



# CAPTURE SPRING WITH TEXTILES

WOVEN 2023 has been all about natural dyes with the Growing Colour Together movement! The aim is to get everyone growing around Kirklees.

At this time of year many people have access to wonderful flowering gardens and green spaces, whether these are intended for dyes or not. That's why we'd like to get everyone involved in capturing a snapshot of Spring to enjoy in the months to come! In this project we'd like you and your family to get involved and create an eco-printed piece by gathering, pressing and bundle dyeing with the plants around you.



## IN THIS MAKE AT HOME PROJECT YOU WILL LEARN HOW TO:

- Prepare cotton for a dye technique
- Find out how to set your flowers to capture spring
- What to do to reveal your spring print later in the year

We want everyone to press on the same spring day - 9th July and to reveal and share with us on Friday 1st September. This way you can take your spring press into school as a show and tell



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# PREPARING YOUR FABRIC FOR DYEING

## YOU WILL NEED:

- Natural laundry liquid
- Cotton fabric
- A wooden spoon
- Scales
- Unsweetened soya milk (1 litre per 400g of fabric)
- A bucket
- A washing machine



## CHOOSING THE CORRECT FABRIC

Natural dyes will not bind with synthetic fibres such as polyester or nylon, this is because synthetic fibres are mostly plastic-based and therefore simply not porous enough to absorb plant-based pigments. When we have synthetic fibres which are brightly coloured, this is because the dyes have chemicals in which allow them to bind successfully to the fibres. These chemicals are engineered to ensure that the colours achieved will be bright and last a long time without fading due to washing or exposure to light. Whilst these fibres and dyes will withstand a lot of wear, they can have a lot of negative impacts on the environment. Natural dyes and fibres are much kinder to the wear.

environment and are safer to work with and wear. Natural fibres are naturally much more porous than synthetic fibres and therefore much more likely to have successful results when dyed with plant-based dyes. Natural fibres can be broken down into two groups: fibres which come from plants, these are known as cellulose fibres such as cotton, linen, hemp and flax; and fibres which come from animals, these are known as protein fibres such as wool and silk. When choosing fabrics for your natural dye project, it is important to choose fabrics made of fibres from these two groups.

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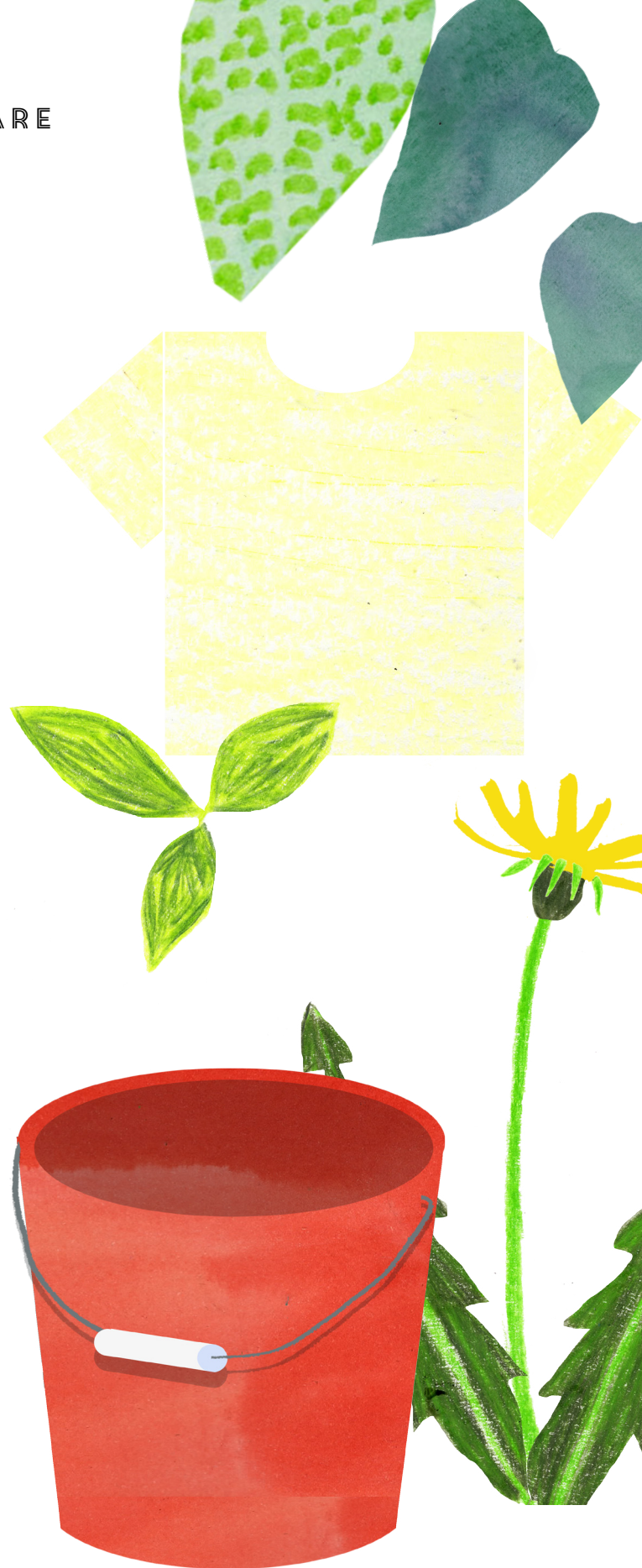


## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO 'PREPARE YOUR FABRIC'?

Preparing your fabric for natural dyeing is an important step which will help you to achieve successful results. Preparing your fabric comes in two steps: scouring and mordanting. Scouring is a process which helps to remove any dirt, finishes or oils from your fabric which might otherwise work as a barrier between the dyes and the fabric. Mordanting is a step which takes place after scouring to help bind the dyes to the fabric for a brighter, more longlasting result. There are many ways to mordant fabric depending on which mordant you use, and these can each change the results of the dyes; however, we are going to cover a simple, safe mordant which can be done at home by anyone. dyes will not be as bright or colourfast as synthetic dyes, but these steps will help you to yield better, more colourfast results from your natural dyes.

These instructions are for preparing cotton fabric for dyeing. There will be any number of cotton things you already own that can be transformed with natural dyes, such as an old tshirt, tea towel or even your bed sheets!

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## SCOURING

Scouring is essentially just washing your fabric. To scour your fabric, you will need to use a natural ph neutral laundry liquid, you can wash it either in the washing machine on a 40 degree cycle, or this can be done by hand. Ensure to rinse and wring out your fabric thoroughly before you begin mordanting.

## MORDANTING

1. To mordant your fabric you will need to first weigh it. As a general rule of thumb, use 1 litre of soya milk for every 400g of fabric.

2. Pour the soya milk into your bucket with approximately 5 litres of water to dilute it. Give it a stir and then place your fabric into the bucket making sure there's enough room to swill it around a bit. This will ensure that you get an even covering of soya milk onto your fabric. Add more water if needed.

3. Leave the fabric to soak for 12 hours, making sure to give it a stir a couple of times to make sure all of the fabric is getting covered by the milk.

4. Carefully remove the fabric from the bucket, making sure to squeeze out any excess milk – leave the milk in the bucket (preferably somewhere cool) as you'll be coming back to it.

5. Put the fabric on a spin cycle in the washing machine and hang it out to dry.

6. Once the fabric is dry, come back to your bucket and give the milk a stir to make sure it hasn't separated. Dip your fabric back into the bucket briefly to coat the fabric in soya milk again before putting it back into the washing machine on another spin cycle. Make sure not to rinse your fabric in this time.

7. Repeat step 6 one more time to ensure your fabric is coated well in the milk and then hang it up to dry.

8. Leave your fabric for at least a week before you begin dyeing it. Adding these layers of soya milk protein and allowing plenty of time to process will allow your dyes to bind more easily with the fabric



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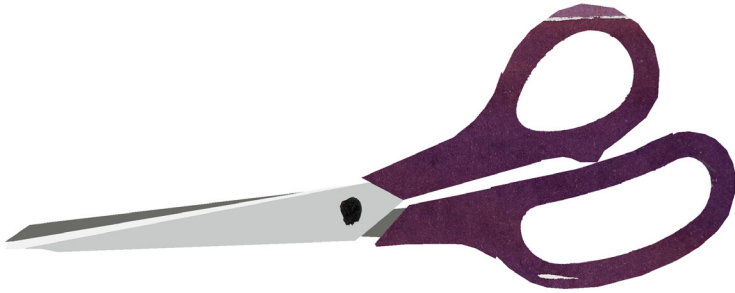
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# GATHERING & PRESSING FLOWERS

Pressing flowers is a wonderful way to capture the seasons to enjoy later on. Pressing flowers is a process which allows you to preserve the shape and colour of plants by drying them flat. This project will allow you to create a snapshot of nature, whether that's from your garden or a local green space by pressing and printing plants into cotton.



