

Encaustic Medium & Paint Recipe

Beeswax (natural or refined)

Castor Wax (Hydrogenated castor Oil)
or wax Damar crystals (a type of tree resin)

Paint pigment (in powder form) or

Oil Paints (NOT Acrylic)



A pan to "cook" the ingredients

A muffin tray (a silicone one makes it easier to get out the "paint muffins")

A hot plate Electric frypan or heating element (to put the pan on)

A metal or wooden spoon to stir the mix

Clean Muslin to filter wax with.

Making the medium and paint

1. To make encaustic medium you need 8 parts beeswax and 1 parts damar crystals or castor wax.
2. To make blocks of beeswax easier to use, first place it in a bag in the freezer for a little while and then hit it with a rolling pin to break into small chunks which are easier to put into your pan.
3. If you are using Damar also break your damar crystals into smaller chunks with either a pestle or mortar or pop it into a zip lock bag and give it a bash with an old rolling pin or rubber mallet.
4. Place your pan (I have a small milk pan) on to your hotplate add your 8 parts of wax. Beeswax starts to melt at around 65C or 145F do not heat over 100C or it will begin to burn or go dark (just take your time and let it melt slowly)
5. When the wax has thoroughly melted add the crystals or castor wax and turn up the heat a little.

6. Stir the mixture occasionally. When it is a nice smooth mixture with no gloopy sticky bits left, you are ready to filter it.

7. Put a piece of muslin over the top of another pan and pour your medium through the muslin to filter out all the little bits of grit and sticks from the Damar. Often beeswax contains some dirt or bits of bee that also need to be filtrated. You can also use nylon stockings, in fact the small anklet socks are the perfect size to fit neatly over a small milk pan. You now have a pot of encaustic medium to use as a clear coat or to make into encaustic paints. We filter our wax several times to insure it is perfectly clean.

8. If you want clear medium it is now ready to use as is, but if you want colour you can add small amounts of oil paint or pigment to the wax till you get the strength of colour you desire. You can use the blocks as clear medium on collage or photographic projects. (note unrefined beeswax has a slight yellow colour due to the pollen) so if you need perfectly clear use refined beeswax that has all the pollen filtered out (do not buy bleached wax as this will go yellow over time)

Pour some of the wax into small cat food or tuna snack size (clean) tins. I wear a cotton gardening glove to do this just so I don't get any wax on me and protect my fingers.

9. Then Squeeze some oil paint onto a piece of clean kitchen paper and leave for an hour or so to leech some of the oils from the paint. You can also use dry pigments to colour your wax with. Add the oil paint to a tin on the hotplate and mix well then add a small amount of medium to the paint and mix really well. You can hold the tin with a pair of pliers to keep it from spilling out. Do not add more than 30% paint to wax ratio). Please note acrylic paint is Plastic and is not suitable to use with wax.

10. Test the colour of your wax on a piece of paper until you get the depth of colour you like. More transparent works better as you build up layers.

11. Now you are ready to begin your encaustic painting.