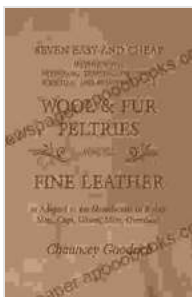


Seven Easy and Cheap Methods for Preparing Tanning, Dressing, Scenting, and Finishing Rawhides and Skins

Working with rawhides and skins can be a rewarding and practical craft. Whether you're a hunter, trapper, or simply interested in preserving and utilizing natural materials, mastering the techniques of tanning, dressing, scenting, and finishing can unlock a wealth of possibilities.



Seven Easy and Cheap Methods for Preparing, Tanning, Dressing, Scenting and Renovating all Wool and Fur Peltries: Also all Fine Leather as Adapted to the ... Robes, Mats, Caps, Gloves, Mitts, Overshoes

by Gail Dufresne

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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In this article, we'll guide you through seven easy and affordable methods for preparing rawhides and skins. By following these step-by-step instructions, you can create beautiful and durable leather goods that will last for years to come.

Method 1: Salt Tanning

Salt tanning is one of the oldest and simplest tanning methods, yielding supple and durable leather. It involves using salt to dehydrate the skin, inhibiting bacterial growth and preserving its structure.

Materials:

* Rawhide or skin * Coarse salt * Container large enough to hold the hide/skin

Steps:

1. Clean the hide/skin thoroughly and remove any excess fat or tissue. 2. Apply a generous amount of salt to the flesh side of the hide/skin. 3. Roll up the hide/skin tightly and place it in the container. 4. Add more salt around the hide/skin, ensuring it is completely covered. 5. Place a weight on top of the hide/skin to keep it submerged in the salt. 6. Store in a cool, dry place for 2-4 weeks. 7. Remove the hide/skin and brush off the excess salt.

Method 2: Alum Tanning

Alum tanning produces a soft and pliable leather with good water resistance. It uses alum, a mineral salt, as the tanning agent.

Materials:

* Rawhide or skin * Aluminum sulfate (alum) * Water * Container large enough to hold the hide/skin

Steps:

1. Prepare an alum solution by dissolving 1 pound of alum in 1 gallon of water. 2. Submerge the hide/skin in the alum solution and soak for 24-48

hours. 3. Remove the hide/skin and rinse thoroughly. 4. Stretch the hide/skin to desired shape and allow to dry.

Method 3: Brain Tanning

Brain tanning, a traditional Native American method, produces soft and waterproof leather. It utilizes the enzymes in animal brains to tan the hide/skin.

Materials:

* Rawhide or skin * Animal brains (fresh or dried) * Water * Container large enough to hold the hide/skin

Steps:

1. Prepare a brain solution by boiling animal brains in water until a thick paste forms. 2. Apply the brain paste generously to the flesh side of the hide/skin. 3. Fold or roll up the hide/skin and place it in a container. 4. Weigh down the hide/skin and store in a warm place for 2-4 weeks. 5. Remove the hide/skin and rinse thoroughly.

Method 4: Bark Tanning

Bark tanning, used for centuries, produces a dark and durable leather. It uses the tannins found in tree bark as the tanning agent.

Materials:

* Rawhide or skin * Tannin-rich tree bark (e.g., oak, hemlock, sumac) * Water * Container large enough to hold the hide/skin

Steps:

1. Grind the tree bark into a powder. 2. Prepare a tanning solution by boiling the bark powder in water for several hours. 3. Submerge the hide/skin in the tanning solution and soak for 2-4 weeks. 4. Remove the hide/skin and rinse thoroughly. 5. Hang to dry in the shade.

Method 5: Oil Tanning

Oil tanning results in soft and pliable leather with water-repellent properties. It uses animal or vegetable oils to tan the hide/skin.

Materials:

* Rawhide or skin * Animal or vegetable oil (e.g., olive oil, cod liver oil) *
Container large enough to hold the hide/skin

Steps:

1. Soak the hide/skin in warm water until pliable. 2. Apply a generous amount of oil to the flesh side of the hide/skin. 3. Rub the oil into the hide/skin thoroughly. 4. Roll up the hide/skin and place it in a container. 5. Weigh down the hide/skin and store in a warm place for 2-4 weeks. 6. Remove the hide/skin and scrape off any excess oil.

Method 6: Smoke Tanning

Smoke tanning imparts a unique flavor and aroma to leather while preserving its durability. It utilizes the smoke from a wood fire.

Materials:

* Rawhide or skin * Wood fire * Smokehouse or enclosed space

Steps:

1. Hang the hide/skin in a smokehouse or enclosed space.
2. Build a wood fire and allow the smoke to circulate around the hide/skin.
3. Smoke the hide/skin for several days or until it becomes pliable and darkens in color.
4. Remove the hide/skin and air out to dissipate any strong smoke odor.

Method 7: Commercial Tanning

Commercial tanning products can provide quick and effective results, but tend to be more expensive than traditional methods.

Materials:

* Commercial tanning solution * Container large enough to hold the hide/skin

Steps:

1. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on the commercial tanning solution.
2. Submerge the hide/skin in the tanning solution and soak for the specified time.
3. Remove the hide/skin and rinse thoroughly.
4. Stretch the hide/skin to desired shape and allow to dry.

Dressing, Scenting, and Finishing

Once you've tanned the hide/skin, you can further enhance it by dressing, scenting, and finishing.

Dressing:

Dressing involves softening and conditioning the leather. You can use leather oils, waxes, or conditioners to add moisture and flexibility.

Scenting:

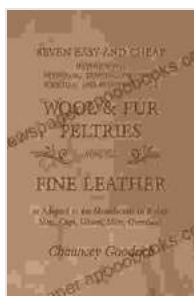
If desired, you can add a pleasant scent to the leather by rubbing in essential oils or natural fragrances.

Finishing:

Finishing touches can enhance the leather's appearance and durability. You can smooth out the surface with a burnishing tool or apply a protective coating to seal in the finish.

Mastering the art of preparing rawhides and skins allows you to create beautiful and functional leather goods. By following these seven easy and cheap methods, you can transform raw materials into durable and versatile items that will enrich your life for years to come.

Remember, practice makes perfect. Don't be discouraged if your first attempts do not yield perfect results. With patience and perseverance, you'll develop your skills and create stunning leather goods that you'll be proud to use and share.



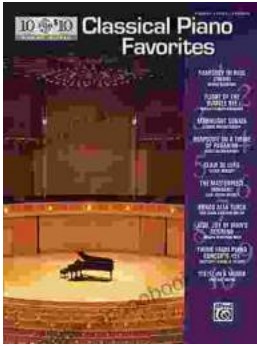
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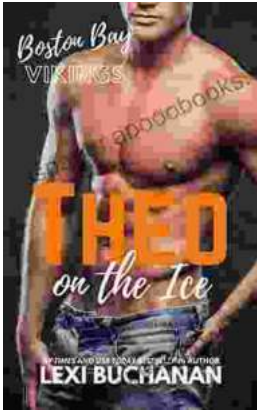
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