

Flower dyeing

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4/19/2020

While trying to preserve textiles and the environment, I have naturally dyed a white cotton shirt using dried hibiscus flowers. I am going to explain what method I attempted to use to dye the shirt, as well as explain how I learned to do this lab in a short amount of time. I am also going to explain a brief summary of hibiscus and how it has been used as a natural dye throughout history. I will also document my findings, on how I expected my tie dye project to come out and how it comes out. And also, how it compares to the video tutorial I watched.

Hibiscus is a flower plant in the mallow family. It is comprised of several hundred species and are native to tropical and sub tropic regions throughout the world. They have large flowers and a stem growing through the middle. It has symbolism and meaning in many cultures. The red hibiscus is the flower of the Hindu goddess Kali. In the Philippines, children use the flower to create a pastime. In Hawaii, if a woman wears the flower on her left ear she is in a relationship, if on the right she is single and openly available for one. The yellow hibiscus is also Hawaii's state flower. The flower is also used to make tea hot or cold and can be eaten.

I followed a tutorial that I watched online in which the lady used onion peels and dyed the shirt using the twist technique. I wanted to do the shibori technique so i watched another one, but they didn't use natural dyes. So I just took examples from both tutorials and combined them for the end result.

For my first step, I remembered that my mother made Jamaica, what some Hispanics call hibiscus Iced tea, so started to boil some flower petals to get the pigment of them to stain the water stronger. Dried hibiscus is a very dark and potent flower, you can see this when the water is lightly pigmented, and it hasn't been boiled yet.



I grabbed my white shirt and proceeded to decide on what method I wanted to use to dye the shirt. I ended up choosing the shibori technique because I like the lines of it better than the usual designs you would see on a tie dye shirt. Also I used my apron because I already know from experience that hibiscus is a very tough stain to remove and will turn your colors in red and purples and your blacks to burgundies. I took my white shirt and started to roll the shirt on a wooden stick I had. You can use a cylinder type of object, or anything that the shirt can be wrapped on. I added my rubber bands to hold the shirt on the stick and added more for extra lines.





For the next step I simply put the shirt into the hibiscus water and waited about 3 hours.



After letting the shirt sit and the dye cooling off, I removed the shirt and dipped it into a bowl of cold water, I don't have the pictures of this because I didn't wear gloves and got my hands stained, but for the person doing this, you should wear gloves during the process. After letting the shirt sit for a couple of minutes in cold water, I washed it by hand with soap and proceeded to dry it by itself in the drying machine. My end result isn't what I expected but it isn't the worst I expected, I definitely didn't come close to the tutorials I watched. I found that my mistake was that the rubber bands were not wrapped tightly and let some of the dye seep in, which did not make my lines very prominent. 📄



I did learn new methods of dyeing during this process. What I would do again make sure I tightly wrap the fabric, and make sure everything is how it should be or how I want it before dyeing the fabric.

## References

(Quynh Ho, 2019) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ag49YvmvpRg>

(Anna McNamara, 2016) <https://youtu.be/32LgqGhAzYc>

