

Oxygen-Molecule 3.2: Uniform Visual Appearance for KDE4

Created 4/29/09 and last modified 4/7/10 by [S. Christian Collins](#).

This archive should contain the following files:

- flatmolecule – launcher script
- kde44-oxygen-molecule.tar.gz – GTK+ theme
- Oxygen-Molecule_3.0.colors – KDE color scheme
- OxygenMolecule-screenshot*.png – theme screenshots
- Oxygen-Molecule 3.2 setup guide.* – documentation

About Oxygen-Molecule

Linux applications are written using different “toolkits” to control their visual appearance and layout. The most common toolkits are [GTK+](#) and [Qt](#), designed to be used with the [GNOME](#) and [KDE](#) desktop environments respectively. You can run programs written in either toolkit under any Linux desktop environment. However, applications written with one toolkit often look out of place alongside applications written with another, since they don't share visual styles. In KDE 4, a user who wants to use a GTK+ application such as Firefox often has to put up with a theme and icon set that don't match the rest of the software on his or her system.

Oxygen-Molecule is a theme for GTK+ applications to provide a uniform look when used under the KDE 4.4 desktop environment. It was originally based on the [kde4.2-oxygen \(modified\) 0.3](#) GTK theme by Dennis Schmitz (which was itself based on work originally by Kim Kahns)

On top of the original theme, I have made the following changes:

- changed colors to match default KDE 4.4 color scheme, including hue adjustment of all pixmaps
- reworked all of the pixmaps and changed measurements for improved visual appearance
- created new spinner buttons, since the original spinners often looked mismatched with the surrounding pixmaps
- linked the GTK theme with the Oxygen icon set (thank you Craig Drummond for showing me how to do this).

In addition, beginning with version 3.1, Oxygen-Molecule features a “flat” mode which disables the background gradient. Some GTK+ apps don't play nice with the background gradient used in the default Oxygen-Molecule theme, causing patches of the wrong shade of grey to appear in the background. Oxygen-Molecule's flat mode solves this problem, and can be enabled on a per-application basis.

Installation

Note: *Oxygen-Molecule* was created and tested using Kubuntu 9.04 and 9.10. Please adjust the installation instructions for your distribution accordingly. Please note that I have not been able to test these instructions on other distributions, so your mileage may vary.

1. Make sure that neither **gtk-qt-engine** or **gtk-kde4** are installed, since they each have their conflicts with the theme.
2. Install the pixbuf theme engine, which should be available from your distribution's repository. On Kubuntu, the package is called **gtk2-engines-pixbuf**:

```
sudo apt-get install gtk2-engines-pixbuf
```

3. Extract the **kde44-oxygen-molecule** gtk theme to **/usr/local/share/themes**. Please note that the folder **/usr/local/share/themes** probably doesn't exist yet, and will need to be created. Here are the Kubuntu commands (run them from the folder you extracted this package to):

```
sudo mkdir /usr/local/share/themes
sudo tar -C /usr/local/share/themes -xzf kde44-oxygen-molecule.tar.gz
```

4. **Kubuntu 9.10 users:** In the KDE4 system settings, go to Appearance. Under GTK+ Appearance, select “kde44-oxygen-molecule” and click “Apply”.

Other users: Modify or create the **.gtkrc-2.0** file in your home directory (Kubuntu 9.04 users modify **.gtkrc-2.0-kde4** instead). Replace its contents with the following:

```
include "/usr/local/share/themes/kde44-oxygen-molecule/gtk-2.0/gtkrc"

style "user-font"
{
}
widget_class "*" style "user-font"
gtk-theme-name="kde44-oxygen-molecule"
gtk-font-name="DejaVu Sans 9"
```

Note #1: *Adjust the font name and size according to your preferences.*

Note #2: *You should make a backup copy of your original file in case you wish to restore the original setting.*

5. If you want GTK+ apps run as root (or sudo) to be themed as well, copy the newly created file to **/root/.gtkrc-2.0**. Kubuntu (9.04 or 9.10) users type:

```
sudo cp ~/.gtkrc-2.0-kde4 /root/.gtkrc-2.0
```

6. Import the included **Oxygen-Molecule_3.0.colors** file using KDE's System Settings under Appearance → Colors → Import Scheme. Click “Apply” to activate the new color scheme.
7. While you're still on the color configuration page, select the Options tab, un-check “Apply colors to non-KDE4 applications”. Also make sure that the “Shading” slider is at 50% and apply the changes. This will make sure that the window frame blends properly with the window contents (please note that smaller windows won't blend as well as larger ones).
8. If all went well, your GTK+ applications should now be Oxygen-themed. Try firing up Firefox or your favorite GTK+ program and see if it works.

Using Flat Mode

There are three ways you can use the Oxygen-Molecule theme.

1. **Use only the standard theme (kde44-oxygen-molecule).** You will have to put up with some GTK+ apps that don't handle the background gradients very well, leaving patches of the wrong shade of gray in the background.
2. **Use only the flat theme (kde44-oxygen-molecule-flat).** This is the “safest” mode in that all GTK+ apps should look proper. While you won't have the additional prettiness from the background gradient, you won't have the color mismatching either. However, if you want to use the Oxygen window decoration, you will probably need to add a window-specific override for every GTK+ app you wish to run.
3. **Use the standard theme by default and call upon the flat theme for certain applications.** This is a best-of-both-worlds solution, but involves editing the launcher shortcuts for any apps you wish to launch “flat”. Because of the system hacking involved to make this happen, it is recommended that only advanced users try this method.

Read below for instructions on each mode.

