

COATE'S WILLOW CHARCOAL

EST 1819

Growing
Success



From ancient times charcoal has played a significant role in portraying human thought and communication. As mankind's original drawing tool, it was used in pre-history for the fascinating cave paintings which give us the only authentic images of life in the prehistoric era.

This artistic tradition has continued down the ages, right through to the present day. Many of the famous old masters utilised charcoal's versatility and ease of use and it remains a popular choice today.

So Many Uses

Charcoal is a simple yet indispensable tool for fine artists. It can be used on its own to create strikingly atmospheric impressions; with paint or pastels where colour is required; for initial outline or shading; or for the preparation of larger works.



Planting the crop



Early growth



Inspecting the young crop

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Other users also value charcoal's many qualities, including schools who find it an effective and economic medium to provide art classes with a drawing material offering characteristics quite different to paint or pencils. The soft black charcoal produced from the willow is particularly well suited to satisfy the whole range of artistic needs.

A Proud Heritage

For over 30 years we have been producing premium quality artists charcoal from willows grown on the Somerset Levels, where the Coate family has specialised in willow cultivation since the early 19th Century.

Willow growing is part of the rich environmental heritage of the Somerset Levels, stretching back over generations. The special combination of conditions enables the willow crop to flourish.

Willow is a renewable crop taking in natural nutrients from the winter leaf fall: consequently no artificial fertilisers are needed. These plants can last for up to 35 years, creating a landscape to enhance the character and image of the region, whilst ensuring a reliable supply of high quality artists' charcoal both today and for future generations.



Harvesting



Processed willow



Finished Charcoal

THE FINEST WILLOW CHARCOAL IN THE WORLD

Straight, clean rods are necessary for top quality artists' willow charcoal. Spraying helps to eliminate weeds and aphid infestation, together with hand weeding, a method successfully proven over the generations.

Cattle eat any lingering weeds during early autumn, then finally comes the annual cutting and bundling of the willows as the plants become dormant and the leaves begin to fall in mid-November.

Preparation of Willow for Charcoal Production

After the cultivation and processing has been completed, the willow is ready for charcoal production.

The rods are cut to standard lengths in a wide variety of diameters, ensuring that an assortment of charcoal sizes are available to meet the specific requirements of individual customers.

The complete charcoal production process takes three days to turn out the premium grade artists charcoal sticks, ready for counting and boxing prior to distribution across the globe.

As we produce and process our own raw materials we are able to select only the best rods to ensure consistently high quality charcoal. Willow produces a very soft, deep black charcoal which is particularly favoured by artists.

A Growing Force In World Markets Across The Globe

Experience, expertise, personal care and modern technology are key factors in the consistently high quality of our artists' charcoal, currently sold in 17 countries worldwide.

Coate's willow charcoal is the preferred choice for the discerning fine artist.

The worldwide demand for our artists' willow charcoal is rising all the time. We offer a flexible service designed to meet the diverse needs of customers from every market sector.

The boxed charcoal is packaged in custom-made containers as part of an efficient, economic service which ensures the product arrives in the best possible condition.



As the willow is harvested annually and grows very rapidly, large-scale tree felling and deforestation, which have such a detrimental impact on the landscape, are unnecessary. Moreover, the willow plantations also provide shelter for several species of wild animals and birds.

Charcoal Production

The world's finest willow charcoal combines tried and trusted traditions with innovative production techniques to achieve the stringent quality control standards essential in today's market. Quality control is carried out at each stage of production by our skilled and experienced team.

Cultivation and Processing of the Willow

Coate's willow charcoal is carefully prepared from our 21 hectares of willow beds. Planting takes place in early spring when 38,000 to 40,000 willow sets per hectare are pushed into the moist, clay-rich soil to produce new rods varying from three to eight feet in length.

Diligent care and attention during these early days is vitally important, as the young willows are highly susceptible to frost damage especially in March and April. Cattle grazing to control excess early willow growth therefore takes place.



Looking Ahead

Continued product development to meet changing customer requirements is vitally important. So, too, is the expansion of export markets and a strong commitment to quality and customer care across every aspect of our business in order to maintain the growing success of Coate's willow charcoal into the 21st Century and beyond.



Global distribution



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