



Adelaide Walker

Fibres and equipment for feltmaking and spinning

Acid Dyes Factsheet

Varying the amount of dye used will result in a paler or deeper colour. The figures below give the weight of dye to use **per 100g** of dry fibre:

Pale shade	0.5g
Medium	1.5g
Deep shade	4.5g

In all cases use 50g to 100g of white vinegar or citric acid **per 100g** as a fixer

Preparation:

- Pre-wash fabric to be dyed in hot water and detergent - rinse thoroughly and leave damp - this process will remove manufacturers finishes - a water softener e.g. Calgon may be added in hard water areas to assist cleaning.
- Pre mix the dye with a small amount of hot water until fully dissolved.

Stove top Method:

- Fill a metal container with sufficient hot water to allow your fibres to move freely
- Dyeing should be in a stainless steel or enamel pot. Aluminium reacts with acid and the vinegar will dissolve part of the metal into your dyebath, interacting with the dye as a mordant whether you want it to or not and leaving permanent marks on the inside of the pot.
- Add the pre-mixed dye and fibres
- Heat for 10-15 minutes
- Remove fabric from the pan and add vinegar
- Return the fabric to the pan and bring to the boil (for wool) or about 85deg for silk. Simmer for a minimum of 30 minutes, agitating gently occasionally for an even colour
- If the liquid remains highly coloured, add a little extra vinegar and simmer for a further 5 minutes or use for a second lighter weight piece of fabric or fibres for a pale shade.
- Remove from the dye bath and rinse in soapy water until no further dye runs out

Microwave method

- Place enough warm water to cover your fibre in a microwaveable container— don't add your fibre yet
- Add premixed dye and mix well
- Add vinegar and mix well
- Add your fibre to the container
- Cover and place in your microwave, along with a small container of water (which helps maintain moisture)
- Microwave on High (800W) for 4 minutes, turn and repeat.
- Allow fibre to cool and rinse with tepid water.
- Remove from the dye bath and rinse in soapy water until no further dye runs out

Sensible precautions

- Keep dye containers closed and away from young children
- Avoid skin and eye contact and inhalation
- Wear gloves when working with the dye
- Wear old clothes
- Containers used for dyeing may themselves end up stained. Don't use your best saucepans