

# Natural Dying

## **Class Length:**

1 hour 15 min

## **Class size:**

Up to 25

## **Class location:**

Learning Lab at the Farber Farm

## **Materials:**

- Clothing or bandanas
- Dye materials – plants
- Rubber bands or rope/string
- Buckets
- Labels
- pots
- Bowls
- Salt
- Vinegar
- Water and lots of it!

## **Introduction:**

The world of natural plant dyeing is vast and exciting. There are many ways to tie dye with plants. We will explore two different methods. The first method is called the roll up method. We take different plants that we like and roll them up inside our shirt or bandana. Then if we want, we can rubber band certain sections to see if we can create a pattern. The second method is to simmer the plant material until the natural dye of the plant is infused with the water. Then we will tie up our clothing in a pattern of our choice and submerge it for a period that we desire – this could be anywhere from 10 minutes to 2 hours. Afterwards we will let our clothing sit, then unravel it and wash it.

## **Instructions:**

When naturally dying with plants its important to set your dye so that it doesn't fade. Dying with flowers and herbs suggests setting your plant in a mix of vinegar and water. Generally, 1-

part vinegar to 4 parts water. Simmer the items for 1 hour then let cool or let dry. If using berries or other acidic foods, combine ½ cup salt to 8 cups water. Increase when needed. Simmer the items for 1 hour then let cool or let dry.

Roll up method – take your item and lay it flat. Choose from the plants offered and lay them out however you would like on your shirt. For the roll up method, this will create spots of color more than blending of color. After you lay out your plants of choice, slowly roll up the material in sections. Then, bind your material together with rubber bands or ropes. Next, steam your item over a pot of simmering water. The best way to do this is with a steam rack or a colander. Let the item steam for about an hour. Let the item cool, then unravel and remove plants. Let the item dry.

Bath method – simmer/boil plants or veggies until desired color has infused in water. Meanwhile, tie up your material with rubber bands or string tie the items. Dip dying doesn't generally work because the dye is not as strong as synthetic dyes, therefore the item has to soak in the infused water for a longer period. Usually, let the clothing set for an hour in the liquid, on a low simmer. Afterwards, take out and let cool then unravel and let dry.

- For the times when preparing the tshirts takes longer than the 1 hour or 1 hour 15 minute time slot, have campers come back and pick up their items for schmooze, or have visiting students get their items before they leave camp (arrange with teacher).