

Natural Dyes



Purple

The color of monarchy, many European nations allowed only their kings and queens to wear it, and many royal portraits bear witness to its scarcity. The color originally came from a sea snail – it took as many as 250,000 mollusks to yield just one ounce of usable dye. A pound of pur-

ple wool cost more than most commoners earned in an entire year through the 15th century.

Today, natural purple dye can be achieved through many plant, animal and mineral materials.

All of the items showcased here can be used to achieve a purple dye naturally.



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What else makes purple?

Purple, violet, mauve, lavender and all the subtle shades in between can be achieved with these natural ingredients.



Alkanet root



Western Jack O'Lantern mushroom



Red Maple bark
(Also Sweetgum and Red Cedar bark)



Dark varieties of fresh or dried Iris blossoms



Elderberries



Hibiscus flowers

Dyeing terminology

Fixative or mordant

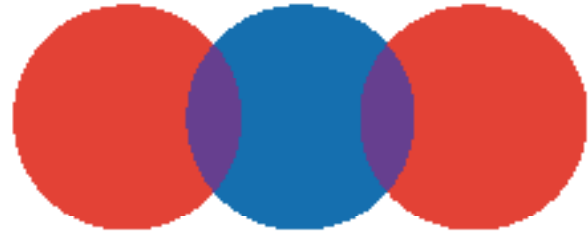
A substance used to make a dye remain true through washing without bleeding.

Lightfast

Retains its color after being exposed to sunlight.

Did You Know?

Purple is a secondary color and is created by mixing primary colors red and blue.



Recipe

Alkanet Violet

Alkanet is a plant that belongs to the same family as borage. It grows in central Asia, central Europe and North Africa. Powdered and whole root are available online.

1) Weigh the fiber you wish to dye, make a note and set aside. This is your weight of fiber (WOF) and will be used to calculate mordant later.

2) Soak 100 grams alkanet in water and rubbing alcohol or vodka for one week at minimum. Then simmer in a ventilated area for an hour. For mordanting:

3) Protein fibers (alpaca, wool, etc.) use alum. Use 15% alum for total WOF.

Cellulose fibers (cotton, linen, flax) use 8% tannin then 15% alum for total WOF.

4) Strain dye liquor and add mordanted fiber. Simmer for one hour.

Beware: Do not bring water to a boil or you may get a brown dye instead of a purple one. Alkanet dye has moderate lightfastness. It is not soluble in water.



*Natural Dyes - Alkanet: The NAWA BLOG. Accessed January 02, 2019. <https://www.naturaldyes.com/2013/12/natural-dyes-alkanet.html>

*Alkanet (Althaea Tectorial) - History of Indigo | Wild Colours Natural Dyes. Accessed January 02, 2019. <http://www.wildcolours.com/alkant.html>