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Scenting Beeswax Candles

Beeswax has a subtle sweet, honey-like fragrance (logical, huh?); however, some folks like to add scents to their candles. I use essential oils or fragrant oils when possible. (I prefer natural products and some commercial fragrances are too much for my taste or do not appeal to me on a long-term basis.) Essential oils evaporate rather quickly, so the key to smelling essential oils in candles is to pour the beeswax in the mold at a very low temperature (just before the wax solidifies). The temperature of the liquid wax should be between 145 and 150 degrees F. (approximately) at pouring, just before adding the essential oils. Stir in the oils thoroughly, but do not spend too much time doing this or you will cook out your scents.

It's fun and easy to [make hand-rolled candles](#) from beeswax honeycomb sheets. It requires no heat, which makes rolling candles a great project for kids or for those with little space or time. To scent the honeycomb rolled candles, either soak the wick in a candle fragrance (or place a drop or two of essential oils along the wick) just prior to making the candles, or, as the candle is burning, put a drop of essential oil into the pool of melted wax at the top of the beeswax candle.

If you are making a lot of candles using essential oils and the honeycomb sheets, you won't want to do the "drops along the wick" method. What I have done in the past is:

1. Pre-cut your wicks to the desired length for the candles you intend to make (ex: 2.5 inches for 2-inch votive candles).
2. Place about 1/2-1 tablespoons of essential oil in a small *GLASS* jar. Make sure you choose a glass jar with a lid.
3. Add some alcohol (about 1/2 cup?) to the jar. I guessed at the ratio of alcohol to fragrance and didn't keep good records (D'oh!), so experiment with this until you get the result you want. Essential oils are powerful, so it was probably at least 7-8 times as much alcohol. My project was making 200 cassia (cinnamon) scented votives for a client and I used a small jelly jar. Oh--and rubbing alcohol, not booze. I don't think essential oils will mix well with water, so I didn't try using water as a thinner. (I have since had a customer suggest that instead of rubbing alcohol, use a vegetable-based oil or peanut oil as a fragrance stretcher.)
4. Put the lid on the jar and secure well. Then shake the jar until you feel the liquids are thoroughly blended. Basically the idea is to use the alcohol to extend the oil and insure the fragrance is evenly distributed to the absorbant wick.
5. Open the jar and put all of the wicks in the jar. Close again and reshake until all of the wick looks thoroughly saturated. (Note that the amount of wick will greatly determine how much oil and alcohol needs to be in the jar. Dry wick won't have any fragrance!)
6. Let sit--I did it overnight.
7. After the "absorption period" is over, empty out all of the wick onto either a clean counter or a sheet of wax paper. Spread the wicks out. Let all of the alcohol evaporate (rubbing alcohol is not fun to smell, so you don't want this scent in your candles).
8. Wicks should be ready to roll (pardon the pun).

Note: This is not the best method of extending essential oils--I need to find out from an herbalist how that is done. Essential oils evaporate quickly and while I

used this method successfully to scent my candles for the task at hand (the candles smelled good), I do not think the candles actually scented the room while burning.

NEVER leave a burning candle unattended or alone with children!

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