

PYROGRAPHY



Pyrography is the free handed art of decorating wood or other materials with burn marks resulting from the controlled application of a heated object such as a poker. It is also known as **wood burning**. It is one of the oldest forms of art, using two elements of the natural world: wood and fire.



The generic term Pyrography (from the Greek *pur* =fire and *graphos*=writing) refers to the same technique applied on any suitable surface like wood, leather, gourds, even paper.

It is the art of burning a design, picture or script in wood or leather using a heated metal point.

A large range of tones and shades can be achieved. Varying the type of tip used, the temperature, or the way the iron is applied to the material all create different effects

An example of pyrography done on plywood, prepared by Bruce Campbell of the Hornsby Men's Shed, is shown on the left.



Safety

The main hazard to be wary of is the extremely fine wood dust when sanding the wood or in some cases the pitch/sap or resin that emits harmful fumes when burning. All wood dust is hazardous & can cause respiratory problems if you do not wear a mask, some more than others & should be avoided. You should always wear a quality dust mask/respirator while power carving, and use a good dust collection system to avoid a lifetime injury to your lungs. These recommendations really are not just for power carving or sanding, but they should be used for burning as well. Remember:

- **DO NOT** burn on pressure-treated wood. It is treated with chemicals that, although safely bound in the wood fibres for construction purposes, are inherently dangerous to woodworkers and woodburners.
- **DO NOT** burn on any type of treated wood: Chemically treated, stained, painted, sealed with a finish, etc. If you must use this type of wood be sure that you have thoroughly sanded it to remove all traces and are burning on **bare** wood.

Prepared Wood, Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF), man made boards and plywood should never really ever be burned on for several reasons. Prepared wood usually has been chemically treated and burning on it will release toxins into the air. MDF is made out of toxic materials and may cause cancer and other health issues. Man-made boards and such also have layers of glue that releases toxins that may not cause immediate harm but impact one later on in life. Regardless of what you decide, it is always important to work in a well ventilated room with a running fan to encourage the circulation of fresh oxygen and to remove the lingering smoke. We have a pyrography set in the Shed if you are interested in using it



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