Ferric Chloride: the basics

The main 'ingredient' in producing these etched images is called Ferric Chloride.

For detailed information about Ferric Chloride visit this website:
http://www.mgchemicals.com/products/prototyping-and-circuit-repair/prototyping/ferric-chloride-415

This is a mild acid, and should be treated with respect.

The good news is: as long as you use plastic containers + utensils while working with Ferric Chloride, it will not damage them at all. Once you've cleaned them thoroughly, make sure they are never used for food storage or preparation.

Neutralizing the corrosive action of Ferric Chloride.

Once the etching is complete, it's important to chemically render the acidic residue inert. This is easily done by using household Baking Soda. Mix a few tablespoons into a large plastic container of water.

With gloved hands, lift your etched pieces out of the etchant, allow the excess to drain back into the etching bath and the transfer the metal to the Baking Soda bath. Gently but thoroughly scrub the surfaces of your etched metal with the Baking Soda mixture. Then rinse with running water.

Because you can reuse the Ferric Chloride, carefully return the 'used' etchant to the original factory container. Clean any drips or splashes with Baking Soda and water immediately.

Note: stainless steel sinks can be stained by Ferric Chloride, as can glass. Thoroughly dilute the residue with water and neutralize with Baking Soda before rinsing the etched items in the sink.

The Graphics Fairy and Thicketworks have made every effort to supply you with accurate information - this information is provided in order to assist you in making your own best decisions about whether or not you choose to work with these products.

If you choose to work with any hazardous materials, read and follow all safety precautions - Be safe, and have fun!