

# [Pot and Pearl Ash Improvement] James Davenport

**Date:** 1795/11/10

**Author**

James Davenport

**Publication Format**

Print

**Type**

Agriculture

**Ingredients**

potash  
pearlash  
pot ash  
pearl ash  
lixivium

**Places**

Wilsonville  
Nova Scotia  
Denmark  
Sweden  
Poland  
Russia  
Norway  
Europe

**Source:** Royal Gazette and the Nova Scotia Advertiser.

**Institution:** Nova Scotia Archives | **Source Origin:** Nova Scotia Newspapers on Microfilm | **Reference:** Microfilm Reels 8162, 8163, 8165, 8167

**Description**

A discussion of safe and labour-saving methods of manufacturing pearlash and potash from a letter dated 4 November 1794. Vol. 6 No. 303, Microfilm Reel 8165.

**Transcription**

POT AND PEARL ASH IMPROVEMENT.

—  
**Wilsonville**, Nov. 4, 1794.

It must be a satisfaction to every liberal mind to be informed of improvements made in any branch of business that lessens manual labour--the subject matter of this communication to the public is respecting Pot and Pearl Ash. In my travels through the northern kingdoms of Europe during the last seven years, I have visited the different manufactories of Pot and Pearl Ash

and took particular notice of their methods (viz.) Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Russia, and Norway. I have used in my different manufactories many hundred thousand pounds weight. To this I will add I am acquainted with refining Pearl Ash used by our glass makers in England for making the finest double chrysal glass.

Lately I was requested by the Hon. judge Wilson, Esq. to have a work erected agreeable to Mr. Samuel Hopkins's plan at this place.--an article so essential to the sail duck manufactory claimed my particular attention. --S. H. being informed attended, and explained the principles of his improvement which from my knowledge of chemistry and the experience I have had appeared perfectly agreeable to reason. -- I however forbore saying much on the subject until the work was compleated and some experiments made both on a small and large scale, this being done to my full satisfaction, I think it but justice to the inventor to say, his works are well constructed for the business, and in the process of the manual labour his method much exceeds any other I have seen, the most cheap, expeditious, and simple--I am informed the large Pot and Pearl Ash makers in this country purchase their common black salts of the poor people, and those men may find themselves hurt by this plan of Hopkins's, be that as it may, they are obliged to bring their black salt to Pearl Ash by extraordinary labour, which this method saves, is simple and easy, to that any labouring man may make his goods himself and send them to market. I am apprehensive, and that from proof, Hopkins has been injured through the carelessness and inattention of workmen (viz.) in not calcsining the ashes to that degree required, a thing absolutely necessary to be attended to-- I have attended the experiment with attention at this place, and find the ashes being perfectly calcsined produced a pure uncolored **lixivium**, and from that a pure good Pearl Ash, whereas those not sufficiently calcsined produced a red brown **lixivium** and an impure alkali not fit for any market. I am ready to meet any person on this head that may object to Hopkins's method either in a chemical or experimental proof. I have heard it said before I saw this method that this new mode would answer well on a small scale but not on a large one, this supposition is groundless. Mr. Hopkins has my leave to publish this if he thinks proper.

JAMES DAVENPORT.

### **Annotations**

lixivium:

Alkaline salts derived from wood ash.

Wilsonville:

A now flooded town, beneath Lake Wallenpaupack, founded by Judge James Wilson, signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Pot and Pearl Ash Improvement recipe from Early Modern Maritime Recipes: <https://emmr.lib.unb.ca/recipes/232>