

A Next Step in Natural Dyeing
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Almost ten years ago, as I finished the teacher training at Rudolf Steiner College, one of my classmates, Lisa Olmsted, invited me to participate in her natural dyeing session. We used the draft of Joan Almon's "First Steps in Natural Dyeing" as a guide, and, of course, were enthralled with the outcome.

Since then, almost every year I have gathered dye and pots to color silk for my kindergarten or to offer a workshop for sharing what I had learned with others in the community. The feelings of wonder and joy remain undiminished each year as we drink in the feast of color that results. I know many of you have also been journeying on this colorful path and have many stories to share. Joan Almon and Lydia Roberson have offered me the opportunity to gather these stories together and weave them into a second volume of the book on natural dyeing. Joan suggests that our emphasis be in the following areas:

- 1) Experiences in the kindergarten, dyeing with children.
- 2) Experiences at home working with different plants from the garden or nature, including different mordants, etc. with special interest in reds, purples, vivid greens - unusual colors.
- 3) The primary interest of both volumes is on silk as a fiber, but if you have had good experiences with other fibers or have found a way to batik with natural dyes, please share.

I would also be happy to receive any stories or folklore about dyeing or color that you have encountered. Please send all material to me at the following address by March 15, 1999. I look forward to hearing from you all.

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A Brilliant Green

Using a strong Osage orange dyebath (8 oz. or more sawdust in 2-3 gallons of water), dye silk as usual. Save the first and brightest yellows for your "greens" - they will look gold when wet. Rinse them very well in 3 to 4 changes of water (I place them in a bowl under running water and continue rinsing till no more dye is lost.) This thorough rinsing makes it possible for many more strong greens before the dyebath becomes too contaminated. Overdye in indigo about halfway through the strength of your dyebath when the blues are medium in color, not too weak. Leave in for 5 to 10 minutes until desired color is achieved, then immerse in indigo rinse buckets. I do not change these buckets for I feel the fabric continues to gain color from the rinse bath and may leave it there for quite a while. This makes a much brighter green than the "spring" green usually obtained.