



# El herbario sobre tela

*Lets create with fresh flowers !!*

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All the elements contained in this box have been chosen with great care.

They seem simple and they are.

They contain the final results of my own experience with more than 1000 students.

With them, I have tried so many variations of materials that, finally, I came to the conclusion that less is more.

More comfortable to handle in case you want to decorate pockets or a ready-made textile case.

Easier to transport in a backpack for a family outdoor day or in your suitcase in case you escape to a tropical paradise full of exotic flowers.

This kit contains:

- A light wooden board.
- A clear polyvinyl sheet.
- A brush.
- A bottle of handcrafted mordant.
- A garment made of GOTS certified natural cotton.
- Some paper cards

Not include:

- A coin.
- Your favorite flowers and plants.

# *The garment*

Cotton is a vegetable textile fiber that grows around the seeds of the cotton plant. A shrub of the *Gossypium* genus that belongs to the Malvaceae family and native of tropical and subtropical regions.

Not all natural cottons of the genus *Gossypium* are good to be used in the textile industry.

Cotton is the most important fiber produced in the entire world, It began to be very important in the 19th century with the new process of textile industrialization. Today it still represents almost half of the world's consumption of textile fibers.

The different types of cotton that we find in the market have different colors, they are not all naturally white. The country that produces the largest amount of white cotton is the United States.

When the textile industry began to worry about the toxic waste that artificial dyes constitute, cotton seeds were genetically modified to produce colorful flowers and reduce the environmental impact of the wastewater from dyeing.

# *GOTS certified organic cotton*

In contrast to the cultivation of genetically modified varieties of cotton, we found organic cotton farming, which, in addition to not being transgenic (modified) plants, does not use any synthetic chemicals such as fertilizers or pesticides.

The production also promotes exploring diversity and biological cycles. Cotton stations in the United States are required to comply with the National organic program where it ends the practices allowed for pest control, cultivation, fertilization, and organic cultivation.

Organic cotton is distributed among more than 24 countries and we must be grateful that its cultivation spreads more each year.

<https://www.global-standard.org/es/>

# *Collecting fresh flowers and plants*

The plants we need to collect for this project can be found just anywhere. In your garden, in the park, or from a bouquet. If you are going for a walk to collect your plants, try to do it in the early morning. It's the best moment of the day. Once they are cut, you should use them as soon as possible. If not, put them in water until you will use them.

Fresh flowers from the countryside turn their heads down very quickly.

At the end of summer, a lot of the leaves are still green, but it contains much less juice and that could give not so exciting results. The leaves have two sides. The first one is exposed to the sun and is more bright. The other shows more details and have a lighter color. This is the one to be in contact with the fabric.

For flowers, it's the opposite. The flower open to face the sun and the bright color side should be in contact with the textile. The thickness of both flowers and leaves has its importance, something that you will learn quickly once you have practiced on paper.

# *My favorite plants*

My favorite plants, I collect them in the field, on the edge of the roads that border vineyards or during walks in the mountains. I live in the Canary Islands where vegetation abounds throughout the year.

Here is a list of the plants that I use the most with my own kit.

Papaver somniferum - poppy flowers and leaves

Viola arvensis - viola flower

Oxalis pes-caprae - weed, goat's-foot, sourgrass, soursob and soursop

Trifolium campestre - field clover, low hop clover

Bidens aurea - yellow daisy flower

Petroselinum crispum - parsley

Ortiga - nettle

## Warning

All plants from nature, contain substances that could produce some allergy to sensible persons. Some of them could be poisonous. I recommend you to collect plants which you know already the names or are commonly used in the kitchen as aromatic plants.

This extreme advice should not stop you to work with fresh plants.

If you don't feel sure about this, I simply recommend you getting advice from your usual flower-shop or to ask your grandmother Grannies know