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RHUBARB MORDANT RECIPE FOR ANIMAL BASED FIBRES

For use with silk, wool, alpaca, cashmere, mohair etc, using rhubarb leaf (oxalic acid)

It's important to make this mordant in a well-ventilated area, as the fumes are toxic. Protect your hands with gloves and wear something to cover your airways and eyes, when working close to the pot.

Use a ratio of 2:1 rhubarb leaf to fibre, based on the weight of the fabric after it has been washed and scoured, and is in its dry state. You should weigh your fibre and calculate the correct weight of rhubarb to use, before you begin preparing the plant.

Equipment:

2 x Large stainless steel/non-reactive pots
Long handled stainless steel/non reactive spoon
stainless steel/non reactive teaspoon spoon
stainless steel/non reactive measuring spoons
Weighing scales
Scissors
Ph neutral soap

1. Wash the leaves and chop them up very small so that they are shredded.
2. Put into a large pot, which is big enough for them to be covered in water completely and have space to move around in freely.
3. Cover with boiling water.
4. Making sure there is enough water in the pot to cover the plant material, bring the water to a simmer, cover with a lid and simmer for one hour.
5. Turn off the heat and leave pot to cool.
6. Once solution has cooled, strain the plant material out and keep the liquid.
7. Add the washed and scoured, pre-wetted fibres to the solution. The pot should be big enough and there should be enough liquid, for the fibres to move around freely in, so that the mordant can reach all of the fibre consistently. Add more water if necessary, to create more space for the fibre to move around in.
8. Bring solution to a simmer. Cover with lid, and simmer for one hour, stirring occasionally so that the fibre is allowing the mordant to reach all of it properly and not getting stuck to the sides of the pot or touching other areas of fibre, which might make it hard for the mordant to access.
9. Turn off heat and allow to cool.
10. Once cooled, move fibre from solution and rinse with cool or lukewarm water.
11. Wash gently with ph neutral soap and cool/lukewarm water, and rinse again to remove the soap.
12. Hang to air dry out of direct sunlight, somewhere warm and dry.