

Tinting Shellac with Dragon's Blood and Gamboge



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DRAGON'S BLOOD: *Any of several red, resinous substances obtained from various tropical plants and trees used for coloring varnish.*
Webster's Dictionary

GAMBOGE: *A gum resin produced by several species of trees native to south eastern Asia. It is of dense, compact texture and of a reddish-yellow color. It is used chiefly as a pigment, giving a clear yellow color.* **Webster's Dictionary**

Dragon's blood and gamboge are two natural colouring materials which can be used with shellac. Dragon's blood is an orange red resin, which is only soluble in alcohol. It is reasonably light fast, stains quite strong, and can be modified to give brownish red shades by the addition of a little transparent black such as ivory black in the form of dry pigment. Genuine lump gamboge will dissolve in alcohol, although it is more widely thought of as a water-soluble gum-resin. Gamboge is marketed in broken cylindrical lumps which, until they are wetted with water or alcohol, are a yellowish brown. It is one of the only yellow pigments which is transparent enough to be used over white metal leaf, but unfortunately not all pieces are equally light fast. It makes an excellent gold colour which you can modify to the exact shade you want by adding a little dragon's blood. Simply dissolve a little of each resin in alcohol and then add a small quantity of shellac varnish to the mixture. From **Practical Gilding** by Peter & Ann Mactaggart, Published by Mac & Me, Ltd., Page 66.