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Harvesting Color: How To Find Plants And Make Natural Dyes



Synopsis

Selection of the Craftersâ™ Choice Book ClubBeautiful natural dyes from plants found in the wild or grown in your own backyard. As more and more crafters are discovering, dyeing your own fabric can yield gorgeous colors. Now master dyer Rebecca Burgess identifies 36 plants that will yield beautiful natural shades and shows how easy it is to make the dyes. Pokeweed creates a vibrant magenta, while a range of soft lavender shades is created from elderberries; indigo yields a bright blue, and coyote brush creates stunning sunny yellows. Gathering Color explains where to find these plants in the wild (and for those that can be grown in your backyard, how to nurture them) and the best time and way to harvest them; maps show the range of each plant in the United States and Canada. For the dyeing itself, Burgess describes the simple equipment needed and provides a master dye recipe. The book is organized seasonally; as an added bonus, each section contains a knitting project using wools colored with dyes from plants harvested during that time of the year. With breathtaking color photographs by Paige Green throughout, Gathering Color is an essential guide to this growing field, for crafters and DIYers; for ecologists and botanists; and for artists, textile designers, and art students.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rebecca Burgess is a teacher and natural dye artisan who has worked for more than ten years creating recipes from local flora. She teaches natural dye workshops throughout the country, to crafters, ecologists, and art students, as well as to apparel giants like Levi Strauss. Rebecca is also the founder of EcologicalArts, an organization dedicated to creating, revitalizing, and teaching

functional art forms that utilize natural raw materials. She lives in San Geronimo, California.

I am a spinner in New England who is looking into dyeing my own yarn. This book looked like it contained some good info about mordanting and afterbaths, and it still does. However, I am disappointed that most of the dye recipes are based on plants found in the Southwest (sometimes almost exclusively in California). I can still use some of the recipes in this book with the plants in my area and it gives a pretty good explanation about various baths and whatnot. I will use this book as a jumping off point, but I wish that I could use more of the recipes.

I have recently gotten interested in herbal dyeing (as it crosses over from my artistic side to my nature-loving-herb-garden-growing side) and this is my first book to have bought to help me get started on the path of herbal dyeing. I have to say the pictures are wonderful, the layout is simple, it's well written and everything is explained very well. There are even a few craft projects in here to give you some inspiration on what to do with all that yarn and cotton and everything else you're going to be dyeing. My only complaint is that it mostly focuses on plants found in the South-west, in California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada. Plants like sagebrush, tumbleweeds, and prickly pear cactus. As I live in the Mid-west, in Ohio, most of the plants in the book don't grow in my area unless you cultivate them, which is not a big deal for some of them, but others really won't do well without a greenhouse. On the other hand, there are plants that you can find everywhere you look up here, like Poke berries, Ironweed, and Goldenrod. I would still recommend it to anyone interested in getting into herbal dyes, though, since most of the plants can still be planted and grown here.

Most of the plants were only available in the states and then only in parts of the states. Disappointing since I don't live in the States. Had I known this before I would not have bought the book. Also information and patterns on knitting. I wanted to learn about making my own dues so this book let me down.

I learned so much from this book and, as a very beginner dyer, needed every bit of it. I live in California, so the plants used apply directly to my context (unlike most books on herbalism, ha), but I feel some of the other reviews missed a key point made in the book: to responsibly harvest, use, and explore what grows locally, seasonally, and is native to our own geography and context. Explore the plants that grow abundantly in your own region and/or garden. Make small amounts of dyes, practice, and see what happens. We don't need to ship products from all over the earth, at

tremendous cost to the climate, when we can just use what grows in our own area.

This book has some pictures. I especially like how there are activities for you to include your children! Everything seems to be laid out very nicely and I look forward to using this book next spring. But I was a little disappointed in the plants listed. About half of them only grow in California. There are plenty of dyers in other parts of the world..

A lovely, very thoughtful and well written guide on dyeing with natural ingredients during the seasons they are abundant. For a novice like me, this book is truly a wonderful tutorial on how to begin and how to learn to become a proficient dyer.

The regions where you can find the plants described in the book are very limited. If you live in the Midwest or east, don't bother with this book.

This book is full of beautiful pictures and good instructions. I like how she shows where the plants can be found regionally on the map. I wish the recipes were written out more like recipe with steps and lists instead of in paragraph form just for ease. I also wish there was more instruction and pictures of sample for dying fabric too. Other than that it is a great book and I would recommend it to other dyers.

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