

## WHY SOLAR DYEING?

- Experimental and Playful
- Easy and not too technical
- Environmentally friendly and uses the energy of the sun to heat and set the colour
- Needs very little equipment
- Takes time for colour to develop: from 2 hours to two weeks or even a month or so outdoors or in a sunny windowsill.
- N.B. After a few weeks the dye pot can be quite "fragrant". Remember to check the contents. From time to time and discard the liquid if starting to turn mouldy (Rarely happens!)
- Rinse the dyed fleece or yarn when ready and dry outdoors on the washing line. Any stray dye materials can be easily removed when it starts to dry and a breeze also helps.

## SOLAR DYE EQUIPMENT

- Glass jars and lids or kilner jars
- Measuring spoons
- Stirring stick
- Alum as mordant {citric acid or vinegar for Food dyes}
- Dye stuff e.g. from the garden. local area, powder food colourants, Kool Aid drink sachets or sourced from natural dye suppliers

## SOLAR DYEING PROCESS

- Soak the yarn, fleece or fibres in warm or tepid water before adding to the dye pot
- Mordant with a teaspoon of alum {citric acid or vinegar for food colourants} . Some dyestuffs require no mordant, eg onion skins or Kool aid drink sachets
- Store gathered plant dye stuffs eg daffodil heads, in brown paper bags, rather than polythene to prevent mould . {Flower heads stored in this way over winter etc will still produce colour when dried in this way.}
- Put plenty of dye stuff into the dye pot and push down with the stirring stick
- Rinse dyed yarns etc in tepid water, towel dry and hang out to dry.
- Dye pot liquids can be safely disposed of into the garden
- Experiment with layering different dye materials in layers as you add yarn or fleece to the dye pot. Remember not to turn this dye pot upside down unless you want the materials to mix.

## SOME SUGGESTED DYESTUFFS TO TRY IN SOLAR DYE POTS

avocado skins, daffodil heads, cosmos, coreopsis, marigold, hollyhocks, lavender, dahlias, onion skins, turmeric root, red cabbage, green cabbage, responsibly sourced lichens, birch bark, heather, oak galls, food dye powders, Kool aid sachets, liquid indigo, madder root, buckthorn bark, safflower, logwood.....

## SUGGESTED READING

**The Wild Dyer: Abigail Booth:** Kyle Books, 2017, ISBN 978-0-85783-395-2

Particularly useful on dyeing fabrics and beautifully presented and well researched. It includes stitching and patchwork projects including a foraging bag!

**Wild Colour: Jenny Dean:** Mitchell BEAZLEY, revised edition 2010, ISBN 978-1-84533-569-4

An excellent resource book on natural dye plants. It includes instructions for making a solar oven if that appeals!