) specified in the recipe. Cold water is important. If you add lye

to hot or boiling water, the water could "boil-up" out of the container; if

you add lye

to *really* cold water, the lye/water might not reach the high temperatures

required to make some recipes. Stir the water and slowly add the lye. The water will get hot and turn cloudy. Continue to stir until the lye dissolves.

Don't breathe or intentionally smell the fumes coming from the cup because they are quite "chokey." If you wait too long to stir the water, the lye could harden in the bottom of the container. This is not a problem. You can

still stir it, but it will be more difficult. Add a glass or stainless steel

thermometer to the lye/water and wait until it reaches the temperature specified in the recipe. (Note: Some people are extremely sensitive to fumes

which come from the lye/water. The fumes which come from small batches (1 pound) isn't a problem. Be aware than larger amounts of lye (larger batches)

creates more fumes, which, with prolonged contact, can burn eyes and skin of

sensitive people.)

4) When both the fat and the lye/water reach the temperature specified in the

recipe, add the lye/water to the fat. It's sometimes a balancing act to get

the fat mixture and the lye/water mixture to specific temperatures at the same time. Never place lye/water in a microwave (the cup could break). It takes lye/water longer to cool than it takes fat to heat. Most soapmakers wait for the lye/water to cool to about five degrees above the desired temperature, then heat the fat. When both the lye/water and the fat are within five degrees of the temperatures specified in the recipe, use a pot holder and move the bowl to a sink (to contain splatters). Slowly pour the lye/water into the fats while stirring. (Note: Temperatures for small one-pound batches of soap poured into individual molds aren't critical. As long as the lye/water and fats are between 120 and 140 degrees F you will have good success. Larger batches or batches poured into a single mold, require the lower temperature range.)

5) Stir the soap until it "traces." When lye, water and fat first combine, the mixture is thin and watery. Gradually, as the lye and fat react chemically to form soap, the mixture thickens and turns opaque. "Tracing" is

a term to describe the consistency (thickness) of soap when it's ready to pour into molds. To test for tracing:

- a. Drip some soap onto the surface of the soap in the stirring bowl. It should leave a "trace" or small mound.

- b. Draw a line in the soap with a spoon or rubber spatula. If a "trace" of

the line remains for a few seconds, the soap has traced.

Tracing is easy to recognize, yet it causes new soapmakers a lot of worry. Relax and know that the soap will trace eventually. Just stir the soap constantly for the first 15 minutes or so, then stir the soap every fifteen

minutes until it thickens and traces, no matter how long it takes.

6) After the soap traces, add up to one tablespoon essential oil (if desired)

and stir a few minutes longer to incorporate the oil. About the only soap that remains totally scent-free is the Pure Soap Recipe that follows.

Other

fats result in soap that has a "fatty lye" smell. Essential oils are

necessary for a pleasant-smelling product.

7) Pour the soap into molds and wait for it to harden.

8) Unmold the soap, Soap is still harsh when it's time to remove it from the molds. Put on rubber gloves and press the back of each mold compartment to release the soap. It's a lot like removing ice cubes from a tray.

Sometimes

the soap doesn't release easily from the mold. To overcome this problem, leave the soap in a freezer for a few hours. Freezing soap causes it to contract slightly, become hard and release from the plastic mold.

9) Wait the time specified in a recipe for the soap to "age." (usually 3 weeks). During the aging time the pH of the soap decreased (the soap becomes

mild) and the bars harden. It's a good idea to write the following information on a piece of paper and place it with the soap: the date you made

the soap, the date the aging time is over, and the recipe name.

10) Step 10 is *enjoy your soap!*

As soap ages, a fine, white powder may appear on the surface. This is soda ash (sodium carbonate) formed by a reaction of lye with carbon dioxide in air. This white powder is mostly on the surface exposed to air while the soap

was in the molds. Soap that contains wax develops little or no soda ash.

There are three ways to deal with soda ash:

a. Try to prevent it. Immediately after pouring soap into molds, cover the

soap with plastic wrap or waxed paper. Press the wrap or paper onto the surface of the soap to prevent air contact.

b. Cut it away. Overfill the molds slightly. Later, when the soap hardens, take a knife and cut the soap level with the mold. This also cuts away the soda ash.

c. Wash it away. Wait until the soap ages and hardens. Wash the powder away

by rubbing the soap with your hands under running water or by rubbing the soap over a wet dishcloth. Set the soap aside to dry----then, *enjoy your soap!*

D. Herbal soap

You can replace the water in soap recipes with herbal tea, but to be honest, most of the properties (color and fragrance) are lost. The best way to use herbs in soap is to add dry, finely powdered herbs to the fats before adding the lye/water. Use anywhere from 1 tablespoon to 1/4 cup dried herbs to 1 lb soap. Coarsely ground herbs should be restricted to about 1 or 2 tablespoons per lb soap because they contribute a coarseness to the soap that sometimes makes it uncomfortable during use. The nicest way to add properties of herbs to soap is the addition of pure essential oils. Most soap develops a "lye/fat" odor, which essential oil prevents. Use anywhere from 1 teaspoon to 2 tablespoons essential oil per lb soap (depending on the strength of the oil). Color is an illusive thing as far as soap is concerned. Natural colors can be obtained by adding 2 tablespoons red clay, calendula petals, or palm oil from Lorann Oils (yellow). Strong, true color can be obtained from Pourette's dye recommended for soap. Use up to 1/8 teaspoon Pourette dye per lb soap.