## YOU WILL NEED

- Scissors
- Flower press or a few heavy books
- Kitchen roll
- Card if using flower press

## GATHERING

When gathering plants for this project, it is best to try and collect flowers which are freshly bloomed. If the flowers are too wilted, colours may not be as bright, and prints may not be as crisp. For best results, try to collect the flowers at the time you'd like to press them, but if this is not possible, pop them in some water until you are ready. Pressing on the same day is best.

When you are selecting plants for pressing, consider what you would like your print to look like. Are there particular colours or petal shapes which you are drawn to? Does your plant have interesting leaves? It is important to note that not all plants will have a strong outcome when eco-printed, as the plants must be rich in tannins for their colour to transfer onto textiles. However, you may choose to use this project to try out different plants and explore colour for yourself. Snip plants at the stem and carefully transport them to your pressing area, ensuring to keep leaves and petals intact

Here are some suggestions of plants to gather and press which should create great textile prints:

- Marigolds
- Coreopsis
- Bracken
- Cosmos (darker shades)
- Daffodils
- Poppies

- Dandelions
- Dock leaves
- Hollyhocks (darker shades)
- Dahlia

Note: If you are foraging for plants in a local green space, you must check that you have permission to forage there. Do not pick anything you are not familiar with and only take what you need.



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## PRESSING

Now that you have gathered your plants, the next step is to press them. Pressing the plants will help to create crisp designs when you move on to creating your textile prints. Pressing can be done either in a flower press or in a book, both techniques work well, the main goal is to add weight to flatten them as they dry.

### TO PREPARE YOUR FLOWER PRESS:

1. Unscrew the screws around the edges of the press and lift the top half off.
2. If your flower press does not have card inside, add a few sheets of card. This is helpful for you to create a few layers within the press and will allow you to dry more plants.
3. Place a piece of kitchen roll onto a piece of card in your press – you are now ready to add your flowers.

\*Go to Pressing your Flowers\*

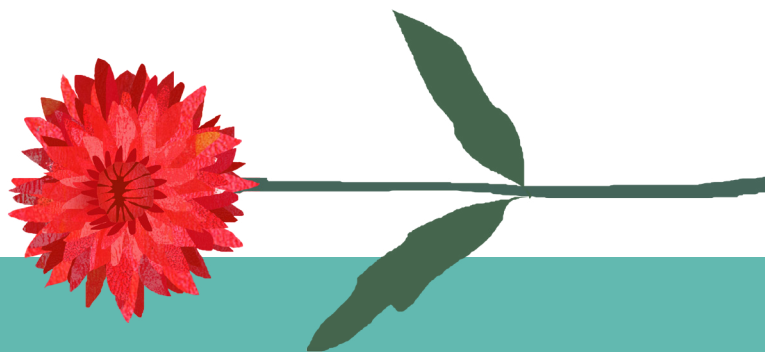
4. Once you have added your flowers, you can cover with another piece of kitchen roll and card, and then screw the top back on tightly.
5. Now it's time to wait. Depending on the flowers you use, this can take from a few days to a few weeks. You can check on your flowers intermittently and carefully screw the press back together to give them longer if needed.

### TO PREPARE YOUR BOOK:

1. Select a thick book and open it on a page around the middle of the book. Pressing your flowers in the centre pages of the book will give you the most weight to flatten your flowers.
2. Line the two pages with kitchen roll, this is where you will place your flowers.

\*Go to Pressing your Flowers\*

3. Once you have placed the flowers in the book, close and weigh down with a few more heavy books on top.
4. Now it's time to wait. Depending on the flowers you use, this can take from a few days to a few weeks. You can check on your flowers intermittently and carefully close the book to give them longer if needed



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## PRESSING YOUR FLOWERS:

1. Select a flower and lay it out flat on a piece of kitchen roll. This will help to absorb moisture from the plant. Open out the petals and leaves so that they are lying flat and visible. Don't worry about creating a picture at this point, as that will come later.

2. For thicker plants, you may choose to gently pull petals off to separate them and create individual petal prints later. A thicker flower head will take longer to dry and may not have as clear results when it comes to printing on textiles later. You can also use scissors to remove any extra leaves if you feel there are too many.

