
Troubleshooting my first 2 batches of soap

Posted by Rhea - 1998/05/01 05:09

"Hello, I'm from British Columbia, Canada. Soapmaking is now becoming all the rage here. I make my first batch with rendered tallow, which after drying, turned to crumbly powder. My second batch was with pure olive oil. This batch turned out great when dried, but then upon remilling, the melting process turned out to be very sticky, no matter how much water was added during the re-melting, but I added my essential oils anyway, and they seem to be drying out just fine. Is it common for olive oil based soaps to be this sticky, and not really re-melt to a smooth liquid?

Thanks for your expertise!

Rhea."

Re: troubleshooting my first 2 batches of soap

Posted by Elle McDade - 1998/05/04 09:44

"Rhea,

I've never used tallow in my soaps nor have I used only olive oil by itself. Perhaps I'm not qualified to answer your particular questions but having made 15 batches at 16lbs each and never having one close to failing I'll offer you this much:

Weighing and measuring using a scale not measuring cups is critical! If you do nothing else, you MUST have accurate measurements. The only way get them is with a scale. The second and just as critical thing is the amount of sodium hydroxide (lye) for each type of oil used in your recipe. Refer to the SAP chart at <http://www.the-sage.com> this will enable you to calculate the correct proportions you will need for the proper saponification to take place.

I'm not surprised that a pure olive oil bar would turn out sticky as you described. I use a mixture of coconut oil, palm kernel oil and olive oil. Each base oil contributes its own special qualities to the final product. I.E. coconut oil is great for a nice thick lather, palm kernel makes for a harder bar thus longer sink-life, etc.

Read books and keep checking on the questions and responses from other 'soapers' at this site and you'll be sure to learn where where you went wrong and what you need to do differently.

Hope this tidbit helps. Happy Soaping "up there" From "down here in San Diego California"

Elle

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