E. Superfating soap

The following recipes have the exact amount of lye to make soap that contains

very little excess fat. This soap leaves skin perfectly clean and smooth feeling. Some people like excess fat in recipes. For this I recommend 2 to 4 tablespoons castor oil added when the soap traces. Castor oil is emollient and contributes to soap lather. Adding castor oil after tracing along with 1 tablespoon essential oil also seems to help retain the soap fragrance.

F. Soapmaker's supply list (United States)

Barker's Enterprises, Inc.
15106 10th Ave SW
Seattle WA 98166
Telephone: 206-244-1870
retail/wholesale: waxes, molds and candle dye (which works for soap)

Chem Lab Supplies
1060 Ortega Way, Unit C
Placentia CA 92670
Telephone 714 630-7902
Fax 714-630-3553
retail: pH kits, electronic scales, lye

Hagenow Laboratories, Inc.
1302 Washington St
Manitowoc WI 54220
No telephone, correspond by mail and request catalog
lye, waxes, clays, essential oils, thermometers and pH kits

Liberty Natural Products
8120 SE Stark St
Portland OR 97215
1-800-289-8427
\$50 minimum order retail/wholesale same price

essential oils, soapmaking fats, herbs, clays, etc.

K & W Popcorn
710 E 24th St
Trenton MO 64683
Telephone 816-359-2030
retail only: coconut oil 5 gallons (will ship)

Lorann Oils
4518 Aurelius Rd
Lansing MI 48909
Telephone 1-800-248-1302
retail/wholesale: essential oils, fats, candy molds, waxes

Pourette Soapmaking Supplies
6910 Roosevelt Way NE
Seattle WA 98115
Telephone 1-800-888-WICK (9425)
retail/wholesale molds, dye, wax (request *soapmaking* price list as it's
different than their regular catalog, which contains candle molds)

Sunfeather Soapmaking Supply
HCR 84 Box 60-A
Potsdam NY 13676
Telephone 315-265-3648
retail only: lye, fats, soap fragrance

G) Now, the moment you've been waiting for--the recipes!
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All rights reserved. All ounces (oz) are determined by weight unless
otherwise stated. Lye is "sodium hydroxide" granular or flake form.

Pure Soap (the only recipe I've discovered that remains scent-free and
doesn't require essential oils) Good for washing dishes, delicate laundry,

etc. Great lather.

16 oz coconut oil

2.8 oz lye

1 cup water (8 fluid ounces)

Fat and lye/water temperature about 120 degrees F

Estimated tracing time: 1 1/2 hours

Time in molds: 48 hours

Age: 3 weeks

Pure Soap Shampoo Bar

16 oz weight coconut oil

2.9 oz lye

3/4 cup water (6 fluid ounces)

Oil room temp

Mix and use lye

Estimated tracing 1 to 2 hours

When the soap traces, add 4 tablespoons castor oil to superfat the soap and

to make a smoother-textured bar. Leave the soap in the mold 24 hours, freeze

3

hours, then remove from the mold. Age: 3 weeks. Essential oil is optional for

this recipe. The soap will remain scent-free without it.

Soap III

6 oz coconut oil

6 oz olive oil

5 oz vegetable shortening

2.6 oz lye

1 cup water (8 fluid ounces)

Fat and lye/water temperature about 120 degrees F

Time in molds: 48 hours

Age: 4 weeks

Soap IV

9 oz vegetable shortening

4 oz coconut oil

3 oz lard

2.4 oz lye

3/4 cup water (6 fluid ounces)

Fat and lye/water temperature about 120 degrees F

Time in molds: 24 hours

Age: 3 weeks

Soap V

10 oz vegetable shortening

6 oz coconut oil

2.4 oz lye

1 cup water (8 fluid ounces)

Fat and lye/temperature about 120 degrees F

Time in molds: 48 hours

Age: 4 weeks

Soap VI & VII

16 oz lard or beef tallow

2.3 oz lye

3/4 cup water (6 fluid ounces)

Estimated tracing 45 minutes

Fat and lye/water temperature about 120 degrees F

Time in molds: 24 hours

Age: 3 weeks

Soap VIII

Beeswax Castile

13 oz weight olive oil

2 oz beeswax

1 oz palm oil

2.1 oz lye

1 cup water (8 fluid ounces)

(melt the beeswax with the fats)

Fat and lye/water temperature about 150 degrees F

Tracing time: about 12 minutes FAST!

Time in molds: 48 hours

Place the soap in a freezer for 3 hours, then remove it from the molds

Age: 6 to 8 weeks for the bars to harden

Beeswax Soap IX

(follow directions at "Soap VIII")

16 oz weight olive oil

2 oz weight beeswax

2.2 oz weight lye

1 cup water (8 fluid ounces)

I really hope you feel confident enough to prepare your first batch of soap.

Good luck and happy lathering.

Best regards,

Elaine C. White

These instructions are based on a book: "Soap Recipes:

Seventy tried-and-true ways to make modern soap with herbs, beeswax and vegetable oils" by Elaine C. White

International Standard Book Number 0-9637539-5-9

The book will be available in bookstores June, 1995 and is available now from:

Valley Hills Press

1864 Ridgeland Drive

Starkville MS 39759 USA

\$23.95 US funds includes price and shipping to US and Canada

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