3. You may find that flower heads pop up slightly due to their form. This is okay, as the weight from your press will help them find their place. Try not to cut the flower from this part as this can make your flower fall apart.

4. When laying out your plants for pressing, ensure to place them down carefully without overlapping one another. You can add more layers on different pages if needed. It is best to dry a few more plants than you think you may need so that you have a nice selection to choose from when creating your eco-print. Whatever you don't use can be kept for another project.

5. Cover with kitchen roll, ensuring not to disturb the arrangement and close your book or flower press.

## REVEALING YOUR DRIED FLOWERS

Once your flowers are flat and dry, you can then remove them from your press. To do this, gently peel back the kitchen roll, making sure not to damage the plants as they may stick to it slightly. Use tweezers if needed. Place pressed plants carefully onto something flat to protect their form. You are now ready to create your prints!



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# CREATING A BUNDLE-DYED PRINT WITH DRIED FLOWERS

## WHAT IS 'BUNDLE DYEING'?

'Bundle dyeing' or 'eco-printing' is a natural dye process in which plants are wrapped in fabric and then steamed or simmered to embed prints of the plants onto the fabric. There are many ways to explore eco-prints and achieve varying results through the use of mordants and modifiers. This tutorial will cover a basic bundle dyeing technique

## YOU WILL NEED:

- Prepared cotton fabric square 25cm x 25cm
- An additional square of cotton fabric 25cm x 25cm, it does not matter whether this piece is prepared or not
- Embroidery hoop – 9inches / 22cm
- Twine
- Pressed flowers
- A pot
- Steamer (if you prefer, this technique is possible without it though)
- Scissors
- A small piece of wood/ stick approx. 15cm in length, small enough to fit into a pot lengthways.
- Tongs
- An iron



## CREATING YOUR BUNDLE

1. This technique requires water in order to rehydrate the plants and create the prints. If your fabric square is not already wet, run it under the tap and wring it out so that the fabric is damp. Lay out your prepared fabric square flat on the table in front of you.
2. Now it's time to create your design. Carefully select your pressed plants and lay out on the fabric. Think carefully about colours and design. If you have dried separate petals, you can lay these down to create floral shapes or letters. Be as creative as you like!
3. Once you are happy with your design, carefully place the other square of fabric on top making sure to keep your design intact. The second square will protect the design and ensure it does not become distorted when steamed.



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4. Fold the fabric widthways as if closing a book and then place the piece of wood lengthways across the bottom of the fabric.

5. Tightly roll the fabric around the stick and secure in place with twine. You'll want to wrap the twine around the fabric covering as much surface area as possible. This will ensure the fabric is pressed tightly against the plants and will create a more successful print. Tie tightly.

### SIMMERING / STEAMING YOUR BUNDLE

This technique can be done in two ways, either by simmering or steaming.

1. Fill the pot with water and place on a medium heat on a stove. This will help to transfer the print without boiling the plants inside.

2. If simmering, place the bundle into the water, it will most likely float to the top but that is okay. Cover with a lid and leave to simmer for 1 hour.

3. If steaming, place your steamer on top of the water filled pot and place the bundle inside. Cover with a lid and leave to steam for one hour.

4. Make sure to open a window and keep the room well ventilated whilst your bundle is cooking as the plants can give off strong smells.

