

BOTANIC EGG DECORATING

It's time to dye eggs! Below are two ways to make beautiful dyed egg creations using all natural materials. We will explore ways to design lovely patterns on eggs from leaf and flower imprints, and how to dye them using plants! No harsh chemicals needed, just some earthen goodness, and your own creative inspiration.



PLANT IMPRINTS

Materials

Eggs
Plant Clippings
Mesh Fabric
String
Scissors

Step 1: Boil your eggs! Set them aside to cool while you complete Step 2.

Step 2: Gather your plant clippings. Look closely at the plants and flowers around you. Examine their intricate patterns, petals, and leaves. Which ones do you think will leave a nice imprint on your eggs? Grab a basket and fill it up with all the botanical treasures you'd like to experiment with. Plants that are flexible and will easily lie flat upon an egg are best. Herbs such as a thyme and cilantro work well, as do ferns, clovers, and flowers such as poppies or flowers with similar petals. Clip small, egg-sized sprigs of these.

Step 3: Find a mesh fabric to use. Pantyhose, nylon socks, or tights work best, however any sort of thin mesh fabric will also work, such as cheese cloth or tulle. If you don't have these materials readily available, think a little creatively about them- Do you have a Halloween costume with a thin mesh fabric that you could cut out? Do you have little nylon bags you've received gifts in before? All of these will work! Cut your material into several 5x5 inch square pieces (one for each egg).

Step 4: Cut your string into 4 inch pieces (one piece for each egg). If you have wire ties or rubber bands, these work too, as does any material that can be used to tie a small knot.

Step 5: Assemble your botanic eggs! Take a piece of the fabric and lie it down on your surface.

Next, take one of your plant sprigs and carefully lay it onto the fabric. Then, lie your egg directly on top of the sprig. Once the egg is in place, gently pull the fabric all around the egg, wrapping it tightly in the fabric so that the leaves or flower petals are firmly pressed against the egg, but also stay intact. Pulling the fabric as tightly as possible will ensure the dye will easily go through to the egg, but be sure you don't destroy the plant and its natural pattern in the process.

Finally, give the fabric at the top of the egg a good, tight twist, and secure the fabric by tying a knot at the top of it, or securing it with a wire twist tie or rubber band. Make sure the fabric does not loosen in the process, and be sure your plant sprig lies flat and tight against the egg, as that is the portion of the egg that will not color, thus imprinting its shape on the egg after it's dyed.

Step 6: Repeat Step 5 for all your eggs, using different plants and plant placings on each egg to achieve new and creative designs!

Step 7: Set your egg creations aside, and begin preparing the natural dye solution (below)!





NATURAL EGG DYES

Materials

Hardboiled Eggs

Water

White Vinegar

Cups, Jars, or Bowls

Egg Carton or Drying Surface

Scissors



COLORS

2 cups chopped purple cabbage = blue

2 cups red onion skins = lavender

2 cups yellow onion skins = orange

4 cups shredded beets = pink

4 tablespoons ground turmeric = yellow eggs

2 cups blueberries = dark blue



NOTE: The following steps must be done for each different color of dye.

Step 1: Bring 2 cups of water to a rolling boil.

Step 2: Add your chosen coloring plant.

Step 3: Reduce the heat and simmer the solution for 30 minutes or longer- The longer you simmer the solution, the deeper the color will become. Note: You can create different batches of solution using the same plant so as to have different shades of the color (i.e. lavender, purple, deep purple).

Step 4: Strain the solution into a large cup, jar, or bowl, and allow it to cool to room temperature (about 2-3 hours).

Step 5: Stir 2 tablespoons of white vinegar into the solution.

Step 6: Place 3 eggs (or however many can fit) into the solution.

Step 7: Refrigerate overnight, or until your egg has reached the desired color. Feel free to check on them as the hours pass, and to remove them or let them sit longer depending on your color preferences. The color will deepen the longer the egg sits in the dye.

Step 8: Once the desired color is achieved, remove the eggs from the dye and let them air dry in their original egg carton for a few minutes, or on a drying rack or paper towel. You can also gently dry off any excess dye from the panty hose with a paper towel, making sure the flower petals or leaves do not move too much.

Step 9: Carefully cut below the fabric knot, and gently remove the egg. Next, pat the egg dry with a paper towel. Finally, gently remove the flower or leaf to reveal your beautiful botanic imprint and naturally dyed egg!

Egg dying is a wonderful opportunity to talk to children about spring and rebirth! While dying eggs, as children what they notice about the eggs, what they thing might happen inside of an egg, what other kinds of animals they think might lay eggs, and where they might find eggs in nature. The activity can be followed up with further springtime activities, such as dissecting flowers to reveal the eggs inside the flower ovaries, searching for bird nests, or going on a bug egg exploration by looking under leaves for evidence!

HAVE FUN!

