

TANNING INSTRUCTIONS

HIDE PREPARATION:

Hides must be cured before tanning to prevent hair slippage. To cure, flesh hide completely, then salt generously, making sure there are no flaps where flesh side will touch flesh side. The hide should be left salted for at least three (3) days for thin hides (such as rabbit) and seven (7) days for thicker hides (such as deer). When the hide is cured, and just prior to tanning, wash hide in a mixture of salt water and degreaser (about 1/2 pint degreaser to five (5) gallons water). If the hair is bloody, add ammonia at a rate of 1/4 pint to five (5) gallons water.

TANNING SOLUTION PREPARATION:

A 30 gallon plastic garbage can works well for a container. DO NOT use a metal container. Mix 20 gallons water with 15 pounds of salt. Then add approximately 1/4 pound aluminum sulphate per gallon of water (or until the ph reaches 3.2), then add the buffering agent / softener soda ash until the solution reaches ph 3.5 (amounts of aluminum sulphate and soda ash will depend on the natural ph of your water). The solution should be kept at a temperature of 70 - 80 degrees, NEVER below 70 degrees.

TANNING:

After the hides are washed, place them in the solution, weighting them down if needed to keep them below the surface. The hides should be stirred around at least daily until the tanning process is completed. After the hides have been in the solution 36 to 48 hours, they should be removed and fleshed again to remove any membrane left on the hide or the hide will not tan properly. Then, put the hides back in the solution. Heavy hides may need to be fleshed and thinned two or three times during the tanning. Thin hides, such as rabbit, will only need the membrane removed. Thin hides should be tanned in three (3) to five (5) days. Thick hides should be tanned in five (5) to ten (10) days.

AFTER TANNING:

Rinse hides lightly in clear water. Make a solution of 1/2 tanning oil and 1/2 water. Rub this solution into the flesh side. Hang to dry. Once dry, place hide in a tumbler with sawdust to soften and clean the hide. If a tumbler is not available, work the hide by hand while drying. If the hair is oily, make a mixture of white gas (Coleman fuel) and clean, washed sawdust. Rub this into the hair generously and then comb dry and shake out.

RESEARCH MANNIKINS

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