

Introduction to NATURAL DYEING

with Trudi Pollard

Session 2 Workshop Booklet



Do you really know what plant your using?

Here are some questions to ask yourself before you work with your plants, especially if they are unfamiliar to you.

1. Is this plant benign or poisonous? If so use masks, gloves and other appropriate precautions or choose not to use it!
2. Do you know which family the plant belongs to?
3. Can you use the stems, leaves, seeds, flowers, roots or the whole plant?
4. Is this plant acid or alkali based?
5. Is there natural tannin in this plant? If so you may not need to use a mordant at all.
6. What time of year is best for using or harvesting this plant?
7. Is this plant best used fresh or as dried material?
8. Do you have the necessary permissions to collect plant material in the Australian bush land or elsewhere in the world?
9. Is the plant protected or endangered?

Labelling materials

Labelling your materials as you go through different dyeing processes can get very confusing and it's not always easy to track your pieces.

It also helps to feel confident that you can replicate or adjust your original process to get your desired results.

To make this process easier the following tips may help.

1. Use surveyors tape and use a permanent marker and record the fibre content and weight of the item.
2. Snip a small hole in the fabric and thread the tape through. Knot it.
3. Add your process to the tape as you go through the process.
4. Devise a code for the processes. Example M for Mordent.
5. Make a circle around the letter once you have completed it.

Some suggestions about recording?

1. Note where you picked your plant from! Different areas contain many different natural elements such as soil mineralisation or water fall.
2. Note what season you picked your plant! Yes, plants give different amounts and intensity depending on when you picked the plant. Generally hot dry summers usually produce brighter colours from plants than hot and wet climates.
3. Don't ever think you will remember what you did! Keep your natural dye journal up to date and jam packed with great ideas! That are labelled and documented!

Place your chopped roots in cold water in the dye pot and soak atleast overnight. Trudi has soaked plant matter for weeks. just see what happens but don't let it go 'off'. This could happen if the fruit of the tree is being soaked due to the sugar content in the matter.

Testing is always a good idea if you want to control your outcomes.

Otherwise just relax & experiment!

And be safe while you're doing it.



PREPARING YOUR NATURAL DYE MATERIAL

Because we are using the dye material straight from the plant we need to do some preparation work for some materials. The reason for this is to break down the fibre of the plant so that the dye is released more easily from the plant.

It is generally better to break down the fibre before the fabric or yarn is dyed incase it is damaged or dyed for too long and you do not achieve the result you wanted.

If using leaves you don't generally need to break down the fibres but if using bark, seeds or twigs it is better to soak and prepare before dyeing.

BASIC IMMERSION DYE METHOD

1. Place your dye matter in cold water in the dye pot.
2. If using powder, paste with warm water.
3. Add your fibre (prepared) and very slowly bring the water to a slow simmer at around 60 degrees Celsius.
4. Simmer at that temperature for 1 to 2 hours
5. If desired you can leave the fibre in the dye bath overnight
6. Wash in mild pure soapy water and rinse until water runs clear.

To wash the fabric...

Rinse in cold water first

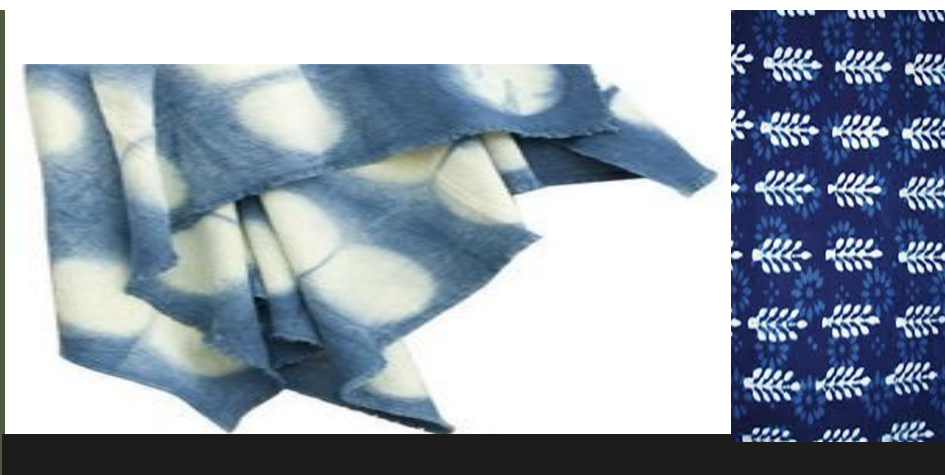
Hand wash in soapy water

Rinse 2 or 3 times until the water is clear

Put some lemon juice or vinegar in the last rinse.

Lux soap flakes and Velvet soap are pure soaps. There are also other eco friendly products on the market.

Make sure that you only use dishwashing liquids containing no bleach. Most commercial products that do not specify that they are eco friendly do contain bleach.



TRUDI'S NATURAL DYEING TIPS

1. Dyeing evenly – Make sure you have enough water in your pot to completely cover your fabric and make sure all of your fabric is wet evenly and not on top of an air bubble. Spread your fabric out in the pot and stir gently often. Also evenly pre-wet your fabric in room temperature water before dyeing. Don't use very hot or cold water as protein fibres such as wool will shock and felt it.
2. Place the dye stuff in old panty hose or synthetic lace curtain/ muslin bag or open weave fabric to contain the dye stuff (foliage, etc).
3. Keeping clean colours – don't contaminate pots and keeping your working area clean is the best way to have clear uncontaminated colours.
4. Always have a container ready when you remove your fabric from the dye pots – It saves spilling water and colour all over the floor!
5. Let the dye pot cool before you remove your fabric. Protein fibres like wool will felt and won't be happy with you or you won't be happy with it.
6. Weigh your fabric whilst it's dry before you do any Shibori and especially if you want to mordant your fibre.
7. Use only clean non-reactive pots: stainless steel or enamel (unchipped). Iron and copper pots will react with the dye bath. Iron will dull or "sadden" colours whilst Copper will brighten them. (Alum does not effect the colour when dyeing).
8. It is VERY important to **always** add chemicals to water, not the other way around.



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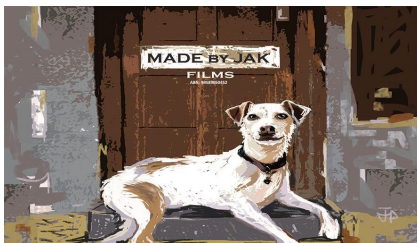


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This Free on-line course
has been sponsored by
the City of Armadale.
Western Australia.



A huge thank you to Andrew Pheasant
& Karen Hudson from Jak Films who
were the film makers.

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Trudi's Main On-Line Material Suppliers

- KraftKolour Australia. www.kraftkolour.com.au
(Ask for Bonnie)
- Dye Man (formally known as Batik Oetoreo)
www.dyeman.com
- Botanical Colours—Kathy Hattori from Seattle U.S.A
www.botanicalcolors.com
- DHARMA TRADING ONLINE www.dharmatrading.com



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