

NATURAL DYE COLLAGE

Learn about natural dyes made from common ingredients, that work on fabric or paper, and make your own art with them!

Here are some things you may have in your kitchen or around your house that can be used to make dye:

red, yellow, or purple onion skins

hibiscus tea

tumeric powder

beets

red or purple cabbage

black beans

berries

black tea

flower petals

acorns

wild flowers



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Part 1:

What you need:

- one of the natural dye ingredients listed on the previous sheet
- water
- watercolor paper, coffee filters, or cotton fabric
- jars
- a large pot big enough to fit the jars
- trays to soak fabric and paper
- newsprint or towels
- paper or cardboard (as a backing)
- glue
- salt or vinegar (as fixative or "mordant" if you are using fabric)



If you are working with fabric, make sure it has been washed.

Sometimes fabric has waxes or oils that will prevent the dye from adhering. Natural fabrics (like cotton) work much better than synthetic ones (like nylon).

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Measure your natural ingredients and add them to a jar with a 1 to 2 ratio of ingredient to water. (i.e. one cup of onion skins to two cups of water)

It is recommended to use jars so your pot can remain usable for cooking, and to make multiple dyes at once.

Fill the pot halfway with water and bring it to a boil, then let it simmer for an hour. While you wait check out the artist profile!

Note: If your ingredient is **flowers**, let them simmer for only **10 minutes**.

If you are using fabric, first soak your fabric in a **mordant** mixture. **Mordant** is a substance that will combine with your dye and help it fix to the fabric. You can use vinegar in a ratio of 1/5 vinegar 4/5 water, or salt at one tablespoon per 16 oz (2 cups) of water.

If you are using watercolor paper or coffee filters, you don't need to use mordant or soak them prior to dyeing.

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Emily Donovan



Emily Donovan studied art at the University of Minnesota. Her paintings are created on paper with handmade dyes from natural materials using methods and recipes that are centuries old. Her process includes a bit of chemistry, observation of plants and seasonal cycles, and research about the origins of color. Time spent outdoors observing, gathering and then creating color allows her a special relationship with landscape and an appreciation of the numerous species which coexist in our ecosystem.

<https://www.emaluna.com/>



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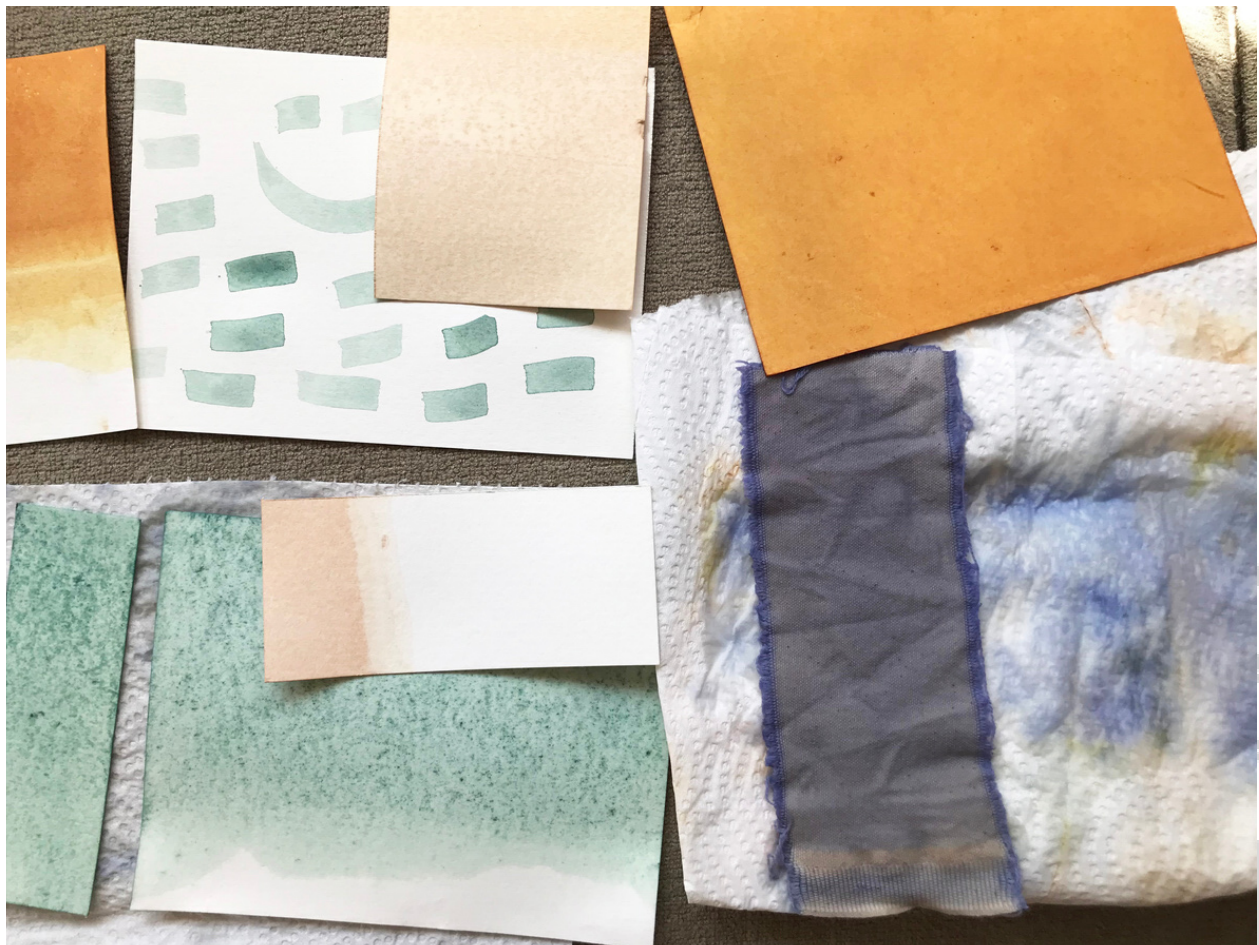
Part 2:

Once your dye mixture has cooled, strain the solid materials from it and pour into a larger bowl if needed.

Dip your paper or fabric in the dye.

Fabric will need to soak for 30 minutes - 1 hour. Paper absorbs the color much faster and can be soaked for 1 minute.

Tip: Set a timer - paper that sits too long can get soggy!



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Let your paper dry on an absorbent surface or drying rack. Fabric can be dried on a clothes line or bathtub.

Once your dyed sheets are dry, you can cut them and glue them onto a paper or cardboard to make a collage!



A note about blues and violets:

Blue wild flowers create a dye that appears green on most surfaces. To make blues and violets you can try soaking your paper and fabric on a vinegar mordant mixture, or adding alum powder to your dye.

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