

## Tinted CA Glue for Cracks and Voids: New Choices

Plus some additional thoughts about epoxies

When confronted with a crack or a void in a blank where those “features” are unwelcome...or unsafe...most of us turn to our handy selection of cyanoacrylate (CA) glue of several viscosities. Historically, most of these are colorless. That’s changing!



About 5 years ago, Kirk deHeer introduced his students to “Liquid Ebony,” a medium viscosity, fluid, jet black CA glue (Instabond, Craft Supply). ([woodturnerscatalog.com](http://woodturnerscatalog.com)) Kirk used it to form a 1 mm wide line around the circumference of a medallion in the lid of a turned box. It bonded the medallion securely, filled the small gap, and made a visually appealing, contrasting line. This material is fast and effective to fill cracks and small voids in very dark wood, such as fractured knots in black walnut or narrow splits in wenge. Using the microdropper, it also does a fine job plugging those annoying 1-2 mm powder post borer holes which often have a black ring around the channels.

However, this excellent product can be too black aesthetically for similar “features” in more common woods with shades of brown.

Enter Starbond! This competitor to Instabond offers a **medium brown** and **dark brown** CA glue, along with a black one. The material has a “medium” thickness, but viscosity is low enough to soak deeply into cracks, almost as well as the “thin” clear CA glue, but it’s less brittle. It bridges small gaps effectively, and it blends nicely with most of the brown woods we use. It runs around \$14 for a 2 oz bottle, a bit more than Instabond clear. Available from Lee Valley. ([Home - Lee Valley Tools](http://www.leevalley.com))

For larger defects, we’ll more likely use epoxy than CA for gap filling strength, perhaps mixed with sanding dust from the same blank for color match. Of course, we also can embellish “plain epoxy” with decorative pigments, crushed stone, shell inlay, or metal powder for color accents. The temptation to use fast-setting epoxy can betray a turner, however, as particulates in rapidly curing epoxies tend to trap tiny bubbles.

Caution: Some CA glues as well as two-part liquid epoxy resins have rather short shelf lives. I suspect that's true for the solid products, too. I generally use my supply within a year of purchase, although the Instabond and Starbond CA products from the above vendors have lasted well into a second year. Buy a quantity you plan to use, and then get fresh stock from a busy retailer with inventory turnover.

### Epoxy Putty for Larger Gaps



The market is expanding our choices for epoxy “sticks” which contain both a clay-consistency, pigmented resin and an activator, separated by industrial magic until use. The users slice off as much as they need, massage the components until they blend completely, then squish it into place during a 15 minute work time. They sand and finish nicely, but it's hard to fill deep gaps because it's relatively stiff.

Instead of simple “dark and light” hues, manufacturers are offering quite a range of shades...similar to traditional, solvent based wood fillers. For larger projects, two-part epoxy putty...in separate containers...can be mixed and custom pigmented.

**Joe Cox** may be our club's resident expert in these products...blending talents for turning, carving, and artistic inlay...as he memorably offered in his pre-pandemic demo. Maybe we can coax him into a refresher talk in the future!



*Joe Cox, Putty Fantastic!*



## Santa Cruz Woodturners' "Resinators"

For an experience-informed, deeper discussion of resins which can be used for both structural and decorative functions with or without a pressure vessel, I encourage you to review the "Resinators" virtual panel discussion from the educational files, April, 2021, on Santa Cruz Woodturners website. [www.SCWoodturners.org](http://www.SCWoodturners.org)

It features in depth contributions from **Larry Dubia**, **Mattie Guthrie**, **Dwain Christensen**, and **Roy Holmberg**, with some chirp-in comments from the moderator. You'll also find superb comparison tables and links.

Link: [Microsoft Word - Resinators 4-21 compress photo.docx \(scwoodturners.org\)](http://www.SCWoodturners.org)

Larry Dubia's September, 2022, demonstration of pressure pot epoxy craft will soon be "up" on our website:



*Dwain Christensen*



*Larry Dubia*

We gotta stick together in these difficult times, right, but not when you're pouring epoxy!

Wells Shoemaker, October, 2022  
*Past President, Santa Cruz Woodturners*