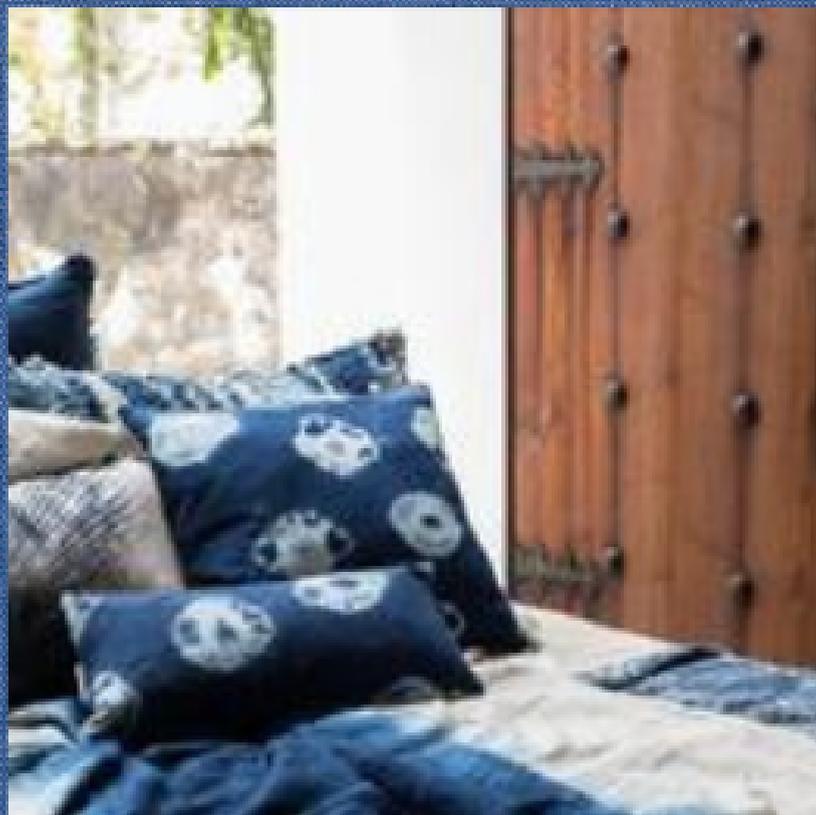


# Natural Plant Dyes *and* HOMEWARES

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Why You Should Choose  
**ONLY Natural**



# **Natural Plant Dyes & Homewares**

## **Why You Should Choose ONLY Natural**

### **What are natural plant dyes?**

Natural plant dyes are derived from the leaves, flowers, fruits, stems and roots of various plants, and have been used by humans for thousands of years.

Compared with the synthetic and potentially very harmful dyes widely used in the homeware, fashion and many other industries today, natural plant dyes come with a vast range of health and environmental benefits. Simply put, natural plant dyes follow the laws of nature.

Along with being interminably healthier for both humans and the planet, natural plant dyes have a clear and definite aesthetic appeal, particularly when it comes to homewares.

The natural, soft hues and tones of these plant dyes provide a classic look that will fit seamlessly with any style of decor.

If you are one to appreciate the beauty of nature, you will certainly appreciate the look that can only be achieved through the natural plant-dyeing process.



## **Why choose natural plant dyes over synthetic dyes?**

There are a myriad of reasons why you might choose natural plant dyes over synthetic dyes. Here are some common ones:

### **❖ Reduced impact on the environment**

As plant dyes are derived from natural, renewable sources, they have a greatly reduced impact on the environment.

Plant dyes are naturally biodegradable. They produce very little waste, and their disposal does not cause air or ocean pollution. Plant dyes do not require the sheer level of manufacturing and production of synthetic dyes, and have a carbon neutral footprint.

Conversely, synthetic dyes contain chemicals and carcinogens that are harmful to both the environment and humans. Toxic residuals from the dyeing process eventually end up in our oceans, which poses a catastrophic threat to marine life.

In fact, up to 20% of industrial water pollution is a result of synthetic fabric dyes and treatments.

Thousands of synthetic chemicals are used in the treatment (dyeing, bleaching and brightening) of fabrics within the textile industry - it is safe to say that synthetic dye pollution is a serious, dire and potentially global issue.

When you consider the toxic and harmful effects of synthetic dye manufacture and disposal to our environment, to the natural simplicity of natural plant dyes, the choice over which to support is clear.

By choosing products with natural plant dyes, we are all playing a part in helping to preserve and protect our precious environment, as well as helping to reduce our unhealthy reliance on harmful and toxic ingredients and products.

There is a healthier way!



## ❖ **Reduced impact on our health**

Along with having a catastrophic effect on our environment's health, synthetic dyes also pose a significant risk to *human* health.

The myriad of chemicals used in the production of synthetic dyes can wreak havoc on our bodies in more ways than one.

