

How You Can Color Fireplace Flames

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How You Can Color Fireplace Flames

If you enjoy sitting around your fireplace and watching colorful flames dance, you'll be happy to know you can color your own flames quite cheaply. Basically, there are three methods of coloring fireplace flames. You can soak the logs in an alcohol solution which contains certain chemicals. Or you can soak the logs in a water solution containing certain chemicals and then dry them. And finally, you can just throw certain chemicals into the flames. The various chemicals or salts required for certain colors of flames are as follows:

potassium sulphate (3 parts) and potassium nitrate (1 part)
for violet flames

strontium chloride for red flames

calcium chloride for blue flames

magnesium sulphate (Epson Salts) for white flames

baronsalts (borax) for yellowish-green flames

copper sulphate (blue vitrol) for green flames

sodium chloride (table salt) for yellow flames

You may also treat pinecones, coarse sawdust or cork waste and throw them into the fireplace to color the fire. They are far easier to treat and take less time to dry. Here are two methods for treating bases such as course sawdust, pinecones and cork waste.

Best for sawdust - Dissolve the chemical in water. Stir in your base. When the solution is completely absorbed, spread the base out in a thin layer to dry.

Best for cork-based chips - Add 1 pint of liquid glue to 7 parts of water. Crush the chemical to a fine powder and add 1 pound of the powder to each gallon of glue-water. Put into the liquid as much of the sawdust, cork waste or pinecones that it will take, stirring and adding more base until all the liquid has been absorbed. Spread out on a rack to dry.

It is better to treat separate portions of your base with the solution of a single chemical than to treat the base in a single mixture of various chemicals. After drying the separately treated portions of sawdust or cork waste, you can then mix them together in order to achieve distinctly colored flames.

There is no fixed proportion of chemicals to be used to a given amount of water. As much of the powdered chemical should be mixed with water as will dissolve, until you have a saturated solution. The only exception is ordinary table salt (sodium chloride), in which case you should use 1/2 ounce of salt to each pint of water.

Coarse hardwood sawdust is better than pine or other softwood sawdust as a base. Cork waste also makes an excellent base.