

ETCHING BRASS

Metal name or call letter plates really dress up a radio shack. You can readily make them using the process of electro-etching, even if you have no etching experience. The brass is connected to the positive terminal of a six-volt storage battery or line-operated dc power supply. A strip of copper flashing is attached to the negative terminal. Both are hung in a glass or plastic container filled with a copper sulphate (blue vitriol) solution. The brass plate becomes etched at any point where the solution contacts it. Any portion of the metal protected by a substance resistive to the etchant will remain intact. Wax is a suitable etch resistor.

Prepare a brass blank for etching by dipping it in hot paraffin. Then, using any pointed tool, scribe the lettering you want to etch. To make the solution, stir one quart of copper sulphate crystals into a quart of water until dissolved. The solution will take on a clear blue color. Then place the metal strips in the etchant and connect them to the power supply terminals. Incidentally, the process can be employed in reverse if raised lettering is desired. Blue vitriol crystals are readily available. They are commonly used to discourage the growth of roots in sewers and drain pipes. —*Harry J. Miller, Sarasota, FL.*