

What!?"Green" ambroid?...

*As printed in the September 2004 Windy Sock, the Newsletter of the San Antonio Alamo Escadrille, Joe Joseph,
Editor*

We have seen a report, unverified, that acetone will no longer be used in the manufacture of ambroid (nitrocellulose) cement. Skeptical at first, we later noticed that our Duco cement didn't seem to hold things together as well as it had. Never hasty to condemn the environmentalists ("green" movement), your editor chuckled over their efforts to save the bugs down deep in the caves from extinction. But hey, this could be serious; to us old timers, ambroid cement is the patriarch of our hobby. But what if the report is true, and we must now tolerate a weaker glue? In the old days, guys dissolved toothbrushes in acetone to get a good quality ambroid cement but who knows what toothbrushes are made of nowadays? You might get who knows what, or nothing at all. Well, an item came up on the Internet recently (www.pyroworx.com) that we should keep for "just in case"; it told of how we can make our own nitrocellulose lacquer, which is simply diluted ambroid cement.. Here's the way it goes:

Materials: 4 table tennis balls (defined as "two star", whatever that means); 14 ounces of acetone; a 500 milliliter (17 oz.) glass jam jar with metal screw-on lid; and a stirrer.

(1.) Pour the acetone into the jam jar.

(2) Put in the table tennis balls. If you can't fit all at once, just put in as many as you can, and let them dissolve. Once they have dissolved, you can put in the remaining balls. It'll take a couple of minutes for the balls to dissolve. They will get all mushy and break apart. Use the stirrer to make them dissolve faster. Be careful not to get any of the lacquer between the lid and the jar; the lacquer will seal the lid permanently on.