WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. A matting agent for aqueous coating compositions, said matting agent comprising composite silica particles comprising (a) porous silica particles having (i) a median particle size of greater than 3.0 microns (µm) up to 50.0 µm and (ii) a total pore volume of at least 0.10 cubic centimeters per gram (cc/gm) to 3.0 cc/gm as determined by Barrett-Joyner-Halenda (BJH) method; and (b) (i) one or more waxes, (ii) one or more polymers, or (iii) any combination of (i) and (ii) at least partially within pores of the porous silica particles, wherein (1) the composite silica particles have a total pore volume of less than or equal to 1.2 cc/gm as determined by Barrett-Joyner-Halenda (BJH) method, and (2) a majority of an outer surface area of said composite silica particles comprises silica, and wherein, when incorporated into an aqueous coating composition in an effective matting amount and the coating composition is applied onto a substrate to form a clear coat film, the matting agent provides increased chemical resistance in the film as compared to a film formed from an aqueous coating composition comprising silica particles having a higher total pore volume as a matting agent.

2. The matting agent of claim 1, when incorporated into an aqueous coating composition in an amount sufficient to achieve, upon drying on a plain, smooth and non-penetrating black chart to form a film, a 60^{o} gloss value between 10.0 and 15.0 in a dried film, and enables the film to exhibit a water damage 24 hr ΔL^* of less than 6.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter.

3. The matting agent of claim 1 or 2, when incorporated into an aqueous coating composition in an amount sufficient to achieve, upon drying on a plain, smooth and non-penetrating black chart to form a film, a 60^{o} gloss value between 10 to 15 in a dried film, and enables the film to exhibit a 50/50 water/ethanol damage 1 hr ΔL^* of less than 13.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter.

4. The matting agent of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein when incorporated into an aqueous coating composition in an amount sufficient to achieve, upon drying on a plain, smooth and non-penetrating black chart to form a film, a 60^{o} gloss value between 10 to 15 in a dried film, and enables the film to exhibit a 50/50 water/ethanol damage 4 hr ΔL^* of less than 15.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter.

5. The matting agent of any one of claims 1 to 4, when incorporated into an aqueous coating composition in an amount sufficient to achieve, upon drying on a plain, smooth and non-penetrating black chart to form a film, a 60^{o} gloss value between 10.0 to 15.0 in a dried clear coat film, and enables the film composition to exhibit a film clarity ΔL^* of less than 7.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter.

6. The matting agent of any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein said composite silica particles comprise up to 75 weight percent (wt%), based on a total weight of said composite particles, of one of (i) said one or more waxes, (ii) said one or more polymers, or (iii) any combination of (i) and (ii).

7. The matting agent of any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein said composite silica particles comprise from 1.0 wt% to 70.0 wt%**,** based on a total weight of said composite particles, of one of (i) said one or more waxes, (ii) said one or more polymers, or (iii) any combination of (i) and (ii).

8. The matting agent of any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein said composite silica particles comprise from 2.0 wt% to 50.0 wt%, based on a total weight of said composite silica particles, of one of (i) said one or more waxes, (ii) said one or more polymers, or (iii) any combination of (i) and (ii) at least partially within the pores of the porous silica particles.

9. The matting agent of any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein said porous silica particles comprise silica gel, precipitated silica or fumed silica particles.

10. The matting agent of any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein said composite silica particles comprise porous silica particles and one or more waxes.

11. The matting agent of any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein said porous silica particles are free-flowing particles.

12. The matting agent of any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein when incorporated into a coating composition and applied onto a plain, smooth and non-penetrating black chart, enables the

coating composition to form a clear coat film having a 60^{o} gloss value between 10.0 to 15.0 as measured using a portable Micro-TRI-Gloss meter.

13. The matting agent of claim 12, wherein the film exhibits (i) a water damage 24 hr ΔL* of less than 6.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter, (ii) a 50/50 water/ethanol damage 1 hr ΔL* of less than 13.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter, (iii) a 50/50 water/ethanol damage 4 hr ΔL* of less than 15.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter, and (iv) a film clarity ΔL* of less than 7.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter.

14. The matting agent of claim 12 or 13, wherein the film exhibits(i) a water damage 24 hr ΔL* of less than 4.8 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter, (ii) a 50/50 water/ethanol damage 1 hr ΔL* of less than 11.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter, (iii) a 50/50 water/ethanol damage 4 hr ΔL* of less than 11.5 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter, and (iv) a film clarity ΔL* of less than 6.5 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter.

15. A coating composition comprising the matting agent of any one of claims 1 to 14.

16. The coating composition of claim 15, wherein said composition comprises an aqueous composition.

17. The coating composition of claim 15 or 16, when applied onto a plain, smooth and non-penetrating black chart, forms a film having a 60^{o} gloss value between 10.0 to 15.0, as measured using a portable Micro-TRI-Gloss meter, wherein the film exhibits (i) a water damage 24 hr ΔL* of less than 6.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter, (ii) a 50/50 water/ethanol damage 1 hr ΔL* of less than 13.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter, (iii) a 50/50 water/ethanol damage 4 hr ΔL* of less than 15.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter, and (iv) a film clarity ΔL* of less than 6.5 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter.

18. The coating composition of any one of claims 15 to 17, when applied onto a plain, smooth and non-penetrating black chart, forms a film having a 60^{o} gloss value between 10.0 to

15.0, as measured using a portable Micro-TRI-Gloss meter, wherein the film exhibits (i) a water damage 24 hr ΔL* of less than 4.8 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter, (ii) a 50/50 water/ethanol damage 1 hr ΔL* of less than 11.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter, (iii) a 50/50 water/ethanol damage 4 hr ΔL* of less than 11.5 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter, and (iv) a film clarity ΔL* of less than 6.0 units as measured using a portable Spectro-Guide 45/0 colorimeter.

19. A substrate coated with the coating composition of any one of claims 15 to 18.

20. The substrate of claim 19, wherein said substrate comprises a wood substrate.

21. A method of improving chemical resistance of a waterborne composition applied to a wood substrate, said method comprising:

incorporating the matting agent of any one of claims 1 to 14 into the coating composition;

applying the coating composition onto at least one surface of a wood substrate to form a coating; and

drying the coating to form a clear coat film on at least one surface of the wood substrate.