

## Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0257-8972(15)30290-5  
DOI: doi: [10.1016/j.surfcoat.2015.09.052](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.surfcoat.2015.09.052)  
Reference: SCT 20605

To appear in: *Surface & Coatings Technology*

Received date: 23 July 2015  
Revised date: 25 September 2015  
Accepted date: 28 September 2015



Please cite this article as: Linkun Xie, Zhenguan Tang, Lu Jiang, Victor Breedveld, Dennis W. Hess, Creation of superhydrophobic wood surfaces by plasma etching and thin-film deposition, *Surface & Coatings Technology* (2015), doi: [10.1016/j.surfcoat.2015.09.052](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.surfcoat.2015.09.052)

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## Creation of superhydrophobic wood surfaces by plasma etching and thin-film deposition

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**ABSTRACT:** Superhydrophobic wood has been created using a combination of O<sub>2</sub> plasma etching and plasma deposition of thin films to achieve the necessary combination of surface roughness and chemistry. Inherently hydrophobic fluorocarbon films (from pentafluoroethane (PFE) precursor) and hydrophilic diamond-like carbon (DLC) coatings (from acetylene precursor) were both used to create highly water repellent substrates. The effect of O<sub>2</sub> plasma etching on surface roughness was investigated using Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) and Laser Scanning Confocal Microscope (LSCM) profilometry. The wetting behavior of the resulting wood was determined by static water contact angle and droplet sliding angle measurements. Wood samples subjected to O<sub>2</sub> plasma etching prior to fluorocarbon deposition exhibited “roll-off” superhydrophobicity with low sliding angles; the sample in this study with the most extreme wetting properties has the highest water contact angle and lowest sliding angle reported to date for modified wood substrates (WCA  $161.2^{\circ} \pm 1.5^{\circ}$  and sliding angle  $\sim 15^{\circ}$ ), without affecting visual appearance of the wood. Due to our ability to control roughness, etched samples that were coated with hydrophilic DLC films displayed superhydrophobic behavior (WCA), although the surface was “sticky” in that water droplets did not slide or dislodge from vertically-held substrates.

**Keywords:** Wood; Water repellency; Plasma etching; Plasma deposition; Fluorocarbon film; Diamond-like carbon (DLC) film; Superhydrophobic surface

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