

Dyeing a cashmere jumper



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INTRODUCTION



This year I am being more intentional in putting together a wardrobe of warm layers so that I don't get cold in my studio as the temperatures fall in the Autumn and winter.

I bought two second hand cashmere jumpers that are perfect but were a very unflattering greyish cream colour.

This is how I transformed them with rosebay willow herb dye into beautiful warm mustardy yellow.

Any botanical dye will work - the main thing to remember is that you need to protect the delicate fibres of the cashmere and make sure that they don't felt.

You can also use these steps to dye any 100% wool knitted garment.



Supplies

You will need

- Knitted garment - 100% wool (though 95% wool will work, sometimes a small amount of nylon is included)
- Aluminium potassium sulphate - 10% weight of jumper.
- Cream of tartar - 6% weight of jumper
- Dye pot which is not used for food
- Muslin bag to contain leaves
- Plant material - 1 - 2 x weight of dry jumper
- 1 tbsp washing soda*
- 2 tbsp vinegar *
- pH testing paper*
- Wooden spoon not used for food
- Colander not used for food

* optional





Instructions

- Weigh the jumper and make a note of how much it weighs, so that you know how much mordant you need
- Wash in wool soap and rinse really well
- Measure out 10% of the weight of your jumper in aluminium potassium sulphate and dissolve in hot water. Once it is dissolved put it in a glass or plastic bowl and add cold water until it is hand hot. Put the jumper into the bowl, submerge completely and leave it overnight.
- Next day add 6% weight of the dry jumper in cream of tartar to a bowl of water and soak the jumper in it for an hour.

Meanwhile

- Strip the leaves from rosebay willow herb - put them into a muslin bag, the more leaves you have, the deeper the colour (within reason).
- Put the bag into the dye pot and cover it with water. If you want to alter the pH of the dye pan add in 2 tablespoons of washing soda to alkalise the water before bringing the water up to a simmer.
- Simmer for half an hour and then leave to cool overnight.
- Next day, remove the bag of leaves and **add enough vinegar to the dye pan to bring it back to a neutral pH** - check using pH paper. It should be 7 when tested.
- Gently add the mordanted jumper to the dye pan, dipping it in first one way and then upside down to make sure that the dye impregnates all the jumper.
- Leave overnight and then remove the jumper. Lay it in a spare pan or bowl and gently rinse with water.
- Dry flat and then store somewhere dark for a week to let the dye settle into the fibres.
- Gently hand wash with wool soap and dry flat.



Other plants to try

There are many other plants you can try in your dye pot - bracken, buddleia, French marigolds, weld, tansy and sweet cicely are all exceptionally good.

I would love to hear how you get on - if you dye a jumper please tag me @snapdragon.life and if you have any questions just get in touch, you can email me at snapdragonjane@googlemail.com

Much love,

Jane

