

PUMICE.

Pumice is a very porous variety of lava. In structure it resembles a sponge, containing innumerable small cavities or vesicles caused by the evolution of gases during cooling. The walls of these cavities, which are very thin, consist of glassy obsidian, in composition approximately that of feldspar.

Owing to the hardness and sharpness of this material, it is very valuable as a polishing agent. For some purposes it is used in the lump form, while for others the pumice is reduced to a very fine powder.

USES.

It is as a polishing material that pumice finds practically all its uses. In the finishing of fine furniture, pianos, carriages, etc., pumice is employed to smooth and polish the varnished surfaces. The finely ground and bolted pumice is generally used for this class of work, though occasionally the lump is used.

For the dressing of lithographic stones a small quantity of lump pumice is used.

In the polishing of pearl and bone buttons, celluloid goods, jewelry, and other fine metal work, the powdered material is used. It should be very carefully graded as to size of grains, the grades ranging to an almost impalpable powder.

Pumice powder is used in the polishing of plate glass, following beveling, etc. Freedom from large particles is essential.

In the manufacturing of scouring soaps, metal polishes, etc., finely ground pumice is used, and small quantities are used in toilet preparations, such as tooth and nail powders.

PRICES.

The price of pumice varies greatly according to the quantity purchased and to the grade.

Powdered pumice ranges in price from \$27 to \$60 when purchased in lots of one ton or over, the average price being about \$40. The average price of selected lump in quarter ton lots is about 3 cents per pound.