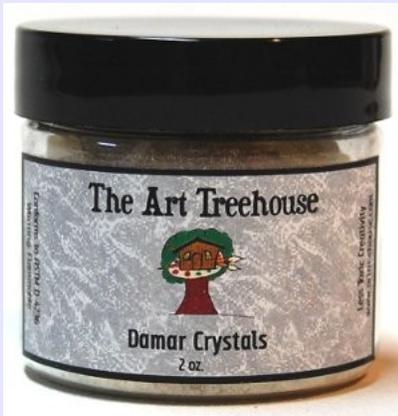


Spike Lavender & Damar Crystals



Like so many of the supplies used in oil painting, Damar crystals are natural in origin. They are made from the resin of a Southeast Asian pine tree. Damar crystals must be dissolved, and then they can be used in varnish, and in oil paint mediums and glazes.

To dissolve the Damar crystals, it helps if they are ground into small pieces. Place the small pieces at the bottom of a canning jar and cover them with Oil of Spike Lavender. The crystals will have bits of pine bark in them, so some people place them in cheesecloth before covering. The only drawback to this is you cannot see how dissolved the crystals are. Close the jar tightly with the lid and let the crystals dissolve – it will take a week or two depending on the thickness of the crystals. Stirring occasionally will help speed things along.

The dissolved crystals in Oil of Spike Lavender make a thicker syrup. If you have not used a cheesecloth, you can filter them with a wire-mesh strainer. The strainer can be cleaned by washing with soap.



A varnish for coating paintings can be made with roughly equal amounts of Damar concentrate and oil of Spike Lavender. A re-touch varnish can be made by adding more Oil of Spike Lavender. Keep in mind that Oil of Spike Lavender is strong – do not “scrub” the painting with it. The goal is for it to evaporate, leaving the Damar film.

If you mix the Damar concentrate you have made with equal amounts of linseed oil and Oil of Spike Lavender, you will have a basic painting medium. The Damar will help give the paint a uniform consistency not found when using only linseed oil. It will add transparency and help reduce wrinkling of the paint film. However, only a small amount should be used due to the potential for darkening.



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