

FROM WOODS & FIELDS

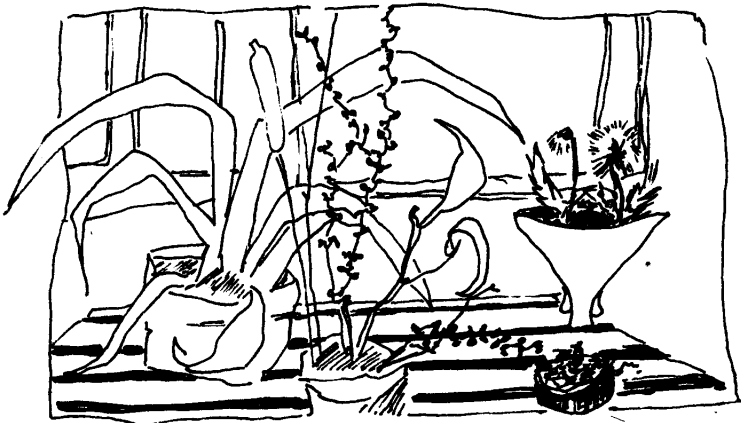


by Connie Magoffin

I am most excited that one of the things I had hoped for in this column has come to be. This summer many of you fellow dyers have shared dye samples and recipes with me. Although I have dyed with what seems like hundreds of plants, there are still a million more I'd like to try. Thus when one of you has tried a dyeplant and you are pleased with the results, I'd love to have you share a sample and recipe with me. If I have tried the dyeplant before I still like to see them, as you may have received different results (different soil conditions, yarn, quantities, etc.). Often, however, it is a plant I haven't tried and you may have this fantastic dyeplant growing in your backyard! I'd like to, in turn, share some of this summer's experiments with you.

Last May, Sue Obrestad dyed with some fresh young willow shoots. She used approximately 1/2 grocery bag for about 1 oz. of wool and soaked the branches 1 week (accidentally, she added, overnight would suffice). The branches were simmered 1 hr., strained and the yarn was simmered in the dye for 30 min. Results: alum—soft light yellow-gold, tin—bright orange-gold, copper—soft dark olive.

Mary Skoy experimented with some plantain (a common yard nuisance) in June. She soaked the plantain overnight, simmered the yarn in the pot for about 3 hours and then let it cool down in the pot for several hours more. Results: alum—soft gold, tin—soft dull yellow, chrome—brassy gold.



Ethel Pettengill shared two dye samples with us. She obtained a lovely shade of avocado with milkweed. One-half pound of alum mordanted fleece was dyed with approximately 1/2 grocery bag of leaves and stems. The yarn was simmered for 1/2 hour and then for another 1/2 hour after some copper sulfate was added to the dye bath.

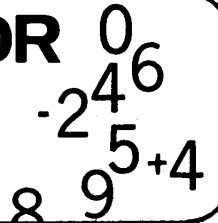
Ethel also tried using 3/4 of an ice cream pail full of chokecherries to dye 1/2 pound of alum mordanted fleece. By simmering for about 1 hour, she obtained a soft pink color tinged with just a hint of purple. A bit of nylon fiber she tried in the same dye bath turned out a surprising light dirty pink.

All the way from the state of Virginia came some samples of handspun dyed in early March, 1974, with fresh dandelion blossoms. The woman who sent the samples had received last

year's Tribune article on my natural dyeing from her mother. She also included a lovely note about the dyeplants and sheep in her area. She used 14 oz. of flowers to 4 oz. wool and the results: alu—soft green gold, tin—very bright yellow-green, copper—olive, chrome—gold.

Wouldn't it be exciting to start a national or possibly even an international exchange of dye samples!

METRICS FOR WEAVERS



by Peggy Dokka

Beginning a series of articles on something that concerns all of us—the imminent arrival of the metric system. —ed.

It is fairly well accepted that the metric system is coming to the United States. Some are eagerly in favor of such a change and some are quite opposed, but most know it is coming. How can we as weavers make the change-over with the fewest difficulties? To begin with, how about trying to "Think Metric" right now? If you can accomplish the visualization of metric measurements, you are three-fourths of the way to making the whole shift. Try not to think English system and then translate; "think metric" directly. To aid you, here are some hints to visualizing linear measurements.

The centimeter (smallest practical unit from our point of view) is roughly equivalent to the width of the tip of your little finger. A decimeter (10 centimeters) is about the width of the palm of your hand. Measure your own hand and decide whether to include the thumb in this estimate, or whether the measurement is closer minus thumb.

Have you been used to measuring yards from finger tip to nose tip? This needn't change—just extend it a little. Don't stop at your nose, but continue the measurement from finger tip to opposite shoulder.

Think these measurements often and soon they will come quite naturally to mind.

Next month we will talk about application of metric measurements to a loom.



a
tune
of
our times

**nimble finger
needle art**

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