

Virtual Studio Activity | Fiber Dyeing with Rachel Denbow

Equipment + Supplies

- Access to stovetop
- 2 medium stainless steel pots (will no longer be safe for cooking; can be found at most thrift stores)
- Stainless steel or wooden spoon
- Yellow onion skins from at least 6 onions (can be gathered over a few weeks or grab some extra papery skin from onion bins at the store)
- 2 tablespoons Alum Sulfate (found in most grocery stores in the spices aisle)
- Any pre-washed fabric that is 100% cotton/linen/silk/bamboo; choose a white or undyed item that will fit into your pot.
- Large bowl to soak pre-washed fabric item
- 4 ft. of cotton twine or 20-30 wooden clothespins for pattern making

Pre-Activity Instructions

Having your pots ready to go will help us enjoy the magic of natural dyeing while we're face-to-face, or camera-to-camera. I will explain everything you've had to prep and why it's important. I'll also teach you a few tricks to pull different colors from the same dye pot, create patterns on your dyed item, and use other kitchen or grocery store items for dyeing.

- Pre-wash your 100% natural fiber in a pH neutral detergent. This will get rid of any impurities.
- If you dry it before the activity starts, soak it in a plastic bowl of water for at least 20 minutes to open up the fibers.
- Fill one stainless steel stock pot with hot tap water about 3/4 full. Add 2 tablespoons of alum sulfate and heat to a low boil. This is your mordant (dye fixative) pot.
- Fill another stainless steel stock pot with hot tap water about 3/4 full. Add your yellow onion paper skins and bring to a simmer. This is your dye pot.