

Cindy Drozda "The Fine Art of Woodturning"

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CD's Arsenal of Abrasives

The variety of abrasive products on the market today is incredible! There are abrasives created for metal, wood, solid surface countertops, automotive finishing, and many other applications. They all do different things well. There is also variation in their quality and price. This list is my attempt to share with everyone what abrasive products I currently use, and what comparisons I have made to similar products. The sources for these products are on my "sources of supply" list.

Product	Comparison	Application	Description/Comments
Mirka Abralon	Longer lasting, more flexible, more durable, and more heat resistant than Micromesh. Also more expensive, but so long lasting that it is worth it. Nothing else performs quite like it.	Excellent for polishing wood in grits of 500, 1000, 2000, 4000. Removes sanding scratches from paper or cloth backed abrasive extremely well. It is also available in 180 and 360 grits which I don't use. Works like an abrasive sponge to apply oil-type finishes. I sometimes use it to sand between coats. flexible enough to be worked into details in the workpiece. Can be used under power, but I usually use it hand held.	Flexible, abrasive coated mesh on open cell foam and velcro backing. Sold in 6", 3", and 2" disks. I cut 6" disks into quarters. Use at lower speeds as it can burn/melt/dull from too much friction. Ok with water or solvent, and so can be "washed" if loaded up.
Hermes RB406	Superior to the Klingspor "Shop Rolls". Extremely long lasting and sharp.	I use this wherever I want a flexible abrasive sheet. I use grits 120, 180, 240, 400. Not as good at getting into corners as stiffer material. Good for sanding inside a vessel using hemostats.	Flexible, cloth backed abrasive. Blue grit on yellow cloth. Commonly found in 2" rolls. Not available in finer grits than 400.
Mirka Royal & Royal Micro	Incredible performance especially in finer grits (400+). Longer lasting and sharper than Klingspor, 3M. More flexible than Astra-Dot in the 240 grit.	Great for power and/or hand-held sanding in finer grits. I use the Velcro backed in grits of 240, 400, 600, 1200 and A-weight PSA in 400, 600, 1000, 1500.	Velcro or PSA backed, paper backed abrasive. Available in 6", 5", 3", 2", and 1" disks. I cut my own smaller disks from the 6" ones and use the scraps for small work.
3M WetorDry Tri-M-Ite Polishing Paper	Flexible and non-scratching as compared with Automotive wet/dry and finishing films. Not aggressive.	I use this for final polishing of wood in grits higher than 4000, for areas where Abralon doesn't reach well, and for rubbing out finishes.	Cloth-like sheets with very fine abrasive. Not long lasting at all, but inexpensive.
Astra-Dot	Longer lasting and more resistant to loading up than Klingspor, Mirka, SIA, 3M. In finer grits than 400, the Mirka Royal is superior.	I use grits 120, 180, and 240 for power sanding.	Velcro backed, paper backed abrasive with a "dot" pattern on the coarser grits. The 400 and 600 were not that special, but the 240 is incredible. Very long lasting.
3M Trizact	Available finer than RB406. Much longer lasting in the 600 grit than Klingspor.	Good for polishing Banksia Pods after sanding through 400 grit. I've tried the finer grits and not felt that they gave me any advantage in my work.	1" wide roll, stiff cloth backed abrasive. Used for metal working. Grit is laid on the cloth so that it acts like the teeth of a file. Stays sharp a long time on abrasive materials like Banksia Pod.
Micro-Finishing Film (Rio Grande)	A flexible alternative to Automotive wet/dry papers that crack when folded.	I use this in 2500 and 4000 for details on finials where Abralon doesn't reach. Good for polishing small coves.	Micron graded finishing film. Very heat sensitive. Non-aggressive. Dulls quickly.
Spectrum Finishing Paper (Rio Grande)	Compared to Abralon, doesn't clog up as easily, lasts a long time, not as expensive. Less aggressive than Abralon. Doesn't conform to	Excellent for sanding between finish coats and rubbing out finishes. Good for wet sanding. I use the 2000 grit the most. Still doesn't replace Abralon for	Mesh double-sided cloth-like abrasive. "Washable", flexible.

	irregularities or features in the surface as well. Much longer lasting than the 3M Tri-M-lte, but doesn't squish into tight places as well.	polishing the surface of the wood before finishing.	