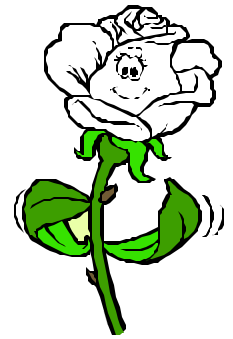


Making Natural Dyes



Hillermann's
Kids' Club

What you need: 2 quarts of water
Large pot or glass jar (sun tea jar)

Plants to use as dyes
Cream of Tartar Knife

Pickling Alum
Strainer

Getting the Color Out-- Once you have harvested plant parts and predicted which colors might emerge from which plants, shred plant materials to expose more surface area from which color can be extracted. Cover the plant materials with 2 quarts of water in an enamel pot. Add 4 tablespoons of pickling alum and 2 tablespoons of cream of tartar. Then, you can try two different methods. (1) Simmer them for about an hour until the water is colored and the plant tissues look bleached, then strain the dye bath through cheesecloth or an old stocking to get rid of plant material. (Some dyers do simultaneous dyeing in which the plant materials are left in when the fabric is dyed. If you decide to do this, place the plants or the fabric in an old stocking or net bag to protect the material from direct contact.) Or you can try the "Hillermann method." (2) Cover the plant materials with water in a glass jar. Let the jar sit outside in the sun (just like you make sun tea) for a few days. Strain the dye through a cheese cloth or old stocking. What to dye. You can try to dye anything! Old socks, t-shirts, handkerchief....be creative. It is very important that you start with clean, white material. The longer you keep the material in the dye the darker the colors will be.

Some Plants to Grow and Collect for Dyeing

- alder leaves (yellow)
- beets (red)
- blueberries (blue)
- carrot tops (green)
- elderberries (blue/gray)
- parsley leaves (yellow)
- tomato plants (pink/blue)
- wild grapes (purple)

Weeds

- bindweed (yellow)
- dandelions (magenta)
- giant ragweed (brass/gold)
- mullein (yellow)

Garden Flowers

- aster (yellow)
- chamomile (yellow)
- marigolds (yellow)
- zinnias (yellow)

- birch leaves (yellow/tan)
- black walnut hulls (black)
- red cabbage (pinkish)
- coffee grounds (tan)
- mint leaves (yellow)
- spinach plants (green)
- tumeric (orangish)

- cocklebur (brass)
- dock (brass)
- goldenrod (brass)
- redroot pigweed (brass/gold)

- black-eyed Susans (yellow)
- coreopsis (orangish)
- sunflowers and seeds (gold)



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