Allergies to textile dyes are relatively common and include potentially severe eczema/dermatitis when dyes which are unbound "leak" or "bleed" from the fabric onto the skin. This can also be an issue with water soluble dyes when the body perspires.

It's helpful (and sobering) to know that after dyeing, only 65% of the colour is retained in the fabric - 35% of the dye is expelled.

Worse, when broken down, azo dyes - some of the most commonly used dyes in the textile industry - release chemicals that are known to be carcinogenic.

Further, the chemicals in synthetic dyes don't merely dissolve - they are absorbed through the skin, or breathed in by us after evaporating.

When considering the health risks of synthetic dyes to us as consumers, we should also think about the health risks to the people working with the dyes during the manufacturing process.

As well as touching the chemicals, these workers are breathing in the surrounding air, and potentially drinking the resultant polluted water.

Natural plant dyes are non-toxic and non-allergenic. They pose MUCH less of a health risk to us as consumers, those involved in the

manufacturing process, and those living near the manufacturing and factories.

Some natural plant dyes also have antimicrobial properties, making them safer for children, especially.



## ❖ Supports an eco-friendly, healthy home and lifestyle

We already know about the harmful effects of synthetic dyes to the environment and our health. And, we all naturally want what is best for our loved ones.

We all want to live in a home and environment that is free of toxins and pollutants. We like to choose foods that are free of artificial colours, because we know that these foods are better for our health. We can also choose to avoid *products* which have been artificially coloured.

By choosing to purchase products that use natural plant dyes, we are not only choosing the best for our home and our family, we are choosing the best for our environment. We are choosing to reduce our carbon footprint.

Natural plant dyes *naturally* support an eco-friendly lifestyle!



## **Traditional use of plant-based dyes in fabrics**

Humans have been using plants for textile dyeing for several thousand years, and natural dyes have played an important role in our lives since that time.

Before the introduction and manufacture of synthetic ingredients and products, humans were forced to rely solely on the things that could be easily sourced around them, including food, minerals, insects and plants.

Of course, terms such as “eco-friendly” and “biodegradable” were not part of the vocabulary of our early ancestors! Then, processes were simply carried out in accordance with the laws of nature, with little or no impact to the surrounding environment.

Yet at some point, humans decided that cheap products needed to be produced on a large scale, fast. Nature would no longer suffice as the sole or main provider of our needs.

The first synthetic dye was produced in the mid-nineteenth century, and natural dyes soon after fell out of favour with humans, as the widespread production of synthetic dyes effectively took over what nature had been providing us with for millennia.

Today, although synthetic dye options are widely available, natural plant dyes are enjoying a resurgence in popularity, as more and more of us are becoming aware of the dangers of toxic chemicals, and embracing a natural-based, eco-friendly lifestyle.

## Which plants are used to make dyes?

Natural plant dyes are derived from the leaves, flowers, fruits, stems and roots of many different plants. The oldest and most extensively used of these is indigo, which has been used by many Asian countries for over four thousand years.

Here are some plants commonly used in natural plant dyes, and the colours they produce. You may be surprised by the volume and diversity of plants!

**BLUES & PURPLES:** Indigo foliage, blueberries, elderberries, hyacinths, cornflowers, dogwood fruit, woad leaves, blackbeans, mulberries, red maple tree bark

**BROWNS:** Chestnut hulls, oak bark, cutch tree, walnut hulls, dandelion root, coffee grinds, yellow dock, birch, tea leaves, limonite, brown clay, ivy stems, sumac leaves & powder, goldenrod shoots

**YELLOWS:** Saffron, St John's Wort, turmeric, tea leaves, brown onion skin, goldenrod flowers, marigold flowers, bay leaves, himalayan rhubarb root, pomegranate rind, queen anne lace flowers, larkspur, kamala seed pods, weld herb, gamboge tree resin, annatto seeds, osage orange

**ORANGES:** Turmeric, brown onion skins, bloodroot, giant coreopsis, eucalyptus leaves, barberry

**GREENS:** Spinach, tea tree, nettle leaves, chamomile leaves, larkspur, yarrow, red onion skins, black-eyed susans, dyer's greenweed

**REDS & PINKS:** Teak leaf, hibiscus, avocado, sumac berries, red elderberry, brazilwood, sycamore, roses, madder roots, St John's Wort, beetroot, red basil, lichens, white bedstraw roots, cherries

**BLACKS & GREYS:** Sumac leaves, black beans, iris roots, walnut hulls, oak galls



## *Benefits of natural plant dyes*

- derived from natural, renewable sources, imposing no harm to the environment
  - biodegradable
  - non-toxic and non-allergenic
  - reduces reliance on harmful, toxic ingredients and products
- contain no chemicals or carcinogens
  - produces no or very little waste
    - carbon neutral
  - provides a natural aesthetic appeal, harnessing the colours of nature
- eliminates allergies and skin problems caused by synthetic dyes
- naturally supports an eco-friendly lifestyle



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