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Candle Making Tips

This page is a collection of questions and my answers to questions about candle making with beeswax. I have never made candles with paraffin and have no idea about how to help you in that area.

Thank you for visiting,
Kelly Borsheim, Lumina Founder
P. S. To learn more about beeswax itself, click [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q. I am doing a 9th grade science project on different temperatures of wax when a candle is being melted. I was wondering if you could send me some information about different types of waxes or anything that you think might be helpful to me.

A. The melting point of beeswax is about 145 degrees Fahrenheit. Beeswax is a naturally sticky wax. Also, even though it has a MELTING POINT of 145 degrees, it will get soft and sticky at much lower temperatures than that (90 degrees?). For more information on beeswax, visit www.luminacandles.com/beeswax.htm For information on other waxes, try calling Porter Warner Industries at 1-800-433-2150 in Houston. They sell microcrystalline waxes and possibly paraffin.

2. How do I melt the beeswax to make solid candles?

A. Check out:
www.luminacandles.com/pouring.htm and
www.luminacandles.com/scenting.htm

3. Are there any limitations to using beeswax instead of paraffin?

A. Besides the higher melting point of beeswax, beeswax shrinks much less than paraffin. www.luminacandles.com/pouring.htm

4. Can you make container candles with beeswax?

A. I have seen people on the Web advertising beeswax container candles, but beeswax has a high melting point of 145 degrees and is not recommended for this type of candle. My understanding is that container candles work best with low-melt waxes because the top surface of the candle must be liquid for easier burning (hence the reason the wax is contained). A low-melt wax will become liquid much easier than beeswax and the wax must be liquid to be absorbed into the wick and burn. Like all candle making, though, if you want to try something, do it. If you have success with beeswax container candles, do not let my ignorance stop you!

5. My tapers are dripping and wax is getting on my candlesticks. I am rolling the sheets tightly and am using the 1/0 size square-braided cotton wick that you carry. What am I doing wrong? S.

A. S. is doing everything right, so we had to look at other variables. I mentioned that sometimes the subtle draft of central air would affect burning and since the tapers are so thin, their small pool of wax is more susceptible to being "blown over." Well, since it was winter, S. decided to see if her central air

heater/furnace was the problem. It was. There was a subtle draft coming from the floor vent. When she tested her candles with the furnace off, her problem disappeared. If you do not want to turn off your heat (or A/C), consider burning your candles in another location.

6. Do you sell molds, other than the votive molds?

A. No, I apologize. I just do not have the space. However, I have information posted about companies that carry molds (and other supplies or candles that I do not, including scents):

www.luminacandles.com/links.htm

7. How do I completely remove the wax from antique glass candlesticks?

A. Try placing your candlesticks in the freezer and let the wax get really hard. Then pull them out and the wax should just chip right off without much coaxing. I know this works with beeswax. If you have a petroleum-based wax (paraffin, etc.) and this does not work, the only other suggestion I have is to place the sticks on a cookie sheet (covered with tin foil) and set them in an oven on LOW temp. Melt the wax off, wipe off the candlesticks with a paper towel and then remove any remaining wax with a solution such as MOO GOO.

8. Do you recommend some really good instruction books?

A. Please visit: www.luminacandles.com/books/cndlbook.htm

9. How do I package my honeycomb candles for resale?

A. Visit: www.luminacandles.com/packaging.htm

10. How do I cut a 10 pound (or larger) block of beeswax?

A. You can rig up a hot wire, which is more detail to build than I feel like writing about now. A soldering iron might work—but not by itself. It gets too hot. My husband has plugged into my soldering iron a variable auto transformer (Variac), a device that controls the output of energy of a standard household plug. When working with wax (for sculpture), I set the dial to about 40 or 50. **Or you can use Mother Nature's help, as I do.** If the weather is hot and sunny, set the block out in the sun, on some clean cardboard. Once the beeswax is soft, you can slice it much easier (I tend to use an ax—the way I chop wood, but I am a little weird sometimes.) If you are lucky, the weather will be really cold outside. Set the block outside (or I guess your freezer would work, if the block fits) and let it get cold *all the way through*. Then get a good sturdy, clean box and throw the block into the box on the ground as hard as you can. The idea is to shatter the wax while capturing all of the pieces in the box. Let the wax come to room temperature and any condensed water evaporate before you place the chunks into the melting pot.

11. I read in another book that the wick should be primed in paraffin, and I was wondering if you agreed, it seemed like it might make the candles burn more slowly. Thanks, Sherry

A. Hi Sherry. I think it's odd that someone would say to prime the wick with paraffin for a beeswax candle. Most people make beeswax candles because they don't like the petroleum-based waxes! Also, beeswax burns longer and cleaner than paraffin, so why prime with an inferior wax? In addition, beeswax requires a thicker [square-braided] wick, so it seems the wick used for beeswax would not be optimum for paraffin. However, I don't use paraffin, so I do not know how this would burn in a small quantity such as described.

