

UPDATED CORN AND POTATO DEXTRIN RECIPES

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Corn and potato dextrin have various uses in the food industry, such as thickening and sweetening. They are powders that when prepared as described, dissolve in boiling water, and after being applied to fabric and dried, they resist the penetration of dyes and wash out in water. Corn Dextrin can create a complete block-out of thickened dye. In a thin layer, it blocks out less. Potato Dextrin, spread thickly on the fabric, cracks as it dries. While damp, it can be scraped away in patterns.

There are many grades of corn and potato dextrin, changing constantly, so the recipes we use in the studio need to adapt as well. Many things influence how they work, including the humidity and temperature of the work area, the temperature of the resist, the thickness of application, the speed of drying, and also the weight and weave of the fabric.

Start by mixing a small amount. All recipes should be used as guides to experiment. Try variations like adding more or less powdered dextrin. You may want to combine these recipes with any directions provided with the product. Keep an open mind about your results—they will all be unique!

The powdered products may change after long storage.

Recipe for Corn Dextrin

½ cup (120 ml) boiling water
12 Tbs (140-150 ml) powdered corn dextrin

Mix with fork or whisk to dissolve. A few dots of powder may remain. Strain while warm if it will be applied with a fine tip. Use warm or cool, the latter being slightly thicker. Apply with pointed bottle, paint brush, sponge, or blocks. Apply to fabric and dry completely. Paint on thickened dye, cure the dye, and wash as you would to remove excess dye.

Recipe for Potato Dextrin

½ cup (120 ml) boiling water
2 tsp. (7.5 ml) sodium carbonate powder
11 Tbs (140-150 ml) powdered potato dextrin

Mix with a fork or whisk. Over-stirring may prevent thickening as much. Pin or tape the SODA-SOAKED fabric down firmly so it won't curl too much as it dries. For best crackle effect use cold and very stiff, and spread with a firm tool. Thicker applications result in a larger cracks. After it is completely dry, paint thickened dye (medium consistency) carefully into the cracks without lifting off too much of the resist or pushing dye under the paste. After the dye has cured, spray off large chunks with warm water, and discard away from the sink drain. Wash as you would to remove excess dye.

TIP: I apply potato dextrin to dry soda soaked fabric, but also add soda ash to make sure that there is enough soda to completely fix the dye. Moving the potato dextrin across the fabric dilutes the soda concentration in some areas and often results in areas of lighter colors and less distinct resist patterning.