

I went to the local hobby shop, not my fave place, but they had the mini lumber I was needing. While there, I chatted up the model train expert re the grout situation. He pointed me at a 1/2 gallon milk carton size of a product called Extra Light HydroCal. This stuff is used to lay streets, etc. on the train boards, as it is light, doesn't shrink, doesn't get hot when hardening, can be carved or sanded when hard, can be colored.



It is pretty cheap, considering. It cost about \$8.00 for a 2 lb. carton, enough to grout all the tile I will ever do, or for lightweight plaster-type molds, etc. And it air hardens with about a 45 minute working time, and a 45 minute "cure" time. Initial cleanup is with soap and water, and was purported to be very easy.



I brought it home, mixed half acrylic craft paint and half water with a dab of powder, and smeared it around on my test strip. The strip was simply cardboard with bits of the shingle cardstock leftovers glued down fairly close together. It seemed to mix up smoothly, colored well, went down nicely, could be removed with water where unwanted, hardened fairly quickly, didn't shrink, didn't resist sanding or putzing with when hard.



I heaved a big sigh of resolve, and did the kitchen floor with it. It came out great, and went so quickly! It cleaned right up and reminded me of working with real grout. I got things as tidy as I could with a wet cloth, then went off to work on other things.



In about an hour I was able to wipe things down with a dry soft cloth to get the "bloom" off. Then I noticed a tiny spot I didn't like really well, so dug the container of "leftovers" out of the garbage (the label warns not to wash any down the drain), and fixed the little spot with some of the still-soft goop left at the very bottom (the top was pretty solid by then).



I went back to look this a.m. with an eye to shooting some digi photos and it looks fabulous! Doesn't come out of the cracks with some rubbing, etc. No shrink, no cracks. So success!

Janey