

# Natural Plant Dyes:

*A how-to & how-not-to*

*By: Carolyn Bradford*





1. I took a giant skein of white cotton yarn and cut off three large sections, which I wrapped in to loose bundles.



2. I boiled up a pot of one part distilled vinegar to four parts water to serve as the dye fixative.



3. I simmered the bundles in the fixative for one and a half hours.



... meanwhile, I boiled one large head of red cabbage until the cabbage leaves lost their color.



4. Once, the dye bath was ready, I carefully squeezed the vinegar-soaked bundles to remove excess fixative.



... then transferred the bundles to the dye bath.



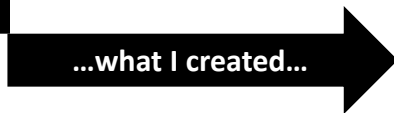
# PURPLE: (Red Cabbage)



...what I envisioned...



...what I created...



7. Once the bundles were dry, I wound each one into a ball for easy use.



6. I hung the yarn on a hanger to dry, inside of a holey garbage bag.



5. I simmered the bundles in the dye bath for four hours, then removed and rinsed the bundles.





1. I took a giant skein of white cotton yarn and cut off four large sections, which I wrapped in to loose bundles.



2. About a week before creating the dye bath, I prepared the rust post-mordant by soaking a couple handfuls of rusty nails in a vinegar-water solution, until the liquid turned a uniform, opaque orange.



3. I boiled up goldenrod plants that I harvested in in a pot of water for about four hours, until the water turned a translucent ochre color.

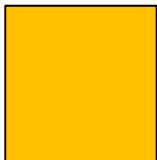


4. I then strained out the plant matter and added the yarn bundles.



# GREY: (Goldenrod)

5. I allowed the yarn to simmer in the dye for four hours.



...what I envisioned...

...what I created...



**CAUTION:**  
Pot is hot!

7. Once the bundles were dry, I wound each one into a ball for easy use.



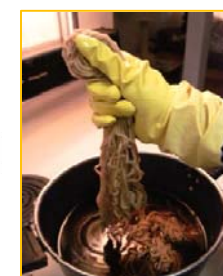
7. After allowing the yarn to simmer in the mordant for an hour, I removed the yarn, rinsed it, and laid it flat to dry.



6. I heated up the rust post-mordant, and added the dried beige yarn.



... then removed the bundles, wrung them out, and allowed them to dry completely..







**1.** I took a giant skein of white cotton yarn and cut off five large sections, which I wrapped in to loose bundles.



**2.** I combined one ounce of ground turmeric in three quarts of water on the stove in a large pot.



**3.** I brought the dye bath to a boil and allowed it to simmer for half an hour.



... meanwhile, I rinsed the yarn bundles in cool water then wrung them out to help the dye take to the fibers uniformly.



**4.** Once, the dye bath was ready, I added the dampened bundles to the bath and allowed them to simmer for half an hour.



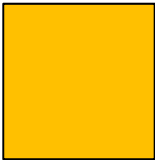
... then removed the bundles from the dye and wrung them out completely.

# YELLOW:

(Turmeric)



[http://www.freebies.com/images/stockphotos/turmeric\\_0108](http://www.freebies.com/images/stockphotos/turmeric_0108)



...what I envisioned...

...what I created...



**7.** Once the bundles were dry, I wound each one into a ball for easy use.



**6.** I allowed the bundles to lay flat to dry for a few days.



**5.** I then rinsed the bundles with cool water to rinse out any excess dye.











**1.** I crocheted a basic hat using white cotton yarn and a size J crochet hook.



**2.** I combined one ounce of ground turmeric in three quarts of water on the stove in a large pot.



**3.** I brought the dye bath to a boil and allowed it to simmer for half an hour.



... meanwhile, I rinsed the hat in cool water then wrung it out to help the dye take to the fibers uniformly.



**YELLOW (again):**  
**(Turmeric)**



**4.** Once, the dye bath was ready, I added the dampened hat to the bath and allowed it to simmer for half an hour.



**6.** Once dry, I added a white band around the bottom of the hat.



**5.** I then rinsed the bundles with cool water to rinse out any excess dye and set it aside to dry..



... then removed the hat from the dye and wrung it out completely.





