

WILLOW TYPES

ENGLISH WILLOW

English willow (*Salix Caerulea* or *Alba Var*) is by nature a soft fibrous timber. In normal usage, willow will become bruised, scarred or dented simply due to the nature of the game. Such marking can occur at any time during the life span of the bat and will not affect the performance of the bat. The English willow is the preferred timber for all cricket bats.

KASHMIR WILLOW

A substitute for English willow is Kashmir willow. This type of willow is much harder by nature and will not have the same performance as English willow. The Gray-Nicolls name on an English willow cricket bat is your guarantee of a quality product.

STOP - Your new Gray-Nicolls bat is not ready for use! There are some important procedures that must be followed before a bat can be used.

OILING

All natural willow blades require oiling and knocking in. Poly-coated blades require knocking in but not oiling. Only raw linseed oil or special bat oil should be used.

- a) A new bat with natural blade should have two coats of oil to the face, edges, toe and back. This should be applied with a soft rag. Care should be taken that oil does not reach the splice or handle. The knocking in process should commence after the second application (see note on knocking in).

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- b) At intervals of 3 or 4 weeks after use, the face and edges of the bat should be cleaned with fine sandpaper, followed by a light application of oil with an oily rag leaving the blade a little moist.
- c) No bat should stand in oil; best results are achieved by smearing over the appropriate areas with an oily rag.
- d) There is much greater danger from a bat being over-oiled than under-oiled. Over-oiling adds weight, spoils the driving power and may cause 'wood rot'.

KNOCKING IN

A new bat, irrespective of the finish, should be knocked in carefully and with patience. This is best done by using a Gray-Nicolls Conditioning Mallet and hitting the blade repeatedly in all areas where the ball would be expected to make contact, paying special attention to the front edges. It is not sufficient to play a few gentle 'throw downs' in the nets or back garden. Take time and your bat will give a better performance and be less likely to suffer damage.

Your cricket bat is ready for use after oiling and at least six hours of knocking in is completed, and most importantly, there is no visible markings occurring from the use of a leather ball e.g. seam marks.

BAT CARE

SURFACE CRACKS

Willow is a natural material and as a bat performs in play, it is quite normal for the blade to develop facial markings. Surface cracking can appear in varying degrees, depending in the hardness of the timber and the ball used. Superficial markings to the edges can also be expected. Neither of these blemishes will affect the playing qualities and should not be regarded as a fault in the willow. Should severe indentations occur to the side of the blade, these will be caused by edging the ball. This is unlikely to be a material fault and advice should be obtained from your supplier.

REPAIRS

Gray-Nicolls offer a complete range of repair services from fixing new handles to repairing splits. Repairs can be made to any bat suffering damage. It may not be necessary to obtain a new bat and it should be remembered the causes listed above are not normally the responsibility of the manufacturer. Quick action can save money and inconvenience. Sometimes it is necessary to have old or new bats repaired. Please contact your local Gray-Nicolls supplier if the situation ever arises.