

Acid Dyes

You have purchased Acid dyes. These dyes are for use with wool and other animal or protein fibres. Fabrics such as silk and synthetics (nylon and polyamide types) are also suitable materials for use with these dyes. To fix these dyes, acidic conditions are required. This is achieved either by adding vinegar or ammonium sulphate crystals.

The methods described are for those who wish to dye materials, but who do not need to particularly control exact colour matches or have exactly repeatable results. If you find through experimenting with this kit that you like the more controllable technical aspects of dyeing, then you should seek more information about this from the Association of Spinners Weavers and Dyers, or look at the books in the recommended reading section.

What you will need

- Dye Pot (for example a large enamel or stainless saucepan)*
- A bottle of vinegar (white)
- Rubber gloves
- Plastic measuring spoons
- Note book and pen
- Measuring jug
- A heat source...cooker or ring unit
- An apron.
- You will also need to protect the immediate surrounding of your working area!

* If you have a large jam-making aluminium pan, you can use it, but do be aware that acid attacks aluminium! Over a period of time the surface of the pan will become pitted and eventually perforated by the action of the acid. In addition, aluminium will slightly alter the chemical balance and may, slightly, affect the colour achieved. Car boot sales are a good source of very cheap pans!

Rainbow Dying

- Firstly, select your dye pot. The size of the pot will determine how much you can dye at a time. Measure the amount of water required to half-fill the pot. Use the guidelines below to work out the maximum weight of fibre/fabric and the amount of vinegar.
- Separately, thoroughly wet the fabric and/or fibre to be dyed, and place to one side. Consider washing fabrics first, to remove any dressing or size and to pre-shrink the fabric.
- Add the appropriate amount of vinegar to the dye pot.
- Put the pot onto the heating source.
- Carefully immerse the material into the water. Ensure that all the fibre or fabric to be dyed is below the surface of the water.
- Using 2 to 3 colours (this will give you lots of colour variations) sprinkle the dye powder carefully on to the surface of the water (some people like to transfer the dye powder into cheap glass pepper pots to make the sprinkling easier).
- Bring the pan to a gentle simmer. You will notice that the dye power will start to percolate through the water/material/fibres.
- Do NOT allow it to rapidly boil or be tempted to agitate or stir the 'witches brew'. If you do, the individuality of the colours will be not be retained.
- For silk, allow to gently simmer for 15 – 25 minutes.
- For other materials, simmer for 20 – 30 minutes.
- Let the 'brew' cool in the pan.
- Discard the residue and rinse the newly dyed material in clean water.

Guidelines

<i>Dry Weight to be dyed</i>	<i>Vinegar</i>	<i>Water</i>
50g	50ml	1½ litres
100g	100ml	3 litres
200g	200ml	6 litres

The above are only guidelines. As you gain experience you will find that you will use less in reality, as the saturation of these dyes is strong.

Tie Dying Using The Microwave

Tie dying creates patterns and variation by preventing the dye from reaching parts of the fabric. By using multiple dye colours, the most fantastic patterns can be achieved. Suitable materials for tie dying are silk, nylon, synthetics, woollen fabrics and felt.

- Make a selection from one of the following operations:
 - Using small elastic bands wrap them around the silk.
 - Using cotton thread take sections of the silk scarf and wrap the sections tightly to make 'finger like projections.
 - Using cotton, scrunch the silk scarf and wrap the cotton around to make a ball or several balls along the length of the scarf.
 - Fold the scarf neatly in to small sections (I usually iron each fold to make this easier to do) when you have folded the scarf then bind it with cotton thread.
 - Take sections and make tight knots - as many as you can create.
 - Or develop your own ideas – just remember the idea is to bind areas so that the dye is prevented from reaching them.
- Make sure that you have not used anything metallic in the binding process above. Remember microwaves do not like metal!
- Wet the bound material and place in a microwave-friendly bowl.
- Add water to about half the height of the fabric.
- Add vinegar. Use about 1/5th of the volume of water.
- Sprinkle several dye colours onto the surface allowing them to spread and seep into the scarf. Alternatively, use just one colour, complete the process and repeat from the beginning with another colour.
- Cover with a layer of cling film or place in a microwave bag. Put the bowl into the microwave.
- Depending on your microwave, run for 2 – 3 minutes on a medium or high setting.
- Open the bowl up and check the contents, at this stage you may need to add a little more water or indeed you may have a colour bald patch in which case you may choose to add a sprinkle of dye. Repeat the heating as necessary.
- Let the contents cool and rinse thoroughly while still bound. Remove all the binding and again rinse. Dry and iron you scarf. If you want a scrunched look twist and knot your scarf and allow to dry.