

Cinna-Dye!

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BUF 2246-HD22

April 25th, 2022

The process of dyeing fabrics using natural sources dates back all the way to 2600 BC and mankind has found many different ways to enhance the dyeing technique since then. However, how easily can you accomplish this task that people have been doing for thousands of years? Depending on what method you choose, the dyeing process can be very intricate, tedious, and require a lot of focus. During this process, it took time to figure out the many different variables so that I can achieve the best possible results. Choosing the right color, how dark or light I wanted the color to be, and what natural dyestuff would be best were all some of the things I had to put into consideration to properly dye my garment. I also chose a color that I feel is not only very prominent and popular in fashion right now but also a shade that I have grown to love on various clothing pieces.

The natural dyestuff that I chose to work with was cinnamon which is native to Sri Lanka (an island country in the Indian Ocean). Even though this spice is native to Sri Lanka it has also been cultivated in China, the West Indies, and South America. In ancient India, the use of cinnamon and several other spices as dyes can be traced all the way back to around 1750-500 BCE. This era in India was called the Vedic period which was a highly innovative age and where many advancements occurred, including the use of dye. The use of cinnamon as a dye can give you very beautiful shades of brown when done correctly. These hues of brown can be very light and subtle or if the process is repeated enough times it can even give you a much darker tint that is almost like a mocha color. Although I found the cinnamon I used sitting in the pantry it is inexpensive but can vary in price range depending on what brand you decide to purchase. The use of cinnamon in Sri Lanka is associated with many positive things and

has been known to symbolize several things over the years. It has been known to be used for love, fertility, spirituality protection, good luck, healing, and many more.

In today's fashion, we can see that the color brown has become very prominent in the clothing we wear. Ready to wear fashion has adopted the various shades of browns or earth tones into their clothing and more and more people have been loving it. The entire spectrum of brown gives off a minimalist and natural beauty that result in such a great look. Personally, my favorite color is black because I dont want to be seen and bright colors tend to draw eyes on you. My favorite garments to wear are hoodies and sweatpants because of their comfortability and how you can even dress them up to give yourself a different aesthetic. Using cinnamon to dye my garment brown was a great option for me to choose because not only is brown trendy but I can also visually see all of the different shades that can come from it. A celebrity that I think has done a really good job with styling the different shades of brown and earth tones is Kanye West. Kanye has been seen many times in these colors and incorporates them a lot into his brand as well.

When dyeing my garment there were many steps I had to adhere to so that I may get the best possible results and this is what I did.

Step 1: Find a garment that you would like to use (I chose a T-shirt) and give it a little wash with soap and water. I chose to hand wash mine and let it dry instead of putting it in the washing machine.



Hand washing the garment with soap and water

Step 2: Once your garment has finished drying add a resist-dyeing technique to give your garment a bit of a design.

Step 3: Get a large pot and put 8 cups of water and 1 cup of cinnamon into it. Bring the solution to a boil and stir so that the cinnamon can mix into the water.

Adding and stirring the cinnamon to the 8 cups of water

Step 4: Once the solution has come to a boil submerge your garment into the pot and let it soak for at least 20 minutes.

Garment tied with yarn and submerged in cinnamon and water solution

Step 5: Once the 20 minutes or more have passed, remove the garment from the pot and squeeze off any excess solution.

Step 6: Cinnamon does not fully mix with the water so you will need to rinse off your garment in warm/hot water to make sure any extra grains aren't left on it.

Step 7: Find a container big enough to put your garment in and mix a solution with 2 cups of vinegar, 1 cup of water, and 1 tablespoon of salt in it. Put your garment in the solution and let it rest in it for about 15 minutes.



Garment soaking in vinegar, water, and salt solution

Step 8: Once the 15 minutes have passed take the garment out and rinse it again in warm/hot water. After that wait for your garment to dry and you now have a homemade naturally dyed garment!



Finished product

After doing this project I found it interesting that it may take a different process to dye the item you chose. It could be the natural dye that changes the process or the item that changes it and to me, that's what makes it so unique. My project however did not turn out the way I wanted because I incorrectly did the shibori dyeing technique. In the tutorial, I followed their garment had a bit of a darker color and I would have also liked my shirt to be a little darker in color but these are all things that will make me better the next time I take this challenge on.

Going all the way back to 1750 BC we see that cinnamon has always been used in more ways than one. It is seen as an incredible herb that can bring forth healing and protection. Learning about it has taught me that cinnamon can not only be used as a dye but is a symbol for many. The color that it brings has turned into a beautiful fashion trend with a variety of shades and hues for all types of clothing.

References

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