

Candlemaking: Troubleshooting

Problem: Candle drips as it burns

- Candle is burning in a draft
- Wick is too large and melting wax too quickly
- Wick is too small and not absorbing the melted wax around it
- Wick is not centered
- Candle isn't on a level surface
- Candle is tilted in the holder
- Wax has too low a melting point and should be in a container
- Not enough stearin or vybar

Problem: Candle burns too fast

- Wax is too soft. Use a harder wax
- Wick is too large or too long
- Add vybar or stearin to harden wax

Problem: Flame flickers and sputters

- Water in the wax or wick
- Air bubbles inside candle. Air bubbles can be prevented by tapping outside of the mold or perforating the wax with a skewer after pouring

Problem: Flame is too small

- Wax is too hard
- Wick is too small

Problem: Mottled or starburst appearance

- Too much fragrance
- Wax was too cold when poured
- Candle cooled too slowly
- Too much stearin

Problem: Candle has little to no fragrance

- Too much vybar or stearin which encapsulates the fragrance molecules
- Not enough fragrance added
- Allow candle to burn for at least 1 hour before judging strength of scent, because scent primarily rises from the liquid wax pool
- Rubbing your hands over the outside of an unlit candle should activate scent in a candle that has lost fragrance on the outer surface

Problem: Candle smokes or creates soot

- Candle is burning in a draft
- Too much fragrance in recipe
- Wick is too large or too long
- Poor quality wax or wick

Problem: Bleeding or running of color layers

- Previous layer is not properly cooled
- Subsequent layers are poured too hot
- Wax is too soft
- Too much color dye

Problem: Candle bulges

- Mold walls are not strong enough

Problem: Sides of candles cave in

- Air bubbles inside candle. This can be prevented by tapping the mold or perforating the candle as it cools to release air bubbles

Problem: Difficulty removing candle from mold

- Additional pours seeped in between the previous layers of wax and the mold
- Wax too soft (beeswax or soy wax are not suited for molds). Use a harder wax
- Not enough mold release
- Poured too hot or too cold for type of mold
- Put candle in refrigerator. If it still doesn't release, pour hot water on the outside of mold
- Mold has pits or dents which have caused grabbing spots

Problem: Candle cracking.

- Cooled too quickly. Don't put cooling candles in the freezer

Problem: "Wet spots" on glass container. Wax is not adhering to the inside wall of the container.

- Use a softer wax
- Heat the container prior to pouring using a hairdryer

Problem: Wick is burning straight down and leaves a wide rim of wax

- Wick is too small
- Wax is too hard

Problem: Candle will not burn

- Additives like fragrance, color, essential oils or spices are clogging the wick
- Wick was not primed. Light the candle upside down to allow melted wax to prime the wick

Problem: Jar candles leave wax on inside of container wall.

- Container candles burn best when they are lit for a minimum of 4 hours at a time
- Use softer wax
- Use a larger wick