

Preparation of fabric - Lisa Binkley workshop

Instructions for Preparing Fabric for Eco-Printing & Dyeing

- It is very important to have clean fabrics on which to print and dye. Even fabrics that look clean can have residues on/in 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.)
- For Plant Fibers (cotton, linen, hemp, rayon, Tencel)
- Fill a large pot with water + (1-2 t. washing soda + 1-2 t. of cleaning solution like Dawn dish-washing liquid) / 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 for at least 2 hours
- Drain off the liquid and gently rinse the fabrics. Air or machine dry them.
- 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 hours
- For Protein Fibers (silk, wool)
- These need to be cleaned much more gently than plant fibers
- Wash protein fibers in warm water and pH-neutral cleansing liquid or Dawn dish-washing liquid. This can be done on the stove-top or in the washing machine on a gentle cycle.
- If done on the stovetop, put the fabric in cool/room-temperature water and bring the water and fabrics to a warm temperature together. Keep the water and fabric warm and stir gently for about an hour.
- Rinse gently several times
- Air dry