

Iron Gall Ink Making

Recipe:

Book Containing Divers Sorts of Hands, by John de Beau Chesne and M. John Baildon, and published in 1571 (from irongallink.org)

Rules made by E.B. For his children to learne to write bye:

To make common yncke of Wyne take a quart, Two ounces of gomme, let that be a parte, Five ounces of galles, of copres take three, Long standing dooth make it better to be; If wyne ye do want, rayne water is best, And as much stufte as above at the least: If yncke be to thicke, put vinegar in, For water dooth make the colour more dimme. In hast for a shift when ye have a great need, Take woll, or wollen to stand you in steede; which burnt in the fire the powder bette small With vinegre, or water make yncke with all. If yncke ye desire to keep long in store Put bay salte therein, and it will not hoare. Of that common yncke be not to your minde Some lampblack thereto with gomme water grinde

Adapted:

Ingredients:

- 120 ml white wine (LIQUID)
- 35g powdered Aleppo galls (TANNIN)
- 21g iron sulfate (IRON)
- 14g gum arabic (GUM)

Equipment:

- Containers to measure ingredients
- Scale
- 2 beakers, at least 250ml
- Mortar and pestle
- Hammer or other heavy object
- 2 plastic ziptop bags
- Scoops/stirrers
- Cheesecloth
- Quills, paintbrushes, other writing implements
- Paper, parchment, other substrates

Instructions:

1. Crush whole galls by placing in double plastic bags and hitting with a hammer. Then use a mortar and pestle to grind these smaller pieces into a powder. Crush more than the needed amount and weigh the needed amount AFTER you have crushed the galls as you will lose some weight in the process of crushing and powdering
2. Separately, dissolve gum arabic in the liquid (this will take some time but eventually all clumps will dissolve)
3. Add the powdered galls and the iron sulfate to the liquid/gum solution and mix until well combined
4. Strain the solution by squeezing through cheesecloth or muslin to remove gall solids. Use the strained ink!

Ingredients			
Liquid, amount (ml)	Tannin, amount (g)	Iron, amount (g)	Gum, amount (g)

Procedure Notes:		
Step:	Procedure:	Notes:
Step 1	Crush whole galls with hammer, then powder with mortar and pestle	
Step 2	Separately, dissolve gum arabic in the liquid (this will take some time but eventually clumps will dissolve)	
Step 3	Add the powdered galls and the iron sulfate to the liquid/gum solution and mix until well combined	
Step 4	Strain the solution by squeezing through cheesecloth or muslin to remove gall solids. Use the strained ink!	



Link to the Making and Knowing Project's [Secrets of Craft and Nature in Renaissance France](#)