

= Shoe polish =

Shoe polish (or boot polish) , is a waxy paste , cream , or liquid used to polish , shine , and waterproof leather shoes or boots to extend the footwear 's life , and restore , maintain and improve their appearance .

Various substances have been used as shoe polish for hundreds of years , starting with natural substances such as wax and tallow . Modern polish formulas were introduced early in the 20th century and many of those original formulations are still in use today . Today , shoe polish is usually made from a mix of natural and synthetic materials , including naphtha , turpentine , dyes , and gum arabic , using straightforward chemical engineering processes . Shoe polish is usually flammable , can be toxic , and , if misused , can stain skin . It should be used in a well @-@ ventilated area with care taken to protect clothes , carpet and furniture .

The popularity of shoe polish paralleled a general rise in leather and synthetic shoe production , beginning in the 19th century and continuing into the 20th . The World Wars saw a surge in demand for the product , in order to polish army boots .

= Usage =

Shoe polish is applied to the shoe using a rag , cloth , or brush . Shoe polish is not a cleaning product , and therefore the footwear should be both clean and dry before application . A vigorous rubbing action to apply the polish evenly on the boot , followed by further buffing with a clean dry cloth or brush , usually provides good results . Another technique , known as spit @-@ polishing or bull polishing , involves gently rubbing polish into the leather with a cloth and a drop of water or spit . This achieves the mirror @-@ like , high @-@ gloss finish sometimes known as a spit shine or bull which is especially valued in military organizations . Despite the term , saliva is less commonly used as the vehicle or diluent with polish than is water . Polishes containing carnauba wax can be used as a protective coating to extend the life and look of a leather shoe .

Shoe polish may be purchased pre @-@ soaked into a hard sponge , which can be used to buff leather without needing to apply any additional polish to either the leather or the sponge . This is usually known as an applicator . A number of companies that manufacture shoe care products also sell a liquid shoe polish in a squeezable plastic bottle , with a small sponge applicator at the end . To decrease its viscosity , bottled polish usually has a very low wax content .

There are many products closely related to shoe polish , but not strictly considered as such . Other chemical products may be used to clean and shine shoes ? in particular whiteners for white shoes , and a variety of sprays and aerosols for cleaning and waterproofing suede shoes . A banana peel can also be used to effectively shine shoes , but it is not recommended .

Although shoe polish is primarily intended for leather shoes , some brands specify that they may be used on non @-@ porous materials , such as vinyl . The polish is generally the same colour as the shoes it will be used upon , or it may be neutral , lacking any intrinsic colour .

= History =

= = Before the twentieth century = =

Since medieval times , dubbin , a waxy product , was used to soften and waterproof leather ; however , it did not impart shine . It was made from natural wax , oil , soda ash and tallow . As leather with a high natural veneer became popular in the 18th century , a high glossy finish became important , particularly on shoes and boots . In most cases , a variety of homemade polishes were used to provide this finish , often with lanolin or beeswax as a base .

In the 19th century many forms of shoe polish became available , yet were rarely referred to as shoe polish or boot polish . Instead , they were often called blacking (especially when mixed with lampblack) , or simply continued to be referred to as dubbin . Tallow , an animal by @-@ product ,

was used to manufacture a simple form of shoe polish at this time . Chicago , Illinois , where 82 % of the processed meat consumed in the United States was processed in the stock yards , became a major shoe polish producing area .

In 1832 , James S. Mason of Philadelphia began the commercial production of shoe blacking and inks . In 1851 , James S. Mason & Co. constructed a building at 138 / 140 Front St. where ultimately ten million boxes were produced annually , to hold tins of blacking produced by two hundred employees . Later , tins of blacking were labeled as Mason Shoe Polish . This business ceased operation in 1919 and the building was razed in 1973 .

Other early leather preserving products included the Irish brand Punch , which was first made in 1851 . In 1889 , an English man by the name of William Edward Wren , started making shoe polishes and dubbin under the brand name Wren 's . In just 3 years , he won the ? First in the Field ? First Award Leather Trades Exhibition 1892 ? award which was awarded by the Leather Trades Exhibition held in Northampton , the centre of Britain ? s boot making industry . This signified the importance and prestige of the exhibition in the trade and was a recognition of Wren 's quality . In 1890 the Kroner Brothers established EOS , a shoe polish factory in Berlin , which serviced the Prussian military . It finally closed in 1934 when the Nazis forbade Jews to operate a business . The German brand , Erdal , went on sale in 1901 .

