

Botanical Printing & Dyeing

Workshop with Lisa Binkley

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Supply List:

- Up to 3 yards of **undyed** fabric to be dyed and/or printed. The fabrics can be silk, cotton, linen, rayon, a blend of natural fibers (no synthetics), or some of each. Fabrics will NEED to be cleaned/scoured ahead of the workshop. Instructions for doing this are on the next page.
- 1-2x the number of yards of fabric to be used for “blankets”—I recommend cotton flannel or French terry cloth, which should also be scoured. Make sure to have a balance of blanket fabric weight that is equal to or heavier than the weight of the primary fabric to be printed.
- OPTIONAL undyed hand-quilting/sewing threads such as #8 and #12 pearl cotton, embroidery floss, sturdy silk thread, etc. for dyeing
- Fabric scissors
- Scissors for cutting non-fabric
- A sewing needle or two and white sewing thread (we’ll use this to mark individual’s fabrics)
- A measuring tape or long ruler (approx. 24")
- Fitted vinyl or rubber gloves (an extra pair or two would be helpful)
- Clothes that can get messy, as well as close-toed shoes
- A spool/ball of undyed, strong string, twine, or sturdy, non-stretch yarn such as crewel embroidery yarn (white or off white) for tying dye bundles.
- OPTIONAL: A variety of local leaves, seeds, and some flowers that you love. Good options for printing include: all kinds of oak leaves, all kinds of maple leaves (especially Japanese maple leaves), catalpa leaves and seed pods; sumac (except poison sumac) leaves and seeds; peony leaves, rose leaves, raspberry leaves, strawberry leaves, eucalyptus leaves and seeds clusters; fern fronds; perennial geranium leaves; and many other thin but sturdy and heavily-veined leaves (succulent-type leaves don’t work); goldenrod flower clusters, oxalis varieties, lupine leaves and flowers, coreopsis... We will also collect plant material locally once we’re in the workshop area, and you are welcome to use ONLY plant materials from the workshop area during the workshop. I find that this helps to create a special connection between the workshop location and season and the products of the workshop.

Scouring Fabric: Preparing Fabric for Eco-Printing & Dyeing

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It is very important to have scoured (thoroughly clean) fabrics on which we plan to print and dye. Even fabrics that look clean can have residues on them that will block the absorption of pigment, so I recommend using the following techniques to prepare natural fabrics for dyeing and eco-printing. (These are pretty much the instructions found in Jenny Dean's book "Wild Color," which is one of my favorite reference books for botanical dyeing.)

Scouring Plant Fibers (cotton, linen, hemp, rayon, bamboo)

Stove-Top Method: Fill a large (multi-gallon) pot with water + (1-2 t. washing soda/soda ash) + (1-2 t. of cleaning solution like Dawn dish-washing liquid) per gallon of water. Stir the water, washing soda, and cleansing liquid to mix and then add your plant-based fabric. Heat the water to a simmer, and then simmer the fabric at least 2 hrs. Drain off the liquid and gently rinse the fabrics. Air or machine dry them.

OR

Washing Machine Method: If you do not have a pot large enough to undertake this process, I have scoured plant-based fabrics in my washing machine with success. I use the "sanitary" or hottest cycle setting and add the washing soda and Dawn/cleansing liquid directly to the machine. That cycle on my machine runs about 1.5-2 hrs.

Scouring Protein Fibers (silk, wool)

These need to be cleaned more gently than plant fibers.

Wash protein fibers in warm water and ph-neutral cleansing liquid (e.g., Synthrapol, Orvis soap) or Dawn dish-washing liquid. This can be done on the stove-top at a simmer or in the washing machine on a gentle cycle. If it is done on the stove top, put the fabric in room-temperature water and bring the water and fabrics to a gentle simmer. Keep the water and fabric warm, and stir them gently for about an hour. Rinse gently several times. Air or machine dry.