Using Only the Standard Theme

If you are using Oxygen as the window decorator, go into the KDE system settings panel → Appearance → Windows. Under “Decoration Options” select the “Window-Specific Overrides” tab and un-check the box next to “Window Class Name (Firefox)|(Thunderbird)|(Gimp)”.

Using Only the Flat Theme

Repeat steps 4 and 5 from the installation, this time using “kde44-oxygen-molecule-flat” instead of “kde44-oxygen-molecule”.

If you are using Oxygen as the window decorator, go into the KDE system settings panel → Appearance → Windows. Under “Decoration Options” select the “Window-Specific Overrides” tab and check the box next to “Window Class Name (Firefox)|(Thunderbird)|(Gimp)”. You may wish to add additional programs to this list to prevent the window decoration from being shaded with the GTK+ apps you run.

Using the Standard or Flat Theme Based on Application

Copy the **flatmolecule** script to `/usr/local/bin`. Here's the command (run it from the folder you extracted this package to):

```
sudo cp flatmolecule /usr/local/bin
```

Now, in your home folder copy the **.gtkrc-2.0** file you created in step 4 (or if you selected the GTK+ theme through system settings, copy **.gtkrc-2.0-kde4** instead) and name the copy **.gtkrc-2.0-FLAT**. Edit **.gtkrc-2.0-FLAT** and replace any instances of “kde44-oxygen-molecule” with “kde44-oxygen-molecule-flat” (there should be two).

If you are using Oxygen as the window decorator, go into the KDE system settings panel → Appearance → Windows. Under “Decoration Options” select the “Window-Specific Overrides” tab and check the box next to “Window Class Name (Firefox)|(Thunderbird)|(Gimp)”. This list will need to be edited to contain any programs you wish to run in flat mode.

Now, you should be able to launch GTK applications in flat mode by running them as such:

```
flatmolecule firefox
```

Of course, replace “firefox” with the name of the application you wish to run. If all went well, you should see your application themed without the background gradient.

If you are satisfied that you wish to always run a certain application in flat mode, you will need to modify the application launcher accordingly.

Please keep in mind that if you wish to change GTK+ themes, you will need to change your launchers back.

Known Issues

- The window color in GTK+ applications doesn't always match the frame 100%. This is due to a limitation in the pixbuf engine.
- Menus do not have rounded corners. Again, this is a limitation of the pixbuf engine.
- When using OpenOffice.org with the GTK style compatibility mode, the top and left ends of scrollbars are truncated.
- Oxygen-Molecule will not make your KDE3/Qt3 apps appear with an oxygen style. I have not yet figured out how to change the KDE3 theme and colors without inadvertently affecting KDE4 apps.

Changelog

3.2

- Redesigned color scheme to use less extreme shading. This looks better for both KDE and GTK+ apps, in my opinion, and also helps everything to blend a little better. For users upgrading from version 3.1 or earlier, please set your KDE color shading to 50% (see step 7 in the installation guide).
- Tweaked menubar gradient to look better for wider windows, but at the expense of the appearance of narrower ones. My reasoning is that most people use their GTK apps either fullscreen or as large windows.
- Adjusted the size of the active menubar item selector, and further fine-tuned the color of the menu item selector.

3.1

- Added new “flat” mode, which removes the background gradient from windows and tabs.
- Fixed the tree view colors.
- Increased spacing between tabs to better match the Oxygen theme.

3.0

- Updated theme to match KDE 4.4 widgets and shading.
- Almost all pixmaps were completely redone.
- Countless tweaks, including thinner buttons and entry boxes, new spinner buttons and better tab spacing.
- Removed unnecessary clearlooks reference.
- Changed theme install location in documentation from **/usr/share/themes** to **/usr/local/share/themes**.

2.2

- Removed theme's dependency on the Murrine engine.
- Made check and radio boxes smaller for web pages rendered in Firefox. *Fix committed by [Craig Drummond](#).*
- Fixed appearance of selected menubar items. *Fix committed by [Craig Drummond](#).*
- Improved the appearance of check and radio boxes within menus.
- Fixed tree view text color

2.1

- Redesigned scrollbars with new shading effect.

2.0

- Updated the theme to be compatible with the new KDE 4.3 tabs.
- Oxygen-molecule now links directly to the existing oxygen icons, so the OxygenRefit icons are no longer needed.
- Updated the selection box to match KDE's.
- Set the scrollbar width to 17 pixels to match the new KDE default.
- Tweaked the menubar gradient to match the titlebar in a higher percentage of cases (it's not possible to get it fully accurate for every window width).
- Added a vertical window background gradient, which means that the window background will better match the frame when used with the Oxygen/Ozone window decoration. Due to a limitation in the pixbuf engine, this won't always be perfect, especially for windows that are small vertically.
- Fixed the grey tooltips.
- Greatly improved the appearance of progress bars and scrollbar arrows.
- Made the buttons smaller.

1.2

- Provided solid colorizations for buttons, check boxes and radio buttons so they would not appear transparent in Firefox.
- Made menu item highlight slightly thinner to more closely match KDE apps.
- Reconfigured many icons as symbolic links to the oxygen icon set. This cuts down on disk space use considerably.

1.1

- Redesigned check boxes and radio buttons to have a glowing mouse-over
- Check boxes and radio buttons have improved spacing, especially on web pages in Firefox
- The default button in a dialog now appears as it does in KDE apps, with a dark blue outline
- Redesigned sliders and gave them a mouse-over effect
- Made large improvements to the appearance of frames. Previously, they looked very buggy.
- Buttons are now a little thinner, so they look more like they do in KDE apps.