

## Amber – Organic Resin

Although attractive in jewelry and pendants, amber is commonly mistaken as a mineral, but, in the geological world, it is classified as a mineraloid; this is due to its organic origin and lack of an ordered internal structure. All amber begins as tree resin, but not all tree resin is amber. Amber is formed when the molecules within the resin polymerize, a process which can take nearly 100,000 years. After polymerization, amber becomes significantly less soluble in common organic solvents, and will tend to resist dissolving due to inclement weather. OR22



**Amber** OR22



**Copal** B39

## Amber var. Copal

Copal is the term used for resins obtained from various tropical trees; it can be collected from living trees or mined after burial. Copal is like amber in that they have the same hardness but differs from amber in that it is wholly or partially soluble in organic solvent. Most samples show translucence, which coupled with its workability, makes it very suitable to be used in gemology. The tougher, more durable forms of copal can be intricately carved into beaded necklaces and faceted in rings and bracelets. B39