

### Applying Non-Grain-Raising Dyes by Hand

The non-grain-raising, alcohol-soluble dyes were designed for spraying by advanced finishers in a spray room. Spraying these dyes rather than applying them by hand does indeed make a difference. Control is more precise. But with care they can be applied by hand, providing more light resistance and raising the grain less than other types of dyes. The retarder (see Tools and Materials list at right) is essential for hand application to slow the evaporation.

**Step 1:** Alcohol doesn't raise grain, but it readily absorbs moisture from the atmosphere, and that moisture can raise the grain. If you want to be thorough, and cautious, dampen the wood, let it dry, and then gently hand sand with a block and 220-grit abrasive.

**Step 2:** Prepare the stain with the retarder by stirring in one part retarder to ten parts stain. Prepare an amount that allows you to easily measure both components (see **Figure 4.16**). (Stirring straight non-grain-raising dyes is not necessary since none of the ingredients settle to the bottom.)

**Step 3:** Apply the stain quickly; work wet and fast. Any inconsistencies of color or lap marks can be corrected with a water-dampened rag. Dry time is 6 to 8 hours. The retarder slows the drying somewhat.

#### Tools and Materials

- Non-grain-raising stains (such as Behlen Solar-Lux medium wheat or Mohawk light golden oak)
- Retarder (such as Solar-Lux)



**Figure 4.16.** Mix one part retarder with ten parts non-grain-raising stain to slow it down enough for hand application.

#### Helpful Tip

##### Shellac and Non-Grain-Raising Stains

Because non-grain-raising stains are alcohol based, a shellac wash coat will pick up some of the color. Work with the brush full of shellac, quickly, and in one direction. Do not overbrush. You can avoid the risks of brushing shellac over non-grain-raising stains by using an aerosol shellac applied thinly or by sealing with Danish oil, which contains no alcohol. Check the final result with a test sample before committing your project to any material, sequence of materials, or procedure.