

Resource: Making Natural Dyes

Choosing your dye materials:

Make sure you pick your flowers, plants and berries when they are at their freshest or ripest to get the best colour.

Most natural colours can be made with:

- Beetroot, berries, avocado skins (pink reds and purples)
- Turmeric, brown onion skins (yellow tones)
- Lichen, black beans (blues)
- Spirulina powder, carrot tops, artichoke (greens)

The natural dye materials used in this Makerspace Session were:

- Beetroot – pink.
- Turmeric – yellow.
- Spirulina powder – green.

Making natural dyes:

Beetroot -

- Chop the ingredients into small pieces and place in an old steel pan. It's also best to make sure you keep this pan separate and don't use it for cooking afterwards, and a wooden spoon you don't mind dyeing as well!
- Add twice the amount of water as your dye ingredients, bring to the boil, then simmer for at least an hour, stirring occasionally, to get a really strong colour.
- For a thinner dye - strain out the bits and return the coloured liquid to the pan.
- For a thicker dye – blend remaining beetroot with cornflour.

Turmeric and Spirulina -

- Mix in 6 tablespoons of turmeric powder into a cup of hot water – stir until dissolved.
- Add twice the amount of water as your dye ingredients.
- Blend any excess lumps.
- For a thinner dye - strain out the bits and return the coloured liquid to the pan.
- For a thicker dye – blend remaining beetroot with cornflour.