

Darkening of (black) Mulberry wood



As was discussed when I previously mentioned Mulberry wood on this forum the black (& probably the US red) Mulberry wood is a striking yellow colour on first exposure but darkens quite quickly under illumination. This is widely reported but see the striking example above where the right side was towards and the left side away from the window where it was set for drying. So darkening is due to light.

Whilst the amber colour may be quite pleasing it is less distinctive and other online comments suggest it will further darken to brown over (not very much) time.

So it seemed worthwhile to try various surface coatings that are designed to prevent wood darkening under ultraviolet illumination, although the Mulberry darkening is not of course necessarily due to uv - it could be blue light causing this. So I put various coated & uncoated samples in full outside daylight (sunlight when available!). Although this has only been in progress for a couple of weeks the results already look interesting and worth sharing. The samples are all sanded smooth, and for this picture all were wet with water to give a shiny surface. They are in top-to-bottom order:-

- An uncoated but exposed sample
- An uncoated sample kept in the dark (but with air circulation)
- A sample coated with OSMO UV-protection-oil extra, which is an exterior oil-based coating designed to protect from uv
- One coated with OSMO uvwax, which is an interior water-based coating designed to prevent uv darkening
- A sample coated with ordinary hard wax oil which is older than the other samples but has only been exposed to full daylight for the same time, previously in room lighting. Useful to show the direction of travel.

It is striking that all the exposed samples have darkened/changed colour somewhat, although the UV-protection-oil coated sample has darkened rather less than the others and still looks 'yellow'. The uvwax sample has a slightly



milky look that is present as soon as it is coated.

Other notes:-

- the UV-protection-oil is very slow to dry hard - 12 hours is suggested by the instructions but a couple of days might be better. But the finish is then shiny and wax-like.
- The uvwax does not observably raise the grain in spite of being water-based. The finish is 'satin'.

I will report again when the samples have been exposed for longer.

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