

# Botanical Printing & Boro Stitching

5-Day Workshop with Lisa Binkley

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## **Workshop Description:**

Dyeing with plant pigments has been practiced for as long as humans have made cloth and wished to beautify it. Printing with plants has been practiced for generations through such traditions as Easter egg adornment and, in the past few decades, as a way to adorn fabrics.

During this five-day workshop students learn about the history of dyeing and printing with plants; how to prepare fabric for dyeing and printing; ways to secure and alter botanical dye color on cloth; and many ways to get patterns and images on fabric with plants.

During the first three days we will use a variety of local plant material as well as botanical dyes to create color and pattern on our fabrics. We will focus on printing plant material on fabrics; some dyeing with botanical pigments; printing and dyeing together; and possibly using some shibori techniques in conjunction with botanical printing and dyeing.

During the last two days, students will learn and practice hand piecing, applique, and stitching/quilting techniques inspired by Japanese boro mending that are well suited to these fabrics. Students will use their recently printed fabrics to begin an art quilt, art fabric panel, or garment.

## **Supply List:**

- Up to 3 yards total of **undyed** fabrics to be printed and/or dyed. The fabrics can be silk, cotton, new or vintage linen, hemp, rayon, and/or a blend of natural fibers (but **no synthetics and no wool**). All fabrics should be light or medium weight (think PFD cotton, various weights of linen, silk noil, etc.). Fabrics will NEED to be cleaned/scoured ahead of the workshop. Instructions are on the last page of this packet. **Students seem to be happiest with their results when they bring a mix of fabrics that includes some silk and some linen.**
- 1-2 times the number of yards of fabric to be used for “blankets” (e.g., 3-6 yds.)—this can be muslin, cotton flannel, French terycloth; **I highly recommend cotton flannel.** Make sure to have a balance of blanket fabric weight that is equal to or heavier than the weight of the fabric to be printed. (I use cotton flannel as a blanket for lighter weight fabrics and French terycloth as a blanket for medium to heavier-weight fabrics.) This should also be scoured.
- **OPTIONAL** undyed hand-quilting/sewing threads such as #8 and #12 pearl cotton, embroidery floss, sturdy silk thread, sashiko thread, etc. This should be scoured like the fabrics to prep for dyeing.
- Fabric scissors
- A measuring tape or long ruler (approx. 24")

- Fitted vinyl or rubber gloves (an extra pair or two would be helpful)
- Clothes that can get messy, as well as closed-toe shoes (for the first 3 days)
- A spool/ball of undyed, strong string, twine, or sturdy, non-stretch yarn such as crewel embroidery yarn (white or off white) for tying dye bundles.
- 6-12 Ace-type bandages as an alternative way of tying up your bundles.
- OPTIONAL: A variety of local leaves, seeds, and some flowers that you love. (We will have time to collect plant material locally once we're at the workshop.)
- Sewing supplies for Days 4-5:
  - You can piece your fabrics by machine or hand; it's up to you. Bring your sewing machine or check with the studio about rental options if you would like to piece by machine. Bring neutral-colored machine sewing threads if you will be piecing by machine.
  - We will be doing hand sewing/embellishing in addition to whatever piecing we do. Bring hand-sewing supplies including needles and coordinated threads (sewing thread, cotton and/or silk embroidery floss, sizes 5, 8, and 12 pearl cotton, etc.). Hand-sewing needles such as size 7 embroidery needles and size 24 chenille needles are ideal for hand stitching. Bring a range of embroidery thread and floss weights, values, and colors that you think you'll want to use with botanically printed fabrics: these will likely include greys, black, cream, white, deep reds, soft greens, peachy tones, greyed pinks and purples; rusty oranges and browns, golds, and soft yellows.
  - Sewing/straight pins for pinning fabrics together
  - Thin quilt batting (cotton or a natural blend) and backing fabric if you would like to make your dyed and printed fabrics into a quilt
  - A fabric marking tool such as a chalk pencil or chalk wheel
  - A garment pattern and notions if you would like to make your printed and dyed fabrics into a garment
  - Whatever other hand sewing supplies and tools you like to use (a rotary cutter and mat, thimbles, thread wax, embroidery hoop, safety pins for basting layers together, etc.)

# Instructions for Preparing Fabric for Eco-Printing & Dyeing

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It is very important to have clean fabrics on which to print and dye. Even fabrics that look clean can have residues on 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 solution to mix and then add your plant-based fabric. Heat the water to a simmer, and then simmer the fabric for at least 2 hrs. 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 hrs.

## **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 stove top, 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.

