





# **Cathy's Candles**



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**Rekindle an Old Craft—  
Create Candles  
by Reusing & Recycling**

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Universal Publishers  
Boca Raton, Florida

*Cathy's Candles: Rekindle an Old Craft--  
Create Candles by Reusing and Recycling*

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Universal Publishers/uPUBLISH.com  
Boca Raton, Florida  
USA • 2004

ISBN: 1-58112-543-7

To my husband, Gene,  
for all your help in seeking items that could be  
recycled for molds, but mostly for your talent in  
making iron candleholders that enhance the beauty of  
my finished candles.

To our daughter, Sara,  
Thank you for participating and showing willingness  
in rekindling the art of candle making.

To our son, Robert,  
Thank You for your encouraging statement: “Mom, go  
for it!”

To our son, Patrick,  
Thank you for your patience in sharing your computer  
assistance and knowledge. Without your expertise  
*Cathy's Candles* would not be a reality!

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### Candle Poem

A candle's but a simple thing,  
It starts with just a bit of string.  
Yet dipped and dipped with patient hand,  
It gathers wax upon the strand.  
Until, complete and snowy white,  
It fires at last a lovely light.  
Life seems so like that bit of string;  
Each deed we do a simple thing.  
Yet day-by-day if on life's strand  
We work with patient heart and hand  
It gathers joy, makes dark days bright,  
And gives at last... a lovely light.

--Author Unknown

## **Introduction**

I would like to share with you my love in the art of "Candle making". Through *Cathy's Candles* book any novice can begin to make candles with ease and confidence. In a short period of time after using these instructions you will feel like an expert candle maker. If you create a candle that you just can't live with, then re-melt the wax, and begin your project again. That is the beauty of "Candle making"!

Candle making should not only be a fun experience, but an experience that will give you hours of enjoyment. A candle made with your favorite soothing scent is a relaxing and satisfying form of aromatherapy for whatever ails you!

My favorite place to work and create candles is "Up North" in the great State of Minnesota. Minnesota's natural beauty and serenity that surrounds us is what puts me in an instant creative mode.

Candles make a wonderful gift that can be used for all occasions. You just have to be a little creative and add personality to each candle idea. I have learned to improvise on what can be used as molds for my

candles. Some ideas are: plastic cups, paper cups, salmon cans, tuna cans, cardboard potato chip container, and anything else I can find at home or in a grocery store that can later be used for a mold. When it comes to making container candles my ideas keep flowing: half pint canning jars, different and unique glasses, coffee mugs, and just about anything that I can get my hands on. Garage sales, flea markets, or the GOODWILL store are great places to purchase molds, containers, or melting pans. The woods are full of natural additives for my candles, grapevines to add that natural look rapped around your candle, or rose hips and dried flowers to create that country look. Just look around and utilize whatever you find from our many earth's treasures.

When it comes to candleholders that is where my husband's help comes in handy. Gene will cut a block from a tree, or carve a piece of willow for a natural candleholder. He will also make candleholders for me from metal or rod iron, shaping and welding them creating a unique design. Let your imagination flow and utilize glass bottles, old threading spools, and even old muffin tins for candleholders.

Art and crafts have been a large part of my life, but mainly I like to do creations that can be made from discarded or natural items. Of course, candle making will always be a fun part of my life. You will find yourself looking at other candles in a different way. Wondering how that candle is made, what to display that candle on, and finally what can I utilize for a mold. Let your imagination and creative instincts go with you. Remember when you look for a container for a candle gift; match it with that person's style or personality. But mostly, enjoy a moment of burning a favorite candle.

Good luck with your adventure into "Candle Making"!



## **Equipment and Supplies**

Wax is very flammable, and never should be unattended during the melting process. All projects should be done only with adult supervision. Protective gear should be worn, eye protection to prevent injuries in case of wax spurting, apron to protect clothing, rubber gloves during dipping candles to prevent any burn that occur, and mostly shoes worn in case of any wax that might spill down on you or the floor. Always safety first with common sense used during candle dipping. This will insure a more successful candle and a more pleasant experience.

