

THE  
URBAN DYER'S  
ALMANAC



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**JANUARY & FEBRUARY**

- Carrot Tops
- Mint Leaves
- Spinach
- Sage
- Rosemary
- Cilantro
- Onion Skins - 2
- Onion Skins

**MARCH & APRIL**



**WHY BUY LOCAL**

Shopping at our neighborhood green markets creates a transparent connection to the source of our food and products, which builds a sense of trust and ethics, important traits for strong communities. Buying local is also good for the environment because it cuts down on fuel use in the transportation of materials and products.



**WHY COMPOST**

Three quarters of our household waste is composed of organic materials that can be easily composted into a valuable source of soil nutrients for our neighborhood gardens, and our public parks. Composting stations are now available at our community green markets to make it easier for citizens to keep organic material and food waste out of the landfills.



### WHAT IS NATURAL DYE?

Natural dyes are colors that are extracted from plants (and insects). They are fixed through the use of mordants. Mordants are metal salts and tannins. Some metal salts are; alum (aluminum sulfate), iron (iron sulfate). Tannic acid and myrobalan are tannins that are used to fix dyes to cellulose (plant) fibers. Natural dyes have been used for thousands of years to produce color, and it is only in the past 100 years that synthetic dyes were invented. Natural dyes are a safer and less costly alternative, and once the fiber is prepared to accept the dye, there are many colors that can be achieved.

### HOW IS THE DYE MADE?

Common vegetables, plants, barks, berries, insects, and lichens can be used as natural dye sources. The main source for our dyestuff is the GrowNYC greenmarket where we find plants and vegetables that are in season and are of local origin. The dyestuffs or plant matter is boiled in water to extract the dye. The material to be dyed is first "mordanted" with the chosen metal salt or tannin by heating it in water with the mordant.

### SAFETY

Observe safety when dealing with plants because some can cause allergic reactions. WEAR RUBBER GLOVES throughout all stages of the natural dye process. In the dye process, mordant salts are usually the most toxic problem. Do not use the same pots and utensils that are used for cooking.

### SCOURING

Proper cleaning is essential for the dye and mordants to absorb into the fiber. Synthrapol or Woolite can be used at a ratio of 1 tsp per pound of fiber.

Use a large vessel so the fiber can move around freely.

PARSONS  
THE NEW SCHOOL  
FOR DESIGN

### MORE INFORMATION

This Project is being conducted through Parsons The New School For Design / SDS / Integrated Design Program: IDC Collab: Natural Dyeing.

For more info contact Laura Sansone, Part Time Assistant Professor at The New School:  
[sansonel@newschool.edu](mailto:sansonel@newschool.edu)

### HELPFUL LINKS

The Yarn Tree  
The Woolery  
Aurora Silk  
Maiwa Handprints  
Parsons SDS  
The New School



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## NEW YORKS FARMS & MARKETS

Cardonna Farm / Ulster County, NY  
- Apple Branches

D & J Organic / Suffolk County, NY  
- Carrot tops  
- Spinach

Dutchmill Gardens / Gloucester County, NJ  
- Daffodils

Duva Farm / Salem, NJ  
- Daffodills

Fantastic Gardens /  
- Catmint

Fiori di Fenice / Broome County, NY  
- Oriental Lilies

Grown on Long Island ?  
- Daffodils  
- Iris



### NEW YORK FARMING

Grow NYC  
American Farmland  
Trust  
NY Farm Bureau  
NYS - DAM  
Local Harvest



### UNION SQUARE MARKET

Greenmarkets have been operating throughout New York City and the five boroughs since 1976. They offer residents and visitors a place to purchase a variety of products directly from the farmers helping to sustain the local NYS economy.

[Click here to watch the Grow NYC video about UDA](#)

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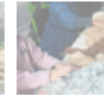
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## ROSEMARY



**Plant Collected:** Rosemary

**Date Collected:** Feb 12, 2011

**Part of plant used and amount:** The whole plant (18g)

**Extraction process notes:**

Simmer for four hours and let cool before using the dye. Use enough water to cover the plant material. Strain the dye material from the plant material.

**Dye Recipe**

**Material/ WOF:** Wool 4.5g/ Cotton 4.5g

**Dye/volume:** 3 1/2 cups

**Mordant/amount:** alum (15% WOF) for wool/ tannin (10%WOF) for cotton

**Additions:** 1/2 tsp iron

**Recipe notes:**

Mordant the fiber for 1 hr using enough water so the fiber moves freely in the bath. Rinse and put in dye. Heat the material in the dye bath for 2 hrs. Let cool. Rinse until water runs clear.

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## PURPLE CARROTS 2



Plant Collected: Purple Carrots

Date Collected: 03/4/2013

Part of plant used and amount: Peels- 320 grams

Extraction process notes: Simmered at 170 degrees for 20 minutes

Material/ WOF: 50 grams of Icelandic wool fleece

Dye/volume: Enough dye to submerge fiber

Mordant/amount: Alum at 15%

Additions: 2 grams of iron

Recipe notes: Heated up fiber in dye bath with iron at 170 degrees for 1hr. Let it cool and soak in dye for 24 hrs. Rinse

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## RED & YELLOW ONION SKINS



**Plant Collected:** Red and Yellow Onion Skins

**Date Collected:** March 5, 2011

**Part of plant used and amount:** 1 shopping bag full of skins/  $\frac{3}{4}$  yellow skins and  $\frac{1}{4}$  red skins.

**Extraction process notes:**

Raise to a boil and simmer for 1 hr. Let cool. Used enough water to cover the skins. Strain the dye material from the plant material.

**Dye Recipe**

**Material/ WOF:** Silk/ 3g

**Dye/volume:** 5 cups

**Mordant/amount:** alum (15% WOF)

**Additions:** Citric acid (squeeze of lemon)

**Recipe notes:**

Mordant the silk in alum for 1 hr on low heat. Use enough water to cover the fiber so it moves freely in the bath. Rinse and place in dye. Let the silk sit in the dye bath for 1 hr at a low simmer. Rinse until water runs clear. Squeeze lemon on fiber. Let dry and then rinse again.

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*compostable*



*architecture*



*recyclable*



*interiors*



*repurposed*



*fashion*



*landfill*



*product*















