



HISTORY & METHODS OF PLANT DYES



Colorful dyes extracted from plants

- For over 4000 years, mankind has been brightening up clothing with natural and synthetic dyes. Different colors add individuality to clothing and has been used to denote gender, status and allegiance.
- It started with natural mineral and plant dyes, but with the discovery of synthetic dyes came a plethora of color choice.



WHAT WERE THE FIRST NATURAL DYES MADE OF?



Centuries ago, there were three types of natural dyes: vegetable or plant dyes, mineral dyes and insect or animal dyes.

When the first humans created clothes made from linseed and cotton, the need for dyeing was absent. All the garments were used in their natural color, which was something close to pale grey or white. Centuries later, in the Middle East, Egypt and Asia, the need to distinguish gender and class became more pronounced and so the first natural dyes were created.



FUN FACT: LEVIS INDIGO BLUE JEANS



True Indigo plant



Indigo dye



Indigo Blue Jeans

Did you know?

The original Levis Blue Jeans were made with a plant dye, extracted from the True Indigo plant in 1873. It's a very expensive and laborious dyeing process that was later replaced with the cheaper blue synthetic dye. Natural Indigo dye is making a come back in blue jeans, but you will have to pay a pretty penny for them!



WHAT IS FLOWER POUNDING?



Bettye Kimbrell's Cherokee Quilt example of leaves hammered onto pieces of fabric and sewn into beautiful botanical quilts.

The Cherokee and other Native American tribes used to decorate their tents and leather goods with a leaf pounding technique.

A leaf is taped to fabric then hammered with a mallet until its chlorophyll creates a stain in the shape of that leaf.



TATAKI ZOME: FLOWER HAMMERING



“Tataki zome” is the Japanese art of transferring botanical dyes from flowers and leaves onto fabric by simply hammering them onto the surface.

Bettye Kimbrell's Cherokee Quilt example of leaves hammered onto pieces of fabric and sewn into beautiful botanical quilts.



HISTORY OF HERBAL SACHETS



- In ancient China, a scented sachet was worn on the body to absorb sweat, repel insects and ward off evil spirits.
- In medieval Europe, sachets known as "plague-bags" were worn around the neck or dangled from the waist to provide protection against parasites and "bad airs".
- Queen Isabella would perfume herself with bewitching fragrances by lining her dresses with herbal sachets.
- Placing herbs under pillows dates back centuries. Thought to protect against evil, bring good dreams, calm bad dreams and even help foresee the future!



BENEFITS OF HERBS IN HERBAL SACHETS



Dry Herbs: Tie the herbs in small bunches by the end of the stems—use kitchen twine or string.

- **Lavender:** Used in Egypt during the mummification process. Also, soothes headaches, insomnia, anxiety, and stress.
- **Rosemary:** 16th century physicians recommended it to “keep thee youngly.” Also, strengthens memory, improves mood and increases appetite.
- **Lemon Balm:** Once used in spells to heal broken hearts and attract romantic love. Also, calming to body, good for stomach issues and balances mood.
- **Rose Petals:** Used since the 15th century to cover unwanted odors. Also, fights depression, protects against viruses, and helps regulate hormone production.