

Applying Gel Pigment Stains

Gel stains are ideal for woods that tend to accept stain unevenly because of variations in the absorbency of the wood—pine being the most notorious culprit. The gel structure of the product limits absorption regardless of the native absorbency of the wood. On the other hand, the limited absorption may prevent development of deep color with a single application. Gel stains are also very handy for applying stain to surfaces that cannot be laid flat; the consistency of the product prevents it from running down in streaks.

Step 1: Open the can of gel stain and notice the jellylike consistency (see **Figure 4.8**). It isn't necessary to stir these products. Stirring reduces the gel to liquid; then you will have to let it sit still so it can return to a gel.

Step 2: Apply the stain evenly with a chip brush or rag. Work the surface with a clean rag until the color is even and has no streaks or heavy spots (see **Figure 4.9**).

Step 3: Allow it to dry, usually 6 hours. The color will be pale because gels remain on the surface. Reapply for greater color but beware of murky results from too many layers.

Tools and Materials

- Gel pigment stain (such as General Finishes Gel Stain or Bartley Gel Stain in Golden Oak colors)



Figure 4.8. Note the consistency; gel stains don't flow.



Figure 4.9. Gel stains spread easily with either brush or rag. Work the surface until it has neither streaks nor heavy spots.