

Practical Tips For Potters Making Improved Cooking Stoves,

Forward and Introduction

Richard Boyt, June 2003

I have just received the booklet "Practical Tips for Pottery Making; Improved Cooking Stoves- A Manual for Potters and Stove Promoters", prepared by Tim Jones, illustrated by Debbie Riviere, and published by Hofman Systems Engineering b.v. PO Box 6423100 AP Schiedam, The Netherlands (Nov 1993). It was graciously sent to me by Auke Koopmans who wrote the foreword, in which he states "There are no restrictions as to the use of this book, as long as the text and illustrations are not reproduced in any form for profitable gain." In the forward, Dr. Koopmans writes "Improved cooking stoves designed to make food preparation more fuel efficient are now available... around the world."

"The most commonly used material for the construction of all or part of stoves is fired clay, also called pottery or ceramics. This is because it is a low-cost, easily molded material that is available in most parts of the world.

"Improved cooking stoves are not produced in highly sophisticated pottery factories, but in small workshops. The materials are normally not carefully selected and refined, but comprised of what is available locally. The production equipment is not expensive machinery, but skilled labor, involving techniques that have been passed down for generations.

"This booklet provides information on clay selection, production methods, handy tips, etc., concerning the production of fired clay cooking stoves. These tips have been tried and tested in many countries. Because of the considerable variations in the minerals that make up local clays, there is no clay mixture recipe or production method that guarantees crack-free cooking stoves. A considerable amount of trial and error is, and will remain, involved before the best possible clay mixtures and production processes are determined.

"The tests and production methods included in this booklet have been chosen for their practicality. They will provide a guide toward achieving the best results from whatever is available. They cannot be used on their own but will, combined with an already existing knowledge of pottery, help avoid the most common problems associated with improved cooking stove production."

My reactions to the above quotations from the booklet "Tips For Potters" are:

1) My own experiences with ceramics are decidedly provincial when compared with the

world-wide scope of the observations found in the booklet.

2) My series on ceramics for stoves is aimed at stovers both with and without previous experience with ceramics. Your feedback would help confirm whether or not I am hitting that mark.

The next submission of condensations from this booklet will cover "Finding and Selecting Clay." It is intended as a supplement to the ongoing series "Ceramics for Stoves." Comments, suggestions, criticisms, encouragements, and ideas will be welcome.

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Note: See other articles by Richard Boyt

- Practical Tips For Potters Making Improved Cooking Stoves
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 - Part 2-- [Finding and Selecting the Clay](#)
 - Part 3-- [Testing the Clay for Cooking Stoves](#)
 - Part 4 -- [Materials That Can be Added to Make a Better Mixture](#)
 - Part 5 -- [Making Up and Testing Mixtures, and Clay Preparation](#)
 - Part 6 -- [Forming Stoves](#) (June 2005)
 - Part 7 -- [Drying and Firing the Stove](#) (July 2005)
- [Ceramics for Cookstoves](#)
 - [1: Finding Clay](#) (May 2003)
 - [2: Testing Unfired \(green\) Clay](#) (May 2003)
 - [3a: Test firing local clays- primitive kilns](#) (May 2003)
- [The Ten Can Stove, built by Richard Boyt \(Feb 16,98\)](#)
- [Pictures of the TenCan Stove](#)