

## Dyeing with Solar Pots

### Preparation

Collect glass jars and lids, as a guide a 1.5litres Kilner jar will hold 100g skein of yarn. Jars of any size can be used.

You can dye wool and silk with this method, or any other protein (animal) yarn. Skein these so the yarn does not tangle.

### You will need:

- Aluminium sulphate – 100g will create a litre of mordant soak. You can reuse this.
- Dye Extracts of choice.
- Detergent – Metapex or Washing up liquid
- Dye spoon – do not use for food.
- Glass jars with lids

### Introduction to Solar Dyeing

Solar dyeing is easy to prepare, but slow to achieve results. The effects are unpredictable but often beautiful. The yarn is first mordanted and then put into the solar pot with the dye, to insure maximum dye uptake. The sun heats the dye bath, fixing the dyes.

### Preparation

Please watch the video on Vimeo – Follow the link.

1. **Clean your Yarn** – There can be oil for spinning and dust on your yarn even though it looks clean. Soak your skein for an hour in warm, soapy water – washing up liquid will do – to make sure it is clean. It will also wet out the yarn so there are no air pockets that can resist dye. **Rinse.**
2. **Cold Mordant** – Mix up a litre of warm water with 100g of alum and soak your yarn in this for 2 days. You can reuse several times.
3. **Build your Solar Pot** - You are going to layer dye extracts and materials within the jar, then add the water. The number of colours you use is determined by the size of your jar. I wouldn't use more than three and these would not be very different – I don't want muddy colours!!

**Note:** We will use between a half teaspoon and a full teaspoon of extract to dye 100g of materials, depending on the potency of the extract. So, use your extracts in moderation.

Do not overfill your jars as the materials will expand when wet and hot. Place the lid on your jar, do not tighten or it might explode as the contents expands. Leave in a greenhouse, conservatory or sunny window ledge for 1 – 3 months depending on how much sun you have.

If you get mould then remove it with kitchen towel.

When complete empty outside as it is likely to smell!!! And wash as usual.

### Ideas

#### Jar 1 – A Single Colour

Select a single colour extract and place it at the bottom of your jar. Add materials and fill with water. This will create a gradient of full strength to pale.

#### Jar 2 – Two Colours

Select two colours and place them below and above your materials. Add your water.

#### Jar 3 – Three Colours

As jar 2 but add a third colour in the middle of your materials. I would do this with colours that relate such as a red and 2 yellows to give a range of oranges.

If you have a large jar you may need to add colours in the middle even if you are using idea 1 or 2.

Play with the jars and materials you have, setting up solar pots as you wish.

**Please be careful of dye chemicals and equipment, keeping them separate from children, animals and foodstuffs. Wear a dust mask when working with powders and gloves to protect your hands.**