SOME NOTES ON FERRITE CORE IDENTIFICATION

The Easy Way (Assuming inductance measurement capability)

1 - To minimize the contribution of lead inductance, wind at least 5 turns (N) of wire on the unknown toroid
2 - Measure the Inductance in micro-Henrys (uH)
3 - Compute the value of A_L using: $A_L = (1000uH)/N^2$
4 - Find the core material that best matches A_L by using the data tables at https://toroids.info/FT37-43.php or http://www.catzco.com/toroids.htm or http://www.gqrp.com/toroid_data.pdf

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Identifying Ferrite Cores

What you have to do to sort most ferrite cores is wind a few turns on the core, enough to get a reliable reading for the measurement device you are using, and then sweep frequency until X=R. Reactance equals resistance.

What you will find is various cores have X=R at certain frequencies, this is where the loss tangent and reactance cross, or the Q=1 frequency.

For example 73 Material X and R cross at around 2 MHz. 43 materials cross up in VHF.

If you are using an MFJ-259 try to do this with enough turns so that the R is 50-100 ohms at the crossing frequency. Keep the core RIGHT AT the connector!!!!

If you are looking at low mu powdered iron cores, then you can just measure inductance. Using just a few turns, maybe a half-dozen, look at the value of inductance and the slope of inductance with frequency. The Q will probably be too high to use reliably unless you have a professional instrument. You can calculate A_L and try to match it to a core, but this is not very reliable because several different types have similar A_L's.

Actually a very low ui core is difficult to sort out. High ui mixes are pretty easy.

From: Tom W8JI

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Identifying Torrid Core Materials

The easiest way to identify most ferrite materials is to wind about four turns of wire through the core and then measure the lowest frequency at which the value of reactive impedance equal resistive impedance i.e. X=R. There will be some variation between different batches and sizes of materials. But if you can plot the results graphically you can easily identify the 'signature' of each material.

Here are my references for some common ferrite materials

FT240-77 - 0.74MHz FT240-31 - 3.5MHz FT100-33 - 7MHz FT240-43 - 17MHz
FT240-K - 22MHz FT240-52 - 31MHz FT240-61 - 58MHz

Iron powder has a slightly different 'signature' it usually has a very low resistive component, which peaks to a higher value near self-resonance. The more lossy the material the broader and lower value of resistive peak is apparent.

T200-52 40MHz Lime Green/ Blue/Red) used in PC power supplies - moderate loss

T200-26	60MHz	Yellow & White used in PC switch mode power supplies - high loss
T200-2	60MHz	Dark Red used for HF tuned circuits (& Ruthoff Ununs) - high Q low loss
T200-1	70MHz	Blue colour not common - moderate loss
T200-6	100MHz	Yellow colour used for VHF tuned circuits - high Q low loss

From: https://g8jnj.webs.com/balunsandtuners.htm

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Resistance Measurements May Help Identify Unknown Core Material

Question: Is the material a low resistivity Mn-Zn ferrite or is it a high resistivity Ni-Zn ferrite? This can be answered easily with a simple ohmmeter resistance measurement. This will be point-to-point resistance on the surface of the ferrite part, not actually bulk resistivity. Proceed as follows:

(a) Clean a small area on the part so the probes of the ohmmeter will make good electrical contact. Some cores are painted, coated with clear insulation, or oxide, which must be removed.
(b) Set the ohmmeter on the 1K ohms scale.
(C) Place the probe tips firmly on the ferrite part about 1/4 in. apart and read the meter.

If there is no reading the core is probably Ni-Zn ferrite material. Typical Mn-Zn ferrite cores will read anywhere from 1K to 1OOK ohms. If it is over 1OOK try the 10K range on the meter. An accurate reading is not necessary and not possible with this method because of variable ferrite surface conditions. The object is to make a preliminary sort and identification. Bulk resistivity of Mn-Zn ferrites ranges from 10 to 5000 ohm-cm, with the new high frequency power materials nearer the high end of the range. (K4ZAD Note: Powered iron measures very high also.)

A core which measures in the low resistance range should be used in applications for relatively low frequencies. Typical applications are switching power supply inductor or transformer, power line EMI filter, or any other application in the kilohertz or low megahertz range.

The Ni-Zn ferrites have very high bulk resistivity with a typical range between 1 x 106 and 1 x 108 ohm-cm. These will only register on the highest ranges of the ohmmeter, if at all. Typical applications are EMI filters, beads, RF chokes, RF transformers, baluns and antenna rods.

Excerpted and slightly edited from the book: Ferrite Applications by Alan K. Johnson

K4ZAD 10/01/2021