

Causes Of Candle “Soot”

Ever wonder about that black on your candle or candle container – or sometimes even in the area, such as a wall, around which the candle was burned? We tend to refer to it as soot, but it can also be caused by other reasons. Below are various factors that I’ve noticed over the course of my many years of burning candles.

Let’s start with what **does** cause soot.

Soot can be a by-product of the wax mixture. The amount of soot deposited varies between wax types. Paraffin candles that I’ve burned over the years typically produced the most soot. Even soy candle brands that I’ve burned tend to leave varying amounts of soot.

The type of wick used might produce soot, especially if it has been coated. I’ve notice that cotton wicks tend to produce less soot (if any) than other wick materials.

Ingredients used in the fragrance might produce soot, whether the ingredient is “natural” or artificial. Cinnamon is one that will typically leave soot when burned. The more cinnamon in the fragrance, the greater the amount of soot left on the candle’s container.

Other causes of that “black stuff”.

Not trimming the wick before lighting. Whether it’s the first time lighting the candle or the 20th time, trim the wick to ¼ inch every time before lighting the candle.

Letting the flame burn too high. If the flame burns too high, it will leave black marks on your container or even the area around your candle. (Plus, you have the risk of possibly starting a fire.) Make sure you trim the wick to ¼ inch before lighting. And extinguish the flame and trim again if the wick grows tall during your burn time.

Drafts. Keep the flame out of drafts or it will blow the flame over to the side of your container, leaving black marks. Drafts can also pose a fire risk.

Wax burns too hot. If the wax burns too hot, it may leave black marks from the heat. It also might cause your container to break. Check with the manufacturer or your retailer on proper burning procedures for your candle.

Using a candle shade or decorative lid. Some candles just are not made to be used with candle shades or decorative candle lids – typically either due to the wax mixture (it might burn too hot) or due to the wick configuration. Check with the manufacturer or your retailer on proper burning procedures for your candle.

Blowing out a candle. Blowing out a candle tends to produce quite a bit of smoke, which then collects on your candle container or the area around the candle. For less smoke, use a candle snuffer or press the wick into the melted wax with the flat of a knife blade (an ordinary kitchen knife works fine) to extinguish the flame. Just be sure to straighten the wick again before the wax cools.

Any combination of the above reasons can end up leaving black on your candle containers. Some deposits are easy to clean up, and some will take some scrubbing.

My favorite candle brand burns virtually soot-free. Some of the scents deposit some black on the containers because they happen to contain cinnamon in the fragrance. Naturally <smile>, cinnamon is one of my favorite scents – so I don't mind the little bit of black that ends up on my candle containers.

May you have many safe and rewarding candle-burning hours.

A confirmed candle-holic, Marie Rice has burned many different candle types and brands over her lifetime and discovered her [current] favorite candle brand in the summer of 2005. Reading, gardening, and crafts are other favorite pastimes. Marie can be contacted through her website: www.PartOfTheWhole.com

About The Author

A confirmed candle-holic, Marie Rice has burned many different candle types and brands over her lifetime and discovered her [current] favorite candle brand in the summer of 2005. Reading, gardening, and crafts are other favorite pastimes. Marie can be contacted through her website: www.PartOfTheWhole.com

© 2008 by Marie Rice