

## Tanzanite

Tanzanite is the romantic name bestowed by Tiffany & Co for a variety of zoisite found and named for its country of origin: Tanzania. It is a very attractive deep blue with varying degrees of a purple flash and over the years has enjoyed increasing popularity.

The colour itself is only possible due to treatment. Out of the ground, zoisite is generally either brown or a brownish-green. For the overwhelming majority of tanzanite on the market today the rough stone has to be heated to produce the desirable colour. This treatment, like most heat treatment, is stable and quite acceptable.

A down-side of heat treatment is that producing a deep colour in small stones is not possible. This may have been a reason why coating has now become a more popular treatment.

As with coated topaz the treatment is not necessarily difficult to detect but is often overlooked because of ignorance of the treatment existing in the first place. The first step in examining a tanzanite should be to place the stone in water and examine facet edges and the surface of the gem for coating abrasions. This can also be done by using a 10x loupe. Under magnification, coated tanzanite will have look as though there are numerous tiny holes across the surface. With the addition of a fibre-optic light, whitish surface marks may also be apparent.

As with topaz, common sense should also apply to detecting coated tanzanite. Small stones which have a particularly good colour or stones priced that are 'too good to be true' should all be treated with some skepticism.

### Treated Topaz imitating Tanzanite

At time of print it has just been reported that natural topaz coated to imitate tanzanite had just been released on the market in cut stones and beads.

### Disclosure

A reminder that all gemstone treatments are required to be disclosed to the consumer under ACCC regulations.