Next we need a container for melting the wax or paraffin. They're a lot of options on cans that can be used for melting the wax into, an 11.5 oz. Coffee, a large spaghetti sauce can, or a large can from peanut butter. The important thing is to remember the size of the can you use will determine the amount of wax you will melt. This can is used to hold your wax chunks that will be melted for your project. Prepare your melting can by pinching a pouring spout so that the melted wax will pour out at a slower pace. Again I cannot impress the importance of care and safety when pouring hot melted wax. Wax can cause burns

so use all the precautions needed to protect you from injury. You will place the melting can into water to aid in the melting process. You will need at least several inches of water on the bottom of your double boiler or electric frying at all times. The water will evaporate during the heating process so always monitor your water level in your pan and add more water when needed.

**Crock pot**– for melting wax. A crock-pot can be used to melt your wax. This enables the wax to melt at a low temperature.

**Double boiler pans** or an **electric frying pan**- is used to heat the wax. I prefer to use the electric frying pan because you can control the temperature easier. I like to keep my wax melting between 130 – 150 degrees. Wax is very flammable, so temperature control is a must. Never heat wax directly in a pan that you have placed on a burner, because the wax will start on fire! When you use a double boiler you will need a wax thermometer to control the melting temperature, and heat at a low temperature.

**Molds**– during my different projects I will talk about many different household items to use as molds.

Some of these items that can be used are: milk cartons, salmon cans, Dixie cups, plastic cups, 1” metal pipe, tomato cans, frozen juice containers, potato chip cylinder containers, and oatmeal containers. Just use your imagination and look around the house for various ideas. If you are using a plastic or metal mold you will need to prepare the mold with coating the inside lightly with any vegetable oil or silicone spray. This will aid the candle in separating from the mold easier. While looking for cans to use, keep in mind that they can’t have ridges inside. Ridges on cans may prevent you from removing the candle from the mold; therefore you may need to use a can with a smooth wall inside. The molds bottom needs to be the same size as the top so the candle can be removed from the mold after the wax sets up fully. Candy molds and muffin tins are needed for molds on some of my projects.

**Dixie cups**– for storing the excess candle wax. The next time you begin a project just tear off the paper of the Dixie cup and reuse the wax for melting. A Dixie cup can be used as a mold also.

**Wax Thermometer**– is used to control the temperature during melting. Wax should generally be melted between 130 degrees – 150 degrees.

**Mold Seal or putty**- is used to seal around a mold or a piece of pipe to prevent the wax from escaping.

**Wicks**– are available on the Internet on candle supplier's sites, and at your local craft center. There are various types of wicks available. Follow the manufacture instructions on what size to use according to the diameter of the candle. You will have to prepare your wick before the final insertion. To prepare your wicks soak the wick into the melted wax for about five minutes and remove the wick to dry. Cut your wick  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch higher than your candle.

**Stearine** – this is an additive used to help the wax from shrinking so that the wax will become easier to release when making molded candles, and also helps slow the wax from dripping during the burning process. Stearine also makes the wax translucent, and adds an opaque look. When the wax is melted it lowers the melting point and when the wax cools this makes the candle harder in order to prevent bending or slumping. Stearine should be melted prior to

adding candle wax. Follow the manufacture instructions on how much to use per pound. (Caution: use Stearine with paraffin wax not beeswax. It should never be used with rubber mold materials, because it acts as a caustic.)

**Candle scent**– this can also be purchased at a craft store or on the Internet from a candle-making supplier. You can buy this in a liquid form or small blocks. I prefer the liquid form. Follow the manufacture instructions on how much to use.

**Candle dyes** come in small blocks. Use a small shaving of the candle dye first, and then add more as you feel the need. To test the color you have produced, spoon a small amount of the colored wax unto a piece of wax paper. If this is not the desired color then add more dye to the melted wax. Repeat this process until you create that perfect color for your candle. Remember denser the wax is the more dense the color will become. You can use crayons for coloring, but because of the oil used in crayons they will produce a molted look on the candle.

**Knife** – is used for cutting the wax blocks into small chunks. The smaller the chunks the quicker the wax

will melt. Keep this knife only for this project. The knife should be kept sharpened and remember to use caution when using a sharp knife so you will not cut yourself.

**Welding rod** or **metal knitting rod**– is used as a wicking rod. The size of the rod should be as close to the diameter of your wick. My husband made a handle at the top of my rod to protect me from puncturing my hand while pressing down on the rod.

**Scale**- is used for measuring your wax. It is very important to measure the amount of wax needed to add the correct amount of Stearine, dyes, or scent. Weigh one pound of wax, chunk the wax into small pieces, and then melt it in your pan. Make a mark where the line is for one pound of melted wax. Continue this for marking two pounds or however much melted wax can be held into your can. Use the pound marks for your next project.

