

Tinting Polyspan

Published techniques for translucent model-aircraft finishes

INFORMATION NOTICE

Fly2Build provides these summaries and links for information only. All techniques and results are attributed to the cited authors. Fly2Build has not tested or independently verified them and does not endorse any method, product, or result. Readers must consult the original sources and current product instructions and determine safety, compatibility, and fitness for their own purposes.

Published reports describe adding color either to the clear finish or to the loose Polyspan before covering. Pat Tritle specifically addresses preserving translucence. The other reports document coloring methods, without a measured comparison of light transmission.

At a glance

Published approach	Where color is added	What the report establishes
Pat Tritle / 2021	Tan dye in nitrate dope	Natural linen appearance with translucence
John Hoyle / 2013	Polyester dye in a hot water bath	Uniform orange color; later heat shrinking
Don Typond / 1994	Dye concentrate in sprayed clear dope	Historical color-finishing method

1. Natural linen tint - Pat Tritle

Tritle reports that direct application of Rit All-Purpose Dye had little effect on Polyspan. He instead mixed liquid Rit Tan into nitrate dope to obtain a translucent linen appearance.

His reported sequence: attach the covering with nitrate dope, heat-shrink it, brush on three coats of clear nitrate dope thinned for brushing, then apply three tinted coats. He found little benefit from a fourth tinted coat.

Reported limitation: The mixture separated and formed solids after three or four days, so he advised mixing small quantities. His approximate mixing ratio is not fully specified in the article; this bulletin does not present it as a precise formula.

Original source: Pat Tritle, "Natural Linen Finish on Polyspan," in HOW-TO Roundup, Model Aviation, October 2021.

<https://www.modelaviation.com/how-to-roundup>

Scroll to "Natural Linen Finish on Polyspan." The article includes comparison photographs.

Additional published methods

2. Dye the loose material - John Hoyle

Hoyle reports using iDye Poly, the polyester-specific dye, in enough water to immerse the loose Polyspan. He simmered it for about 30 minutes with frequent agitation, then rinsed and dried it before covering. His orange result was even and free of streaks.

He reported wrinkling without shrinkage during dyeing, followed by successful application with Balsaloc and heat shrinking. Two or three coats of 50:50 dope/thinner did not disturb the color. The heated water bath and the later dope finish are separate stages.

Scope of the report: No precise dye concentration or light-transmission measurement is supplied. His suggested short brown-dye bath for an antique look was an idea he had not yet tested.

Original source: John Hoyle, "Dyeing Polyspan," SAM 1066 New Clarion, January 2013, page 22.

<https://www.sam1066.org/NewClarion/nc0113.pdf#page=22>

Open page 22. If unavailable, search the author, article title, and newsletter issue above.

3. Spray tinted clear dope - Don Typond

Typond describes coloring Polyspan by mixing dye concentrate into clear dope and spraying it onto the covering. His article names Starline concentrates available at that time in several colors.

Scope of the report: This is a historical account. Its product-specific mixing ratio should not be transferred to Rit, iDye Poly, or another dye. The article does not provide a quantitative translucency test or establish compatibility with current formulations.

Original source: Don Typond, "Polyspan," Flying Models, December 1994; reprint hosted by RSM Distribution.

<https://www.rsmdistribution.com/articles/polyspan2.pdf>

See the first page for dye in clear dope; the second page completes the article.

AUTHOR CREDIT, RIGHTS, AND SOURCE LINKS

Full credit for the referenced work belongs to Pat Tritle, John Hoyle, Don Typond, and their respective publishers or other rights holders. Fly2Build claims no authorship of the underlying work. Rights remain with their holders; links do not grant permission to reproduce or redistribute the linked material. Inclusion implies no affiliation or author approval.

Each URL is clickable and printed in full. If a link fails, copy it into a browser or search the article title, author, and publication date. These summaries are not a substitute for the complete original reports.

Fly2Build makes no representation or warranty as to the accuracy, completeness, safety, or fitness of the referenced information for any particular purpose. Source references reviewed October 21, 2026.