

Beech on a Budget

SAFE • LEGAL • LOW COST

By Mike Caban

Window & Leading Edge Care



Many of us obsess and fuss over the cleaning and appearance of our Beechcraft, especially in the heavy summer bug season. I thought I would provide some insight on the low-cost products I use to keep my windows and leading edges clean.

Our Beechcraft windows are acrylic based materials, which offer an excellent balance of strength-to-weight ratio. However, acrylic is easily scratched by dust and debris. It's important to use soft cotton cloth or towels to clean the windows. Old cotton towels, T-shirts, and the like can be pressed into service as a low-cost supply of materials for window duty. Alternatively, Figures 1 and 2 highlight some cost effective industrial cotton towels/rags that make for ideal hangar stock.

Figure 1 is a 5# box of recycled cotton T-shirts from www.mscdirect.com, MSC Supply (P/N 01253178) for approximately \$12. **Figure 2** is an 18-pack of 18" x 18" cotton glass cleaning towels from Amazon for

approximately \$15. Decent cotton shop towels can also be sourced from the Big Box hardware stores as well as national auto parts stores.

As for acrylic window cleaning products, the popular aircraft supply outlets offer a wide range of specifically branded aviation window products.

However, I've found several low cost, locally sourced products that I've used on my windows for years with very good results. Two things to remember when sourcing a window cleaner for your aircraft windows locally:

1. Do *not* use any product that contains ammonia (ammonia, over time, will cloud acrylic materials);
2. Ensure that the product labeling includes "acrylic" as one of the surfaces for which the product is intended.



FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3



FIGURE 4

Figure 3 depicts one of my local favorites from Home Depot, and **Figure 4** is my travel-ready cotton towel wrap around the can for storage under the rear seats. In my experience the Zep Foaming Glass Cleaner and cotton towels are a very good bug remover and cleaning system for my Baron windows that were installed in 2004.

To be sure, there are many premium products available for our windows



FIGURE 5



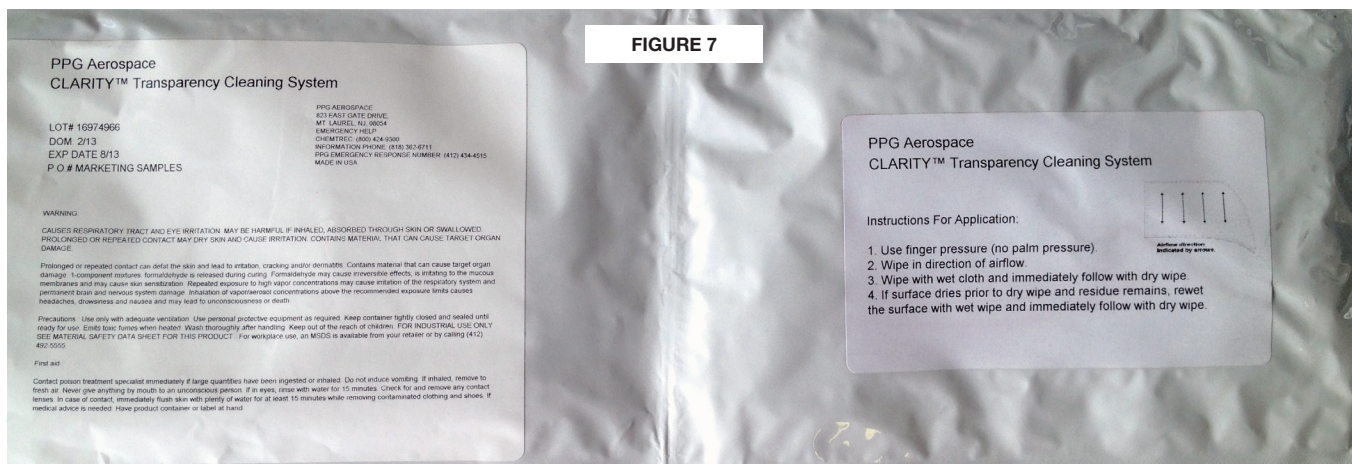
FIGURE 6

that offer a higher degree of polishing and the ability to shed in-flight rain, and that make bug removal somewhat easier. Some of those products include Prist, Plexus, (**Figure 5, 6**) and Aeroshell Plexicoat (not shown).

While cruising this year's EAA AirVenture exhibits, I visited with PPG and learned that they have just introduced a new cleaning product for acrylic "transparencies" (their term for aircraft windows). It's called the CLARITY Transparency Cleaning System (**Figure 7**). Ward LaPaglia and Ed Mullins of PPG told me the

CLARITY system was born out of a military need in the Iraq/Afghanistan theatre of operations. Bugs were pummeling the aircraft during operations, and the incredibly high temperatures there were baking the bugs into the windows. PPG's CLARITY solution is designed to remove bugs easily, and leaves a thin layer of protection on the surface, making future bug removal much easier. PPG reps also stated the military noted that their windows were not being abraded nearly as much by desert sand when using the CLARITY Cleaning System.

FIGURE 7



Clarity is a two-part system consisting of two wet microfiber cloths of their proprietary solution and one dry microfiber cloth. I was able to do all the windows on my B55 Baron with the package, and it did remove the bugs rather easily. After a flight the next day, new bugs had accumulated and they were easily wiped off with a microfiber cloth and water. The technical data sheet can be found at www.csobeech.com/files/Clarity.pdf. I'll know soon how long the treatment lasts and will post a report in a follow up. The product is available through Aviall under P/N 599306 and the PPG representatives indicated an approximate price of \$16 per treatment system.

If you inherited your Beechcraft with scratched windows, you might benefit from a scratch removal kit specifically for acrylic manufactured by www.novuspolish.com (**Figure 8**) available through Amazon for under




FIGURE 8

\$10. It is a three-step kit that allows you to deal with heavy scratches via level #3 all the way down to very light scratches with level #1.

Bonanza owner John Roney of Florida provided a positive PIREP on his use of the Novus Polish system for window scratches, which resulted from carelessness with sunglasses and headsets placed on the glareshield.

For my leading edges, I've employed two products for long paint life and good cosmetics:

1. 3M Leading Edge tape #8674 (See the April 2013 *ABS Magazine* article for install tips);
2. Simple Green Extreme (diluted 50% with water) for cutting through the bugs on the nose and leading edges quickly.

Keep the pride of the General Aviation fleet looking good! 

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CORRECTION
Beech on a Budget article

In my July 2013 "Beech on a Budget" article, I misstated the fuel O-ring part number. The correct part number is M25988/1-338. I apologize for any confusion. Since writing this article, I have also learned the O-rings are available at Skygeek.com for \$8.80 apiece.