**Beeswax** – is a natural product that should be used with candle wax. I like to melt half beeswax and half candle wax. This formula is used because beeswax has a tendency to burn very quickly and spurts while the candle is burning. Beeswax can be purchased at

suppliers that handle candle-making supplies, but I prefer to find a local beekeeper and purchase my beeswax directly from him. Sometime beekeepers advertise beeswax for sale in your local paper.

**Candle wax** - comes in a large block or chunks. This can be purchased on the net or at your craft store. Candle wax has some Stearine already in the wax to help the wax harden. Remember; never leave your melting wax unattended. Always keep your fire extinguisher handy just in case of the melting wax catching on fire. Safety first! Children without adult supervision should never do these projects unattended!

**Paraffin Wax** – can be used for candle making. You can purchase this wax from a grocery store in the canning department, or you can purchase candle wax in a large block or chunks at your local craft store. Remember; never leave your melting wax unattended. Keep a fire extinguisher handy when working with melting wax. Safety first! Children without adult supervision should never do these projects unattended!

**Tallow candles**— candles can be made from tallow (rendered animal fat). After you render the fat add ½ lb of alum and ½ lb of salt pepper per lb of fat. These additives aid in the hardening of the candle. Beef fat is preferred over sheep fat.

**Old baking pan** – can be used to pour melted wax into for rolling candles to give it an antique look. Garage sales are good places to find old equipment that is needed for candle making. This pan should only be used for your candle making.

**Spoon or dowel** - is used to mix the scent or stir the color. Put these aside and only use for your candle making projects.

**Wicks** – can be made from cotton string. The string will need to be prepared by adding one part salt, two parts borax, to 10 parts water. Soak the string into the solution for 8- 12 hours and then let dry. I have not had much success with homemade wicks.

**Herbal scents** – powdered or dried herbs can be used to scent wax. You can strain the herbs from the melted wax by using cheesecloth over a pan and slowly pour the melted wax into the pan. Or you can

keep the dried herbs in the melted wax to give it a more natural appearance. If you do decide to keep the dried herbs in you wax, remember as the wax melts the dried herbs can create a burnt aroma instead of your pleasant scent that you had originally intended. Do not leave your candle that has dried herbs or flowers in the wax burn completely down, because the dried flower or herb can start on fire!

**Candle care** – to give your candle a lustrous shine you can just rub the outside of the candle with oil. For an old or dirty candle you can rub gently on the outside of the candle with an old nylon to give the candle a shinier look. Always make sure that you burn your candle in an area that cannot catch anything on fire. Also make sure your candles are securely place on any candleholder. A protection covering placed under your candle is a must! This will protect your furniture from being ruined from melted wax dripping down on it. If you want your candle to burn longer you can put the candle in the freezer for 5 minutes. Chilling the candle will slow down the burning process. When your candle loses its scent you can just sprinkle a small amount of scent on your candle to revive its scent. Beeswax candles have a tendency to bloom (your candle will have a cloudy low luster appearance). Take a nylon

stocking or piece of nylon and rub the candle lightly.  
Watch the candles regain that lustrous shine again.

Notes:

You can straighten your tapered candles by heating the candle slowly with a blow dryer and then roll the candle on a flat surface. This method works well with removing any outer bubbles that have occurred on the tapered candle during the dipping process. If your container candle loses its scent, light the candle and when it has a small pool of melted wax add a small amount of scent into the melted wax.

Always keep your candles stored in a dry area out of the direct sun. Years ago they stored their candles in a wooden box to enable the candle to breathe. I wrap individual candles in tissue paper for stacking, and lay my dipped candles flat to keep their shape.

Cleaning wax off clothing is very simple. Let the wax set up fully and scrap off as much as you can. If this doesn't seem to come off then put the piece of clothing in the freezer to set the wax up fully and then scrap the wax off. If any oil resin is left on the clothing, place a piece of brown bag on top of the affected area with a warm iron to remove the wax. You may have to do this several times using a clean piece of brown bag each time. Add spot cleaner on the oil spot and launder as usual.

If wax falls on the floor wait until it sets up and scrap the wax away with a plastic spatula. Remember it is very important to prepare the area that you use to make candles with to help prevent any damage to your countertop or floor.