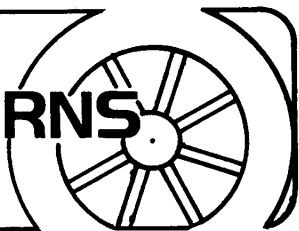


# AS THE WHEEL TURNS



by Pat BoutinWald

Q. How do you design a color palette?

— Linda Rueth Lyster

A. There are many ways of obtaining a color palette. One excellent way is to experiment with dyes on the materials you wish to color. By carefully recording the percentage of hues combined, proportion of dye to material and the dyeing procedure - the dyer will be able to reconstruct any of the resulting colors whenever desired. Jan Carter teaches an excellent course on this style of dyeing that I was fortunate enough to attend this summer. The course covers many different types of dyes, their chemical structure and means of application. (Jan goes over some general chemistry to begin with for those of us who took our last science class many years ago.) I especially enjoyed being introduced to equipment for making precise measurements. The beakers and bunsen burners soon lost their awesome effect and even managed to bring out a bit of the alchemist in me. The course also introduced us to many sources of literature containing information about dyes. One source found at the U. of MN is the *Colour Index*, a six volume listing of dye's names, properties, method of application and fastness ratings. Many long time dyers are unaware of these volumes, or unable to translate some of the technical jargon of commercial dyers. Jan spent 8 months "in hot pursuit" trying to break the code of the local supplier to better identify the dye so that its properties could be found and studied in the *Colour Index*."

Some basic color theory is also covered. Introducing Munsell concepts of hue, value and chroma and combining these with precise dyeing techniques allows students to produce an infinite number of hues.

Just be sure to take this course when you'll have enough time to fully explore all the different topics covered and follow thru on some of the numerous ideas for using color that this course inspires.

No one way of designing a color palette will fill everyone's need. My system of dyeing changes from year to year as my work, available equipment and knowledge change. Right now I work mostly with heather combinations of color in both my spinning and feltmaking. I dye my year's supply of wool during the summer. (I dye outdoors only, on a kerosene stove we bought for \$2.50 at a Wisc. farm sale.) I try to dye a fair variety of colors from around the color wheel. I start with a light value such as yellow in the morning and the end of the afternoon usually finds me in shades of purple.

For my basic colors I purchase: yellow, red, blue, turquoise and black. The turquoise, because many yellow and blue dyes combine to make an olive green. I use turquoise and yellow together when I want warm forest greens. Remember when dyeing there are 3 primaries: yellow,

red and blue. When any *two* of them are in the dye pot simultaneously, you will have a bright pure color. When you have all *three* pigments in the dyepot at once, your color will become desaturated, muted. Keep this in mind so you can obtain whichever effect you desire.

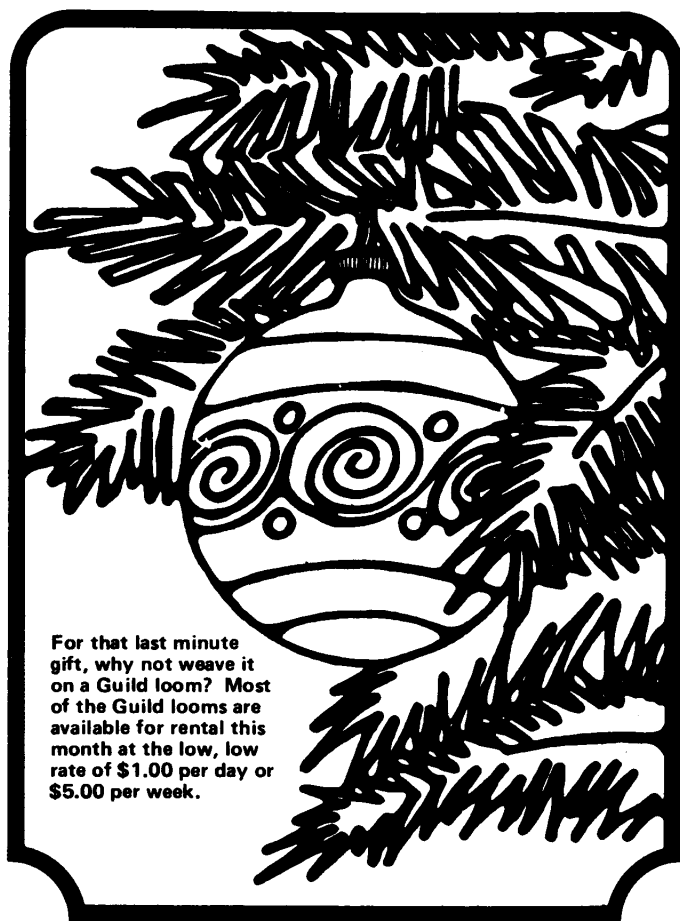
Once the dyed wools are rinsed and dried, I sort them into color families and store them in bags. (You might want to add moth balls.) To extend my palette I card together the dyed wools to create new colors or card in black, grey or white wool to get a shade, tone or tint of that hue.

I'd like to extend an invitation for all you spinners out there to share your method of introducing color into your work. (This means you natural dyers too, of course!) (Pat)

## Do I need to dye my yarns to have a range of colors?

There is an interesting way to add soft hues without dyeing. If you can locate Rayon Acrylic top in extremely harsh and bright colors, it can be added a little at a time while you hand card your rolags. The harsh colors will be softened and muted in the yarn. The thicker and loftier the yarn the more variegated the colors. Fine yarns will take on a duller but still effective color variation. We first found Rayon top available at the Weavers' Alley in Milwaukee.

— Tony Glaski



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