Naturally, it would be better to dip the wick in some wax (I prefer beeswax) since obviously a hand-rolled candle is not solid wax and therefore will burn faster than a solid candle.

(That's why you need to have the first roll around the wick as tight as possible and the tighter you roll the candle, the longer its burn time.) So a hand-rolled candle will burn longer if it is solid in the middle. You might consider taking some of the honeycomb sheets and melting them down in soup cans (the taller and narrower, the better for saving wax). Then you have EXACTLY the same wax color to dip the wicks into before rolling your candles with the honeycomb sheets. (Or you could use contrasting colors for a different effect.)

To learn more about wick, click [here](#).

12. Do you sell or know where I can obtain a medium to paint directly onto the candle itself?

A. No, I do not know where to find paint for candles. Because of the potential harm in burning paint, I am not sure that I would use paint on candles. Perhaps you could paint with colored waxes. They make little potpourri-sized crock pots now and you could just buy a few (to keep the colors separate) and keep your wax on low heat (just enough for the wax to stay liquid) while you paint. I hope that helps.

13. I was told that some wicks emit lead? Have you heard this?

A. There is such a thing as a lead wick. A lead wick is used in some paraffin candles. I could not tell you why since I do not like paraffin candles and know very little about them. Beeswax requires a thicker wick than paraffin waxes and square-braided. I use and sell 100% cotton square-braided wicks.

To learn more about wick, click [here](#).

14. Is there a way to keep candles clean or to keep them from attracting dust (I will never burn this candle). Can I spray it with something? Do you sell a laquer of some kind that would work for this purpose?

A. I can appreciate your desire to not have to dust wax, but I have never heard of the kind of product you are referring to. Even though you do not *intend* to burn the candle, I would be concerned about any kind of lacquer's flammability—a dangerous situation at best. The only way a flammable coating might be acceptable is if the candle does not warm or light the outer skin of wax—but I am not sure you would want to sell a candle like that even, since we have an increasingly litigious society and that is just opening a door you don't want to go through. My solution for keeping things dust free is to put them inside of something else. If you want your candle seen, perhaps you could display it in a glass cabinet—then you just dust the cabinet, not its contents.

Anyway, the best way I have found to "clean" beeswax is to wipe it with some old stockings (hosiery). That's what is recommended for removing bloom that often appears on beeswax candles. And a stocking is soft so that it should not hurt your candle.

15. I have been given 30 pounds of bees wax that is 40 years or older. Will this still be usable? After reading your information, I now know that I need a square wick. My first attempt was a disaster! It would not come out of the container; it would not burn. Is this wax alright to use pure? Do I add any other wax? Any help will be greatly appreciated. Thank You, Dianna

A. Hi Dianna,
Thanks for writing. I can honestly say I don't know the answer to your question. I've never had beeswax long enough to know how it burns when it is really old like that. Beeswax shrinks very

little--it does not pull away from molds as much as paraffin waxes do. I guess my suggestions are this:

- 1) try making a small candle with the square-braided wick. You may find it helpful to look at my page on how I pour beeswax candles: www.luminacandles.com/pouring.htm
See if you have better success.
- 2) You might also try hand-dipping the wick into a jar of the melted beeswax to make tapers. This avoids the use of a mold and should be no problem unless you simply can't get the wax to melt nicely.
- 3) If the above does not work well, try blending your old beeswax with some new stuff to see if that works. I personally would not mix paraffin with beeswax since a major reason for making beeswax candles is to avoid burning a petroleum-based wax (paraffin) in your home. However, some people and companies do blend these waxes (because adding beeswax to paraffin extends the burn time of paraffin candles).
- 4) If you feel you have given it the "old college try", you might consider pouring the old beeswax into small containers and giving or selling it to men who have their own shops. Beeswax has traditionally been used as a lubricant on wood screws. Seamstresses use it with needles, too.

16. I looked at beeswax sheets at our local craft store, but many had smashed or broken areas. Is there any way to recover from this, or is a sheet worthless once it is crushed? Can it be crushed simply by applying uneven pressure?

