

Plum tree bark

yellow, orange, green and grey

YOU NEED

- Plum twigs chopped into small pieces
- Non reactive dye pan (stainless steel works well)
- Indicator strips
- Washing soda
- White vinegar
- Colander
- Bowl or second pan
- Stove
- Mordanted yarn (I use alum at 8%) soaked and drained
- Rainwater (if you have to use tap water leave it for a couple of hours to settle)

METHOD

Soak your twigs for at least 24 hours in rainwater, then divide into two equal parts.

Alkali dye bath -

- Add 1 tbsp washing soda to one pan of water to make it alkali.
- Heat the water to just below a simmer and keep it bubbling gently for half an hour.
- Allow the liquid to cool naturally and drain through a colander into another pan or bowl.
- Measure the pH of the dye in the pan and gradually add enough vinegar to bring it back to neutral.

Neutral dye bath -

- Heat the water to just below a simmer and keep it bubbling gently for half an hour.
- Allow the liquid to cool naturally and drain through a colander into another pan or bowl.
- Add the yarn, gently heat to hand hot and then allow pan to cool naturally.
- Rinse the yarn and hang to dry.
- When completely dry, put the yarn somewhere dark for 2-3 weeks for all the dye pigments to settle.

Modifying colour - this will change the colours from oranges/yellow to green/grey

- Add 2 grams of iron sulphate to 2 litres of water and add yarn. leave for ten minutes until the colour changes
- Rinse extremely well and leave to dry.