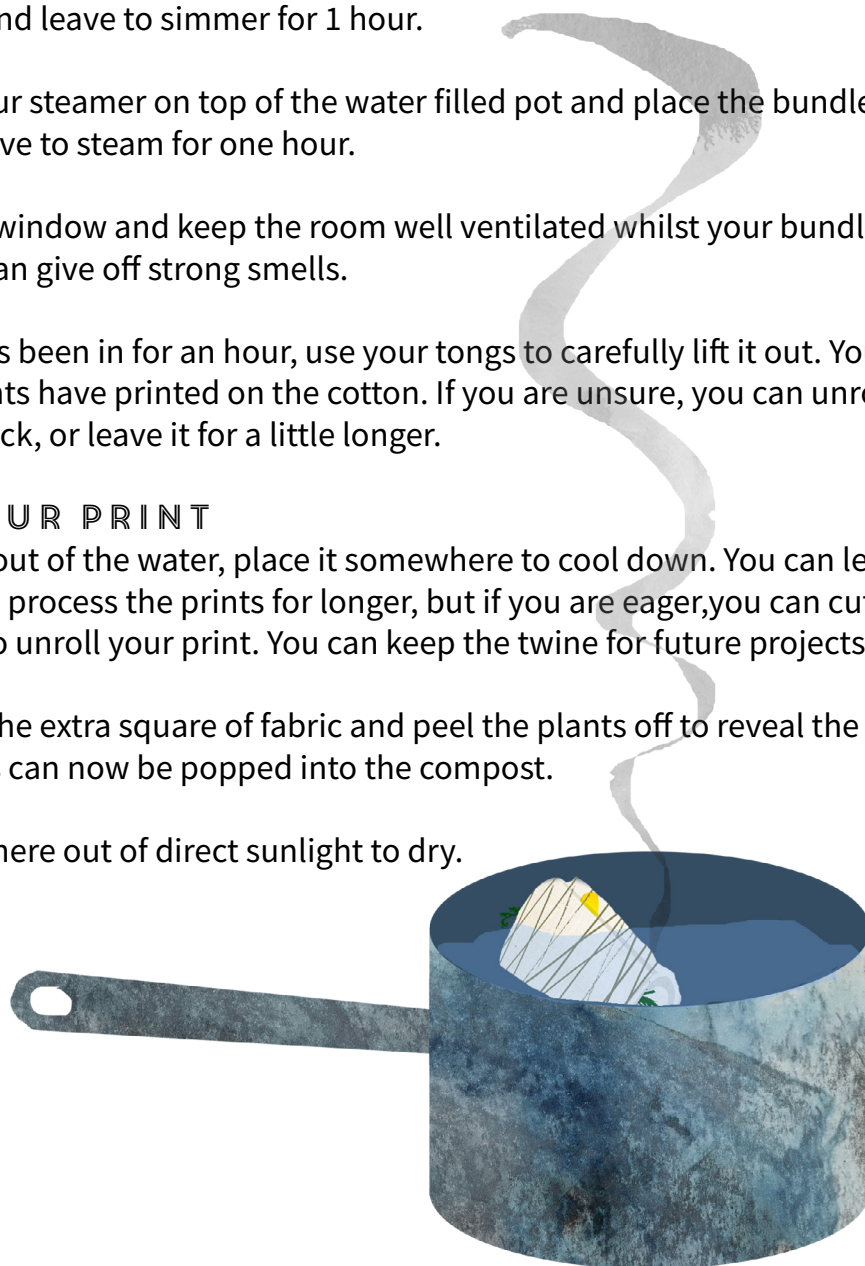
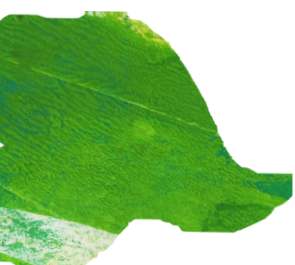
5. Once your bundle has been in for an hour, use your tongs to carefully lift it out. You should see signs that your plants have printed on the cotton. If you are unsure, you can unroll the bundle slightly and check, or leave it for a little longer.

### REVEALING YOUR PRINT

1. Once your bundle is out of the water, place it somewhere to cool down. You can leave your bundle to sit for a bit to process the prints for longer, but if you are eager, you can cut the twine at the knot and begin to unroll your print. You can keep the twine for future projects.

2. Carefully take away the extra square of fabric and peel the plants off to reveal the print underneath. The plants can now be popped into the compost.

3. Lay the print somewhere out of direct sunlight to dry.



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## TOP TIP!

If your print has not come out as clearly as you'd like, you can try different plants and resteam it. You may also like to hammer some of your plants on before steaming! (See plant hammering video)

## ASSEMBLING YOUR HOOP

1. Once your fabric has dried, make sure there are no plant remnants remaining and iron it on a medium heat.
2. Unscrew the top of the embroidery hoop and place your fabric centrally over the inner hoop.
3. Slide the outer hoop over the top and tighten, making sure the fabric is taut in the hoop. Tuck the remaining fabric behind the hoop out of sight.
4. Cut a piece of twine to about 15-20cm and tie around the screw at the top so that your hoop can be hung.

## AFTERCARE

Hang your finished piece out of direct sunlight. As this project is not creating a functional textile, it will not need to be washed. If the fabric fades, this project can be repeated to capture future seasons to come



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