



Simple. Natural. Hardwoods.

HOW TO FINISH ALDER

BETTER PREPARATION LEADS TO BETTER RESULTS



MANY PREFER ALDER FOR CABINETRY, FURNITURE, AND MILLWORK

Alder machines easily, finishes beautifully, and delivers the warm, natural appearance customers have come to value. Like all premium hardwood, achieving consistent, high-quality results comes down to following proven finishing practices.

Step 1: Prepare the Surface Properly

Consistent finishing starts long before stain is applied.

One of the most common mistakes is over-sanding. While it may seem intuitive that a smoother surface produces a better finish, sanding Alder too finely can reduce stain uniformity.

Many manufacturers achieve the best results by sanding Alder between 150 and 180 grit, as higher grits are not recommended. Just as importantly, sanding should remain consistent across all components, as variations in preparation can lead to noticeable color differences after finishing.



Step 2: Seal Before You Stain

When color consistency is critical, many manufacturers apply a washcoat, sanding sealer, or wood conditioner before staining.

This conditioning step partially controls stain absorption, creating a more uniform foundation for color development. This is especially beneficial for darker finishes.

The result is improved consistency, reduced blotching, and greater repeatability from one production run to the next.



Step 3: Build Color Gradually & Consistently

Here's one of the biggest differences between a standard finish and a premium one:

Stain alone rarely creates the final color.

Many cabinet and furniture manufacturers build color gradually using dyes, toners, glazes, and tinted topcoats. Rather than forcing all the color into the wood itself, these finishing systems allow manufacturers to fine-tune appearance throughout the finishing process.



The Result



**Richer, more
consistent color**



**Greater control
over appearance**



**Less variation
from piece to piece**



**Premium-quality
finishes**



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Crystal Cabinets



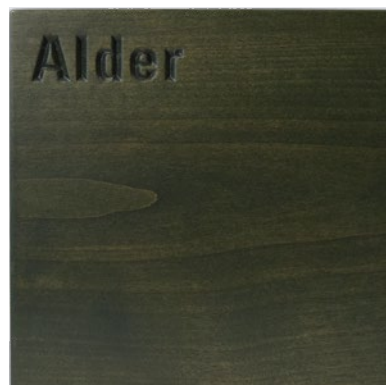
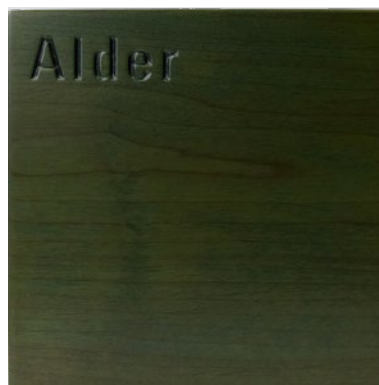
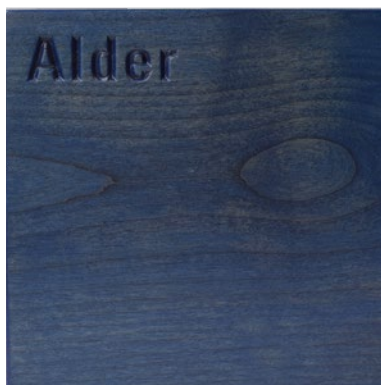
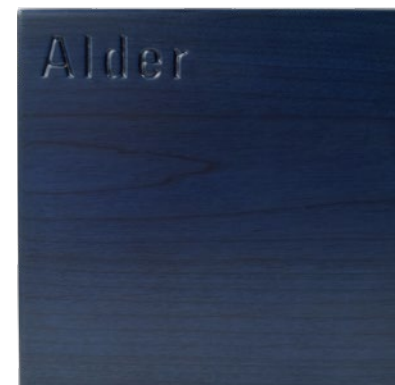
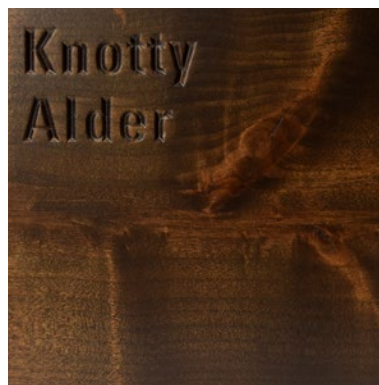
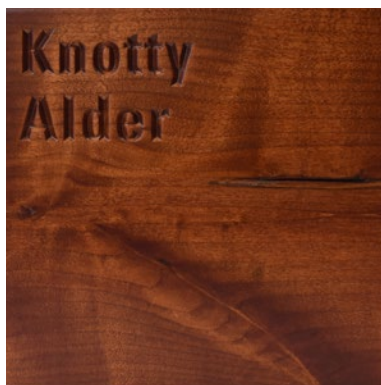
Whittier Wood Furniture



Craftsmen in Wood



James & James Furniture



The Takeaway

Alder performs best with a little preparation. Proper sanding, controlled absorption, and modern finishing techniques allow manufacturers to achieve highly repeatable results while bringing out the warmth, beauty, and natural character that have made Alder a trusted choice for cabinetry, furniture, millwork, and moulding.



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