



## Natural Dye Workshop and Resources Presenter: Freya Clark

A little background and important information (adapted slightly from [naturaldyes.ca](http://naturaldyes.ca))

- Artisans have added colour to cloth for thousands of years. It is only recently (the first artificial dye was invented in 1857) that the textile industry has turned to synthetic dyes.
- Important information
  - Always use clean non-reactive vessels: stainless steel, unchipped enamel, glass, or plastic. Iron or copper vessels can also be used but the metal will react with the dyebath. Iron will dull or “sadden” colours. Copper will tend to brighten them.
  - Dyeing evenly is much more difficult with fabric than with yarns. It is also much easier to dye protein fibres (wool, silk) than cellulose fibres (cotton, linen, hemp). For best results the beginner is well advised to start with wool or silk yarns.
  - Dry all fibres out of direct sunlight.
  - Mixing dyes or mordants and overdyeing can result in that one desired shade. Experimentation pays off and adds an element of creativity to your dyeing. Keep records.
  - All dyes are sensitive to water quality. In almost all cases soft water is preferable for washing, scouring, mordanting and dyeing. Rainwater or distilled water can also be used.
  - Natural dyes are not recommended for synthetic fabrics or fibres.
- Safety information
  - If you have purchased a dye substance, read the safety information on the package, or look it up online.
  - Use gloves
  - Some dyes require wearing masks and goggles while you are working with them
  - Use different pots and utensils for your dyes than you do for your food.
  - Always add your powdered dye to water, don't add the water to the powdered dye

Today's project:

- Today we are dyeing linen which you can sew into a small bag for holding lavender (or anything else you want) after the workshop
- The linen fabric has already been scoured, had tannin applied, and have been mordanted. If you want to repeat this project on your own, visit [naturaldyes.ca](http://naturaldyes.ca) for information on scouring, mordanting, and the usage of different dyestuffs
- Dyeing with goldenrod:
  - I like to use about 100% WOF (weight of fibre) when I'm using goldenrod, you could maybe use less, and it doesn't hurt to use more
  - Take the goldenrod flowers only (as much as possible) for the best yellow
  - Today we are just going to put the flowers right into the pot. If you want to dye more evenly and avoid having to wash the plant material off your fabric/wool, put the plant material into cheesecloth

- Simmer the flowers in water for about 40 minutes to 1 hour
- Add fabric and simmer on low for 40 minutes to an hour or more. You can leave the fabric in the dye water as it cools if you want.
- After dyeing, rinse fabric in cool water until the water runs clear. This may take a little of the color out of the fabric.
- Dying with madder
  - Weigh madder to 100% WOF (weight of fibre) you can use as little as 35% for a lighter color
  - Madder develops it's deepest and richest reds in hard water, preferably water with calcium and magnesium, so add one tums tablet per 4L of water added to the pot
  - Add madder powder to dye pot and bring heat up to 60 °C, hold at this temperature for 1 hour
  - Add fibres and continue cooking for another 1-2 hours.
  - After dyeing, rinse fabric in cool water until the water runs clear. This may take a little color out of the fabric

Easy instructions on sewing a lavender sachet can be found at the link below. If you want to avoid the raw edges of the fabric, you can fold it over and sew it like the example I'll have with me at the event today.

- <https://sustainmycrafthabit.com/homemade-lavender-sachet/>

Resources:

- [www.naturaldyes.ca](http://www.naturaldyes.ca)
  - This website is amazing. It has in depth instructions on all parts of the dye process that is used for many common dyes. There is a lot of inaccurate information out there on natural dyes, so I highly recommend this resource 😊 It's all I use!
- RB Studio Art Centre and Gallery
  - A great place in town to purchase dye supplies and learn more about natural dying, eco printing, and other fibre crafts!
  - Whereas I am just a happy amateur crafter lending my time to Hayes Farm today, Rebecca is an expert. I highly recommend checking out her workshops, they are very worth their modest prices. There is actually a Botanical Dyeing Workshop coming up at the studio on August 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Natural Dye Education Facebook Group
  - I'm a member of this group, and I check in on it now and again. There are some experienced artists in the group who can coach you through if you are having a problem with your dyeing process that you can't figure out a solution to