

Obsidian



Black Obsidian
Alturas, Modoc Co., California



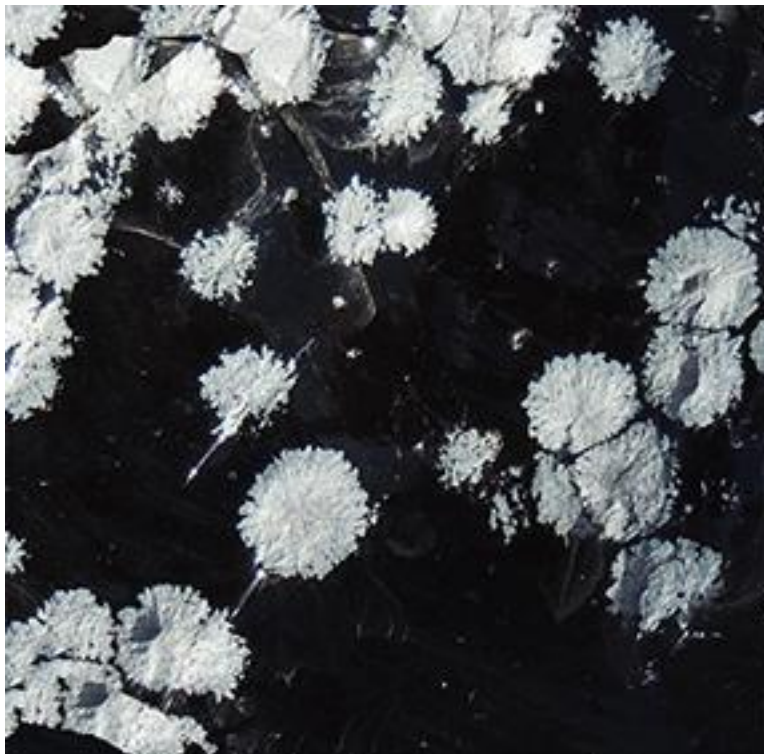
Mahogany Obsidian
Alturas, Modoc Co., California



Gold Sheen Obsidian
Alturas, Modoc Co., California



Rainbow Obsidian
Alturas, Modoc Co., California



Snowflake Obsidian
Black Rock, Millard Co., Utah

Rock Classification:

Extrusive Igneous

Description:

It is super-cooled lava without any crystals in its structure. Chemically it is the same as Granite, but without the crystal structure.

Obsidian is usually a Black volcanic glass. Even though it is mostly black it can come in many colors: mahogany, rainbow, gold sheen, black with white snowflakes, and several others.

It is 5 in hardness on the Mohs scale and has a conchoidal fracture.

Uses:

Obsidian has been used for some of the earliest tools of humankind. Humans have made different types of weapons including, arrowheads and spear points which have been found in many parts of the world. Early inhabitation in modern day Kenya may have produced objects made from obsidian in 700,000 BC. Many obsidian tools have been found dating to 15,000 and 12,500 BC in several parts of the world. During the Neolithic Era, [10,000 to 2,500 BC], in areas of southeastern Italy and the Po River valley obsidian bladelets were used in ritual circumcisions and the cutting of umbilical cords of newborns.

Obsidian is currently used for ornamental purposes and for lapidary cutting and polishing, including, when slabbed very thin, it can be used for making small decorative lampshades.

Researchers have investigated the use of obsidian for surgical scalpels in the medical industry. The obsidian makes the sharpest scalpels, sharper than metal blades, where it is used for open-heart surgery. These obsidian blades are available from medical surgical supply companies. (So this use is here today and not something for the future.)

Above information and photos may have come from Geology.com, Mineral Education Coalition.org, Wikipedia or My Samples.