A. As far as crushed sheets go, they are not totally worthless—they are still beeswax. You can make the most out of them by rolling the damaged parts to the inside of your candles. Only the last wrap is visible, so technically that is the only layer that needs to stay pretty. I suppose one could press the wax back into shape, but depending on the size of the crushed area, this could be tedious. You will find that you will want to protect your candles from "manglers," especially (definitely not limited to) children. Beeswax is a soft, sticky wax and when in sheets, they will yield to pressure from a thumb or a fall. If the sheets are too warm when being rolled, they may dent from the pressures of your fingers as you roll. To avoid this, don't work in a too-warm room (est. 80 + degrees) and do practice until you get the right touch, pressure wise. You need a tight roll, so don't roll too gingerly, or your wax won't have good contact with the wick. See www.luminacandles.com/instruct.htm

Not to toot Lumina's own horn (a-hem), but one of the advantages of buying your beeswax honeycomb sheets from Lumina Candles is that the sheets are stored away from light (that will eventually fade the colored sheets) and away from lots of public hands and poking fingers!

17. What additives can you and can you not use with beeswax candles?

A. I am not sure I have the answers to your question. The only things I have ever added to beeswax are:

- 1) dye
- 2) essential or fragrant oils (for scent)

I am aware that some people add beeswax to paraffin candles to make the latter burn longer. However, I got in to beeswax candles for their purity and cleanliness, so adding stuff to it was not the point. I suppose you could do the old candle maker's trick: experiment and see what happens!

18. First of all, I would like to compliment you on your site! Secondly, I have a question. I am on a limited budget and cannot afford to purchase a double boiler that is specially made for wax melting, is there any way that I could create my

own? Thank you, Brandi

A. Hi Brandi,

My husband likes the "Fry Daddy's" or equivalent-type of cookers. They are nice, are wide (for large blocks of wax), and have temperature control. Of course, they are about the price of a double boiler (\$20-\$30). If you are really looking for a cheaper alternative, try melting the beeswax in a soup can that is sitting in a pot of water. Be careful, though, since the can is still almost directly on the heat source. Also, if you have a junk piece of screen or grid of some sort (metal), place that under the can, inside the pot. The screen lifts the can up off of the heat source and allows water to flow under and around the can. Good luck and have fun.

19. Is there anything I can do with the leftover wax after a candle has burned down?

A. Yes, place the candle stubs into an old stocking (hosiery) and gently melt the wax in a double boiler. The wax melts out of the stocking and the stocking holds all contaminants, such as wick. Now you have some clean wax to make a new candle. (Discard the stocking and its contents.) If you do not have any molds for pouring a new candle, then melt the wax on a no-stick cookie sheet. Make a sheet of wax that can then be rolled around a wick to make a new candle. Have fun!

20. My beeswax candles seem to have a brown "gunk" in them. I think this affects their burning. What can I do about this?

A. The "gunk" might be the propolis and other natural ingredients added to beeswax by the honeybees. Try filtering the wax again before pouring a new candle.

As for filtering the raw wax, beekeepers say that an old sweatshirt with the fleece side up works better than anything.

21. I'm looking for beeswax projects other than candles. Are you aware of any sites that might offer this information?

A. Check out the first item on the following page:

www.luminacandles.com/books/lotionbk.htm

22. I'd like to start my own beeswax candle business. Do you have any advice?

A. Yes, for some ideas and points to consider, please visit <http://www.luminacandles.com/business.htm> Please feel free to e-mail Lumina with any questions you have so this page (or any other) can be expanded as needed.

23. I was wondering if the candles you make are the same as beeswax ear candles?

A. I do not know the answer to your question since I have never seen an ear candle, and the photos on the Web that I have come across seem unclear to me what is going on there. I CAN tell you that the diameters of the candles I make are probably too big, even if the bottoms are squeezed tight, to fit into an ear. Ear candles are a strange concept to me. When one can flush the ear with warm water (using a needle-less syringe) to remove wax from the ear, why would anyone want to deal with fire? I hope this answers your question somewhat.

Reply: Ear candles are normally made out of beeswax. They're hollow in the middle. It's a pretty neat concept - it works like this:

1. you burn one end of the candle with the other end in the ear.
2. the fire uses up the oxygen in the hollow part of the candle, thus creating a vacuum.
3. the wax from the ear is then naturally pulled out of the ear.

Ear candling removes more wax from ears than using a syringe, etc. They're too expensive for me to buy and so I wanted to know how to make them myself.

24. I'd like to make candles for Hanukah menorahs. They would have to be very narrow (about 1/2" diameter) and long (about 4-5"). Just slightly wider and longer than birthday candles. Can I make these out of beeswax? I think that rolled would be tough. What about solid?

A. I would make Hanukah candles by dipping the wicks enough times (in melted wax) until the desired thickness of candles is achieved. Rolled candles that size will not have much wax in them and will burn very quickly.

[More Information About Beeswax](#)

Have a question about beeswax or candle making?

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Most recent revision: 12 January 2001