

EHZ-inquiry: Is shellac allowed?

The extraction of shellac is comparable to the production of honey and can therefore be classified as permitted.

If the product is dissolved with ethanol from halal-compliant sources, but is no longer traceable in the end product (less than 1%), consumption is permitted.

Explanation:

Shellac is obtained from the excretions of the lac insect (*kerria lacca*). The lice use the tree as a host and feed on the sap of the trees. The animals prick the tree, ingest the sap and then excrete a resinous substance. The resin serves as protective armor to protect the offspring, because this is where the brood of the lac insects grows. The resin coats the trees and forms the raw material for shellac. Most of the time, the substance is also used with other coatings such as bee resin. Occasionally, shellac can also be dissolved with ethanol.

1. The extraction of shellac is comparable to the production of honey and can therefore be classified as permitted.
2. When the resin is removed, it is possible that some remains of lice may also be picked up. The EHZ classifies this as harmless, as the consumption of insects per se is not classified as prohibited (see declaration 1) for carmine E120.
3. **Ethanol, obtained from a source that is clearly to be classified as prohibited (for example from the distillation of drinking alcohol such as wine) is prohibited** and therefore its use in flavor production, regardless of the amount, is prohibited. **Ethanol from halal-compliant sources (e.g., based on mineral oil) must not exceed 1% in flavor production (according to the Indonesian MUI standard), since flavor is classified as an intermediate product and not as an end product for consumption.** In the end product, which was manufactured by using aroma with ethanol (from halal-compliant sources) as solvent, the amount of alcohol must be below the detection limit (1 in 10,000), i.e., not detectable. The EHZ certifies according to this guideline.
4. According to the current state of knowledge, Shellac is not classified as harmful to health.