

Tipi Supply - Care of new tipi poles

Your tipi poles will last many years if you waterproof or seal them when you first get them.

Inspect your poles for rough spots that may wear your tipi cover, and sand them smooth. Use a vibrating palm sander. You can also use an Electric Hand Planer if your poles are ruff. Just lightly skim the poles. You may still want to sand them.

Next paint unthinned linseed oil on the bottoms. It will take many coats before the bottoms stop wicking up the oil. Linseed oil takes about a week to dry and harden, but in this case don't wait for it to dry, just keep giving the bottoms coat after coat. If the bottoms are not sealed they will soon start to rot.

Paint the rest of the tipi pole with a 50/50 mix of linseed oil and diesel fuel. You can substitute the diesel fuel with kerosene or turpentine. Turpentine is supposed to help the Linseed oil dry faster. Linseed oil is too thick to be absorbed thru the surface of the poles. It needs to be thinned to penetrate deep into the pole to seal it properly. Allow 24 hours between coats. Flood the mixture into all the cracks on that first coat. When the oil stops being absorbed and remains on the surface, wipe the droplets off the underside. It will take at least two coats, and may take 4 or 5 coats if your poles are very dry. You don't want a thick coat on the surface it will take a long time to dry. Make sure the linseed has dried completely before you put your tipi cover on them. The most important thing is the linseed oil inside the poles. It will keep them from absorbing water, especially thru the cracks.

If your poles are still green, they may not absorb the oil. In this case give them one coat anyway to keep them from drying too quickly and cracking. If you are not pitching a tipi cover on the green poles right away and just storing them, keep them out of the direct sun and cover them. If they dry out too fast they will crack badly. They all crack eventually anyway but sealing them will keep it to a minimum.

Every year when you take your tipi cover off you should give your poles a thin coat of 50/50 linseed oil mix and store them tied in a bundle to keep them straight. If you leave your poles sill standing all winter it is best to take them down first and give them a thin coat of oil before you stand them back up. Winter weather is very hard on poles if they are not sealed well. The linseed oil on the surface of the poles will slowly evaporate over the winter, so check them out in the spring. - W -

Care of old poles

If they have become oxidized or gray with age, it can be washed off with a power washer, or it can be sanded off. Then paint them with linseed oil using the same directions as new tipi poles. Cut the rotten part off the bottoms.

How to bundle your tipi poles.

Stack your poles with the fattest ones on the bottom and tie the bundle every 5 feet. This keeps them straight.

