


# Natural Dyes

When collecting berries, be aware that some are poisonous - just collect those that you can identify as safe. Make sure that you wash your hands after you've finished.


## Step 1 - Gather natural colours from the woodland

There are many things you can gather from a woodland that will create natural dyes. Look out for the following on your next autumn woodland walk:

Red -  red leaves (red/brown), rose hips

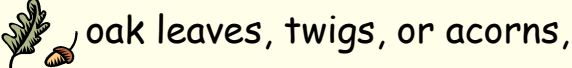

Pink - cherries,  raspberries

Orange - lichen

Yellow -  willow leaves, burdock, dandelion flowers


Green - grass, nettles


Blue / purple -  elderberries, blackberries

Brown -  oak leaves, twigs, or acorns,  walnut shells,  
sweet chestnut twigs

## Step 2 - Prepare your fabric

(This will help the dye to fix to the fabric)

 For berry dyes add 1/2 cup of salt to  
8 cups of cold water

 For plant dyes add 1 part vinegar to  
4 parts cold water

Add your fabric and simmer for an hour.

Rinse in cool water and wring out - the fabric needs to be damp for the next stage.



### **Be safe!**

The next steps involve chopping and boiling. Please make sure children are supervised at all times.

### **Step 3 - Prepare the dye**

You will need: a chopping board and knife, saucepan, wooden spoon, tea strainer or sieve

(a) Chop the woodland material into small pieces

(b) Place in a saucepan with double the amount of water to woodland material



(c.) Bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes

(d) Strain the mixture to remove the seeds, husks and other bits  
Then ...

### **Step 4 - Dye the fabric**

(e) Add the damp fabric to the hot dye and continue boiling for 10 minutes

(f) Switch the heat off and allow to cool, leaving the fabric in longer if you want a deeper shade. Soak overnight if necessary.

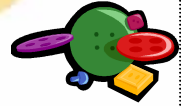
(f) Remove fabric, wring out and hang up to dry (somewhere where it won't matter if it drips!)



# Tie-dying

You will need:

- Fabric that has been prepared for dying (See Step 2)
- Small round objects such as acorns, buttons or beads
- String or elastic bands
- Saucepan of prepared heated dye (See Step 3)



1. Before you dye your fabric, add buttons, acorns or beads, tying string tightly around it.

Adding extra bands or string will give a concentric circle pattern



2. Now add fabric to the saucepan with the dye.



3. Boil for 10 minutes (See Step 4)

4. Remove the fabric, untie the string and discover the pattern you've created!