Prior to 1906 , shoe polish was not well known as a purchasable product , nor was it particularly sophisticated . While sales were not especially high , a few brands , like Nugget , were available in the U.K. during the 19th century . The practice of shining people ? s shoes gradually caught on and soon many shoeshine boys in city streets were offering shoe shines using a basic form of shoe polish along with a polishing cloth .

= = = Modern polish = = =

The first shoe polish to resemble the modern varieties (aimed primarily at inducing shine) were the British and British Commonwealth brands like Cherry Blossom , Kiwi and Wren 's . An advertisement published in March 1947 by Wren 's claimed that William Wren originated the first wax polish in 1889 . As the advertisement was endorsed with the Royal Warrant , its claim would be deemed creditable . However , the most well known brand was Kiwi . Scottish expatriates William Ramsay and Hamilton McKellan began making " boot polish " in a small factory in 1904 in Melbourne , Australia . Their formula was a major improvement on previous brands . It preserved shoe leather , made it shine , and restored color . By the time Kiwi Dark Tan was released in 1908 , it incorporated agents that added suppleness and water resistance . Australian @-@ made boot polish was then considered the world 's best . Black and a range of colors became available , and exports to Britain , continental Europe , and New Zealand began , although the polish is now made in the Far East . Previously owned by the Sara Lee Corporation since 1984 , Kiwi was sold in 2011 to SC Johnson [1] .

Ramsay named the shoe polish after the kiwi , the national bird of New Zealand ; Ramsay 's wife , Annie Elizabeth Meek Ramsay , was a native of Oamaru , New Zealand . It has been suggested that , at a time when several symbols were weakly associated with New Zealand , the eventual spread of Kiwi shoe polish around the world enhanced the Kiwi 's popular appeal and promoted it at the expense of the others .

A rival brand in the early years was Cobra Boot Polish , based in Sydney . Cobra was noted for a series of cartoon advertisements in The Sydney Bulletin , starting in 1909 , using a character called " Chunder Loo of Akim Foo . " Chunder is Australian slang for vomit , and possibly originated through the rhyming slang of Chunder Loo and spew (another slang word for vomit) .

= = = Surge in popularity = = =

At the end of the 19th century , leather shoes and boots became affordable to the masses , and with the outbreak of World War I in 1914 , the demand for large numbers of polished army boots led to a need in the market for a product that would allow boots to be polished quickly , efficiently and

easily . The polish was also used to shine leather belts , handgun holsters , and horse tack . This demand led to a rapid increase in the sales of shoe and boot polish . The popularity of Kiwi shoe polish spread throughout the British Commonwealth and the United States . Rival brands began to emerge , including Shinola and Cavalier (United States) , Cherry Blossom (United Kingdom) , Parwa (India) , Jean Bart (France) , and many others . Advertising became more prominent ; many shoe polish brands used fictional figures or historical characters to spread awareness of their products . In the German documentary of 1927 Berlin : Symphony of a Great City , a scene focuses on shoe shining with a polish called Nigrin sporting the face of a Negro .

Shoe manufacturing improvements in the mid @-@ 19th century allowed for factories to produce large numbers of shoes made of leather , and later synthetic materials . This increase in leather shoe production continued well into the 20th century and led to a surge in the number of retail shoe stores in the industrialized world , and subsequently a call for shoe polish by footwear consumers .

Shoe polish was to be found just about everywhere Allied troops ventured . American war correspondent Walter Graeber wrote for TIME magazine from the Tobruk trenches in 1942 that " old tins of British @-@ made Kiwi polish lay side by side with empty bottles of Chianti . " A story indicative of the rise in global significance of shoe polish is told by Jean (Gertrude) Williams , a New Zealander who lived in Japan during the Allied occupation straight after World War II . American soldiers were then finding the dullness of their boots and shoes to be a handicap when trying to win the affections of Japanese women . U.S. military footwear of the time was produced in brown leather with the rough side out .

When the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces arrived in Japan ? all with boots polished to a degree not known in the U.S. forces ? the G.I.s were more conscious than ever of their feet . The secret was found to rest not only in spit and polish , but in the superior Australian boot polish , a commodity which was soon exchanged with the Americans on a fluctuating basis of so many packets of cigarettes for one can of Kiwi boot polish .

= = = Modern day = = =

Shoe polish products are low @-@ value items that are infrequently purchased , as a single can might last several months for even the most frequent user . Consumer demand is inelastic and largely insensitive to price change , while sales volumes are generally low . In the shoe polish market as a whole , some 26 % of turnover is accounted for by pastes , 24 % by creams , 23 % by aerosols , and 13 % by liquids . In recent years , the demand for shoe polish products has either been static or declined ; one reason is the gradual replacement of formal footwear with sneakers for everyday use .

There are numerous branded products available , as well as generic store brands . There are two chief areas of shoe polish sales : to the general public , and to specialists and trade , such as shoe repairers , and cobblers . The sales percentages between the two outlets are roughly comparable .

Kiwi remains the predominant shoe polish brand in most of the world , being sold in over 180 countries but is often seen as a mass market product more known for its cheap prices rather than quality . Today , it is manufactured in Australia , Canada , France , India , Pakistan , South Africa , Spain , the United Kingdom , and the United States . Other leading brands include Kelly 's , Shinola , Lincoln Shoe Polish , Meltonian , Angelus , Woly , Salamander , Collonil and Cherry Blossom .

Kiwi was acquired by the American company Sara Lee following its purchase of Reckitt and Colman in 1991 and Knomark with its brand Esquire Shoe Polish in 1987 . The Federal Trade Commission ruled that Sara Lee had to divest its ownership of these companies in 1994 to prevent it from becoming a monopoly . Since this ruling , Sara Lee has been prevented from acquiring any further assets or firms associated with chemical shoe care products in the United States without prior commission approval . The Competition Commission in the United Kingdom investigated the potential monopoly of Sara Lee in the shoe care industry . By the end of 2010 , Sara Lee 's Household & Body Care division (which included KIWI) was acquired by S.C.Johnson & Son .

Empty shoe polish bottles can be used to create graffiti , by dumping out the polish inside and filling it full of ink or paint . They are used as a cheap alternative to markers designed for graffiti , and are

much more widely available . Kiwi polish was also used heavily by the U.S. Military .

= = Composition and toxicology = =

Shoe polish consists of a waxy colloidal emulsion , a substance composed of a number of partially immiscible liquids and solids mixed together . It is usually made from ingredients including some or all of naphtha , lanolin , turpentine , wax (often Carnauba wax) , gum arabic , ethylene glycol , and if required a colourant , such as carbon black or an azo dye (such as aniline yellow) . It typically has a specific gravity of 0 .8 , is negligibly soluble in water , and is made of between 65 and 77 % volatile substances ? usually naphtha . The high amount of volatile substances means that the shoe polish will dry out and harden after application , while retaining its shine .

Lanolin , a hydrophobic grease from wool bearing animals such as sheep or goats , acts as both a waterproofing wax and a bonding agent , giving the shoe polish its greasy feel and texture . It prevents the naphtha from evaporating until the polish has been spread and buffed into a thin film on the leather surface . An essential ingredient in shoe polish is a thickener ; without this , the polish would be too runny , making it difficult to use . Gum arabic , a substance from two sub-Saharan species of the acacia tree , is commonly used to increase the viscosity of the product .

Shoe polish contains chemical substances which can be absorbed through the skin , or inhaled . When handling shoe polish , one should ideally wear gloves , and stay in a well ventilated area . Shoe polish should be kept out of reach of children and animals . It can stain the skin for a protracted period of time , and will cause irritation to the eye if there is direct contact .

= = Manufacture = =

Shoe polish can be manufactured using large vats , reasonably powerful heaters and air conditioners . There is no set method of manufacture , although most methods use pressures of two atmospheres to ensure the naphtha does not boil off , and temperatures of up to 85 ° C .

The first step in the manufacture of a typical shoe polish is the melting of the wax with the highest melting point in an electric heater . Following this , all other waxes are added , usually by descending order of melting point . While this wax is held at a constant temperature , the emulsion ? a mixture of the various oils and , if used , fats , is then heated separately , at around 85 ° C . The heated emulsion is then added to the waxes , along with distilled water . When the mixture reaches around 80 ° C , turpentine oil is added . This mixture is then mixed and continually stirred for half an hour . Dyes are added and mixed in turpentine oil if it is not a neutral polish . The mixed mass is reduced slowly to 50 ° C , and as its viscosity increases , it is poured through a closed funnel into a cooling chamber . The poured mass is allowed to settle slowly , providing uniform distribution . The process is considered straightforward and the required equipment is relatively easy to acquire . The cost of establishing shoe polish manufacturing facilities has been estimated at around \$ 600 ,000 (as of 2005) .

Shoe polish is traditionally packaged in flat , round , 60 gram (2 ounce) tins , usually with an easy open facility . Because the amount of shoe polish that needs to be applied is small , and the shoe polish will desiccate due to volatile ingredients , such as naphtha , a large container would dry out before being fully used . The traditional flat , round tins have since become synonymous with shoe polishes .