



REPLICATIONS UNLIMITED

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLEX-BARK

1.0 Method for cutting FLEX BARK

The FLEX BARK is a system based on a flexible polyurethane elastomer and is a very soft and tough material. Depending on the thickness and texture will somewhat determine how to cut the material. Thin textures can be cut with a sharp utility knife or even scissors. Thicker textures may be impossible to cut with either of these the utility knife or scissors.

A jig saw and or circular saw are recommended on thicker textures but due the flexibility of the FLEX BARK, it is important to proper support the elastomer on the area to be cut. For example when cutting a long length, it is recommended that the area (cut on the back side of the texture) to be cut is laid over two 4"x4" boards (with a gap of 1/2") over the length of the cut.

2.0 Method of applying FLEX BARK to the substrate:

The best method to attach the Flex Bark to the substrate is a combination of using an adhesive and screwing the sheets to the substrate. We have tested all the adhesives available at Home Depot and the best adhesive for interior applications is PL Polyurethane adhesive (Liquid Nails is not recommended) or find an adhesive that is designed for adhering plastics. For exterior applications we recommend using a proven adhesive like Sika-Flex Adhesive No. 252. Dry wall screws can be used to assist in making sure that the Flex Bark is tightly in contact with the adhesive and the surface. The screws can be left in (and a blending material can be used to hide the screws later) or the screws can be completely removed if a higher content of adhesive is utilized. Depending on the texture of the Flex Bark – we have found that 1 ten ounce tube of adhesive is needed per 10 sq ft.. A contact adhesive can be used for smoother / lower profile Flex Bark sheets.

If screws can not be used to hold the sheet against the FLEX BARK then the method of holding the sheet tightly against the adhesive while it is drying is accomplished by

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winding a rope tightly around the FLEX BARK by wrapping a rope around the cylinder for 24 hours.

3.0 Method of blending vertical and horizontal sheets of FLEX BARK:

Horizontal Seams: The method of adding multiple sheets to accomplish heights longer than the Flex Bark Sheet is to first attach the first sheet of FLEX BARK to the substrate using the method outlined above. Add the next sheet to the first sheet and over lap the edge of the second bark approximately 1- 2 inches over the first bark. Temporarily screw the second sheet into the first sheet along the seam line (back off the screws 1 – 2 inches from the seam line). It is more realistic if the seam is not straight and follows a natural thinnest area of the barks texture. Back the screws out and add a continuous bead of glue down the screw line – put the screws back in once the glue bead has been applied to compress the glue between the first and second FLEX BARK sheets. Allow the adhesive to dry/cure overnight.

Once the adhesive has dried/cured, pull all of some of the screws out and then trim the excess edge of tree bark back to the glued seam with scissors or a utility knife.

Once the edge of the FLEX BARK has been trim the next step is blend the edge into the rest of the bark. We have a special epoxy mastic that that is applied with a plastic putty knife along the seam. Once the epoxy mastic has been roughly applied, a wet brush (cut the bristles down to an inch long) that has been dipped into water, is used to push and smooth the mastic along the seam. Sand can be then applied to the wet mastic to add texture to the mastic in order to make it blend in better.

Vertical Seam: The vertical seam where the sheets wrap around the tree can be blended the same way. Make sure that the edge where the bark overlaps itself is cut randomly and not straight in order to make the blend more natural and less noticeable. If the width of the trunk is wider than one sheet of Flex Bark, then there will be at least two seams to blend in. Use the blending method with the epoxy mastic outlined above.

4.0 Touch up paint over seamed areas

The coloring system is a multi-stepped process where a base coat is applied to the FLEX BARK followed by one or more finishes. The paints used can be found on an up to date color chart that we can provide.

The coloring system for the Flex Bark system is somewhat a cross between a wood staining process and a faux finishing wall painting system. The procedure is as follows:

Step 1 – Base Coat process: The process begins by spraying with a simple spray cup gun (or rolling or brushing if equipment is not available) a coat of the color specified over the entire surface. The water base coating may require some minor thinning with water to provide a uniform wet coat (do not dry spray) over the entire surface.

See the color chart for the base coat specified for you colored bark.

Step 2 – Top Coat “Wash / Stain”: The key to this next step is to keep the coating wet so that it can be wiped off easily. There are 3 sub steps within this procedure:

- a) Using a spray bottle of water – mist the surface of an area that you can easily reach (such as an area that is 3ft by 3 ft square). When you are misting the area, you do not want to flood the area or have water heavily in the depressions of the texture – just mist it so that you can see a uniform gloss to the surface.
- b) Before spraying your top coat, you will need to thin the topcoat paint dramatically so that it is more like a thin stain or glaze (typically we recommend 1 pt of water per gallon – or when the paint is very fluid). You should use a spray gun or if in a pinch you can load the thinned coating in a hand pump spray bottle or a garden sprayer. You should spray a heavy coat of the thinned topcoat uniformly over the section of tree bark and make sure that it is covering the depressions of the bark.

See the color chart for the topcoat specified for your specific colored bark.

- c) Wiping the topcoat off – utilizing a soft cotton rag – your should immediately start wiping off the topcoat before it dries. In the process of wiping the paint off the surface there are a number of techniques to consider. First, depending on the texture of the bark you may need to vigorously wipe the surface hard – which will remove most of the paint off the immediate surface but leaves the paint in the depressions. If the texture is shallow, then a light wipe and or blotting action may be more appropriate.

The key end result desired is to leave the darker topcoat color in the depressions of the bark and to leave a portion of the topcoat on the immediate surface of the bark to provide the natural looking multi-toned appearance.

If there are any questions on this coloring procedure, please feel free to call our technical department for more details