

FLAKE WAX

Instructions for Dirt Weatherproofing

NOTE: 1 cup of flake wax = approximately ¼ pound

Making waterproof dirt and freeze-proof trap bedding dirt is easy as long as you follow a few simple steps. At all times, clean equipment should be used to keep from contaminating the trap bedding material. Be extra careful not to get any human sweat on the soil, wax or equipment being used. Hint: a 4' x 8' sheet of plywood set up on blocks or saw horses to work on will save your back and make the dirt weatherproofing operation much easier.

First you will need powder dry, sifted soil. Since sand is just a very small rock and won't absorb wax, soil that is relatively free of sand works best. You will also find that soil that is relatively free of organic matter works best because humus materials absorb too much wax. Just plain dirt, as free of sand or organic material as possible works best. Collecting your dirt during a dry period will minimize the drying time. For drying your soil, spreading it out on a sheet of black plastic in a spot that receives full sun works great. A day or two is all the time it takes to completely dry. About dark each night, cover the soil to protect it from any dew that might collect. Uncover it each morning around sunrise.

After the dirt is completely dry, sift it to remove any rocks, leaves, roots, etc. You want the dirt completely pulverized so that wax can coat each grain. The finer the dirt is pulverized, the better it will work. Now mix 3 cups (¾ pound) of flake wax with each gallon of dry, sifted and pulverized dirt. The mixture is now ready to be heated so the wax can be absorbed by the dirt to weatherproof it.

SOLAR HEATING METHOD: Set up your plywood in full sun and cover it with a sheet of heavy black plastic. Spread a layer of your dirt-wax mixture about 2 inches thick on the black plastic. Cover the dirt-wax mixture with a sheet of clear plastic and prop it up about a foot or two above the mixture and let the sun heat the mixture until all the wax is absorbed by the dirt (usually around 2-4 hours). The dirt is now completely weatherproofed – it won't rust your traps and is waterproof, freeze-proof and free of contamination. Store the dirt in a plastic bag or clean garbage cans until you need it when the weather gets nasty and the rest of the trappers are forced to quit.

OVEN HEATING METHOD: ***CAUTION: Only use an oven that is self-cleaning or the dirt will probably be saturated with food odors that will render it worthless as a trap bedding material.***

First, set your oven on clean and turn it on. After the clean cycle is completed, place an uncovered pan(s) of the dirt-wax mixture in the oven and set it on 300 degrees. It will go faster if you don't have the dirt more than 2-3 inches thick. Stirring every 30 minutes or so will also speed up the heating time. When the mixture is thoroughly heated it can be removed, cooled and stored.

HEAT LAMP HEATING METHOD: In a protected spot like a basement, shop or garage, spread a sheet of heavy plastic on your work surface and spread about 2 inches of your dirt-wax mixture on the plastic. Now suspend a large heat lamp about 2 feet over each 4' x 4' section of dirt. (If using a 4' x 8' sheet of plywood, 2 heat lamps will be required.) Surround the whole setup with plastic or plywood to help hold in the heat and heat the dirt-wax mixture until you can no longer see any wax in the dirt. Stirring will speed up the process. Cool and store.