

## Campfire Magic

A campfire is magical. How the coals glow and the flames flicker and the sparks pop and shower, its mesmerizing. But, you can make it even more magical with these simple tricks. It will get old if you use these all the time, but an occasional surprise makes a campfire at that special place or time something to be remembered.

### Chemicals

Adding a small amount of chemicals to a hot burning fire can have an 'Ooooh-aaaah' effect. It's important to do these only after all cooking has been done on the fire and when there is little wind so the smoke can rise up rather than into campers' faces.

You may be able to get ahold of these chemicals in a grocery or dry goods store, in the laundry or cleaner section.

Find copper sulfate in swimming pool supplies.

Epsom salts, borax, and calcium chloride may be found with laundry/cleaning supplies. Copper Chloride, Strontium Chloride, and others may be best found at fireworks supply companies. I've purchased from [Skylighter.com](http://Skylighter.com) and been happy with them. Practice before using them at a campfire so you know how much to use and how to best apply for maximum effect.

Chemical	Flame Change
Copper Chloride	BLUE flame
Borax (laundry)	LIGHT GREEN flame
Copper Sulfate (tree root killer for plumbers)	GREEN flame
Strontium Chloride	RED flame
Potassium Chloride (water softener salt)	PURPLE flame
Calcium Chloride	BLUE flame
Lithium Chloride	PINK flame
Alum	GREEN flame
Sodium Chloride (table salt)	ORANGE flame
Magnesium Sulfate (Epsom salts)	WHITE flame
Sugar	sprinkle into fire for tiny sparks
Powder Coffee Creamer	throw a handful into the flames above the fire for small sparkly flashes
Flour	toss a small amount into flame to make a flash flame
Iron filings	toss a small bit into flame to make gold sparks
Powdered aluminum	toss a small bit into flame to make silver sparks
Magnesium shavings	toss a small bit into flame to make very bright silver sparks

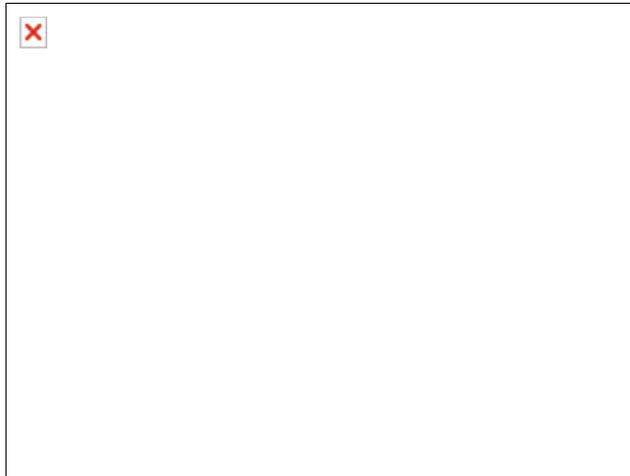
So, then how do you get the chemicals into the fire? Well, throwing the powder in gives a burst of color, but then quickly dies out. You might want to do this for special effect when

telling a story. But, to make the colors last longer, I've created wax patties which are made just like the Wax and Woodchips fire starters on the [Firestarters](#) page. Don't use these patties if you want sparks, just toss the dry chemical on.

- Melt old candle wax in a double boiler.
- Get a bunch of small paper dixie cups.
- Pour about 1/4 inch of chemical into each cup.
- Pour melted wax into the cup to just cover the chemical and quickly stir it with an unfolded paperclip or other small stir rod. This is to thoroughly coat all the chemical.
- Let thoroughly cool and then peel or cut off the sides of the paper cup. I leave the paper bottom on.

Toss one of these patties into the hottest part of the fire and it will melt and the show begins! Mixing different chemicals will not make a new color. Just add one single type at a time or put different kinds in different places.

You can always use the old way of sliding a length of garden hose inside a piece of copper tubing and tossing that in the fire.



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