

# Aging Paper To Look Like Old Parchment

by Sol Zaga

Before we start -- please -- there is NO CORRECT WAY to age paper. Experiment and decide which of the various choices work for YOU or for your project

Paper that has been aged can be used for many purposes --- the pages of old books, manuscript pages and scrolls. Here are a few examples of how it can be used in miniature projects:



Rolled scrolls



Illuminated Manuscripts



There are many many choices of paper to use. My own choice is Southworth Fine Parchment Paper in the Ivory color. It can be purchased at Staples, 100 sheets to the pack for about \$10.00 or thereabouts. There are many other colors available -- but this one has consistently worked the best for my purposes. Like all things - experiment.

The easiest way to age your paper is to use any of the suggested items below in a large cookie sheet with sides. Mix up the potion of your choice and place your paper in the solution until the paper looks "about right". The paper can be dried in the sun or dried in the oven (watched carefully so it doesn't catch fire).

If the paper isn't flat enough to run through your printer (I use an Epson Stylus Photo R800) then place between two sheets of plain white paper and iron until flat.

The illuminated pages that I use are all downloads that I found by Googling on the Internet -- you may have to be creative to locate them -- but they are there. There is no website that I know of that has them for you -- you have to look, save the pictures and massage them in a Paint Program -- the one I use is Paint Shop Pro X2.

The images on the processed paper -- I spray the pages with a fixitive.

The scrolls are created by rolling around a knitting needle and securing with a piece of thread or twine. DMC Heavy Pearl threads look very nice for this purpose.



## **POTIONS TO USE**

### **TEA LEAVES STAINING**

First thing you want to do is desaturate about three tea bags in about two cups of for about an hour.

After you've done so, take one tea bag and rub the whole surface of the paper with it.

Do the same with the next tea bags only rub it gently. The paper's practically soaked now and you don't want it to tear, just wear it a down a bit.

You can also break open a tea bag and sprinkle the paper with flecks of tea

Soak up all the excess liquid by dabbing it with paper towels.

### **COFFEE GROUNDS STAINING - Method 1**

Like tea, you can use coffee grounds to make paper look old. Apply wet coffee grounds to your paper. Remove grounds. The paper will be stained brown. Dry paper under a weight to avoid warping. As above, there is likely to be a coffee odor afterwards.

Coffee grounds are also not acid free.

### **COFFEE GROUNDS STAINING - Method 2**

As for the coffee method, it's practically the same this time you'll only use about 1/4 cup of black coffee (no cream, no sugar!). Coat the paper with the coffee.

Just like using the flecks of tea, you can also do this using grains of instant coffee.

Dab up the excess with paper towels.

### **BALSAMIC VINEGAR SPLATTERING**

Same as above. Expect odor. Vinegar is not acid free.

### **LEMON JUICE Option 1**

Paint your paper with lemon juice, then heat with a heat gun. The paper will take on a brownish, aged look. It will continue to darken as you continue to apply heat. Lemon juice is not acid free.

### **LEMON JUICE Option 2**

I discovered while experimenting for a project that if you soak paper in just enough lemon juice to get your paper wet and to slightly cover the bottom of the pan for about ten minutes and put in the oven at 350 for about ten more minutes the paper looks old and it gives the edges a slightly charred look.

### **DECORATING CHALKS**

These chalks are a favorite way to make paper look old. Apply the chalk (one of the brownish colors) to the paper using a cotton ball, makeup sponge, Q-tip or swab. This is especially effective on the ripped edges of paper or vellum. Allow the chalks to set, or spray with a fixative if speed is important. Decorating chalks have many uses when making altered books. Acid free decorating chalks are available at [ioann.com](http://ioann.com)

### **WALNUT INK**

Walnut ink is made from black walnuts. It is usually sold in crystallized form, and must be hydrated before using. Apply the wet walnut ink to the paper, lace, fabric or other material. You can create various effects as you strive to make paper look old.

### PAPER TEARING

Instead of cutting your paper neatly, tear it. Holding the paper towards you while you tear will produce one look; holding it away from you will produce another. Color the torn edges with decorative chalk, walnut ink, tea bags, or similar to give an aged appearance.

### BLEACHING

Apply household bleach to your paper. Apply directly with an eye-dropper, brush or sponge, or use a water-color pen. If it is available in your area, a Chlorox Bleach Pen is also a good choice. Note that some papers could contain inks that are colorfast and bleach-resistant.

### SANDING WITH SAND PAPER

Lightly sand shiny paper or other paper to produce "tooth" or a worn look. Sand the same way you sand wood -- in a directional move, rather than circular.

### PAPER CRUMPLING

Crumple up your paper. Flatten it out, then crumple again. Repeat as often as you wish before using the paper in your layout. Iron the finished paper if desired, for a special look, or try placing the (thickish) paper in water before crumpling for yet a different

### PAPER BURNING

Another way to make paper look old is to burn the edges of the paper. For safety's sake, do this over a sink, using a candle or stick of incense. Pinch the firey edges out with your finger. If desired, wet an inner border on your paper before applying the flame. You can do the wetting with a damp Q-tip, paint brush, or your finger. This prevents the paper from burning more than you want, since the wet inner border will prevent the flame from going further.

### CANDLE WAXING

Write over your paper with a white candle, covering as much area as you can. Crush the paper so the wax cracks. Apply paint over the surface, forming random cracks. Remove the wax by ironing your paper. Place it between two sheets of paper towels padded with newspaper on both sides and use a hot iron.

As for the drying process, you have a couple of options. Some prefer to crisp the paper by baking it in the lowest part of the oven in a cookie sheet, using about 200°F of heat. When the paper starts to curl up on the edges, it's done.

Some others would prefer to just sandwich it in between paper towels and flat weighted paper objects (like those old unused encyclopedias) left to dry overnight. It's to prevent paper from warping.

For effect some burn the edges a bit for an overall antique look.

### CURRY POWDER

I've had some interesting results using the instant coffee method above, then sprinkling coffee granules and curry powder over the paper.

In closing -- EXPERIMENT -- HAVE FUN -- then choose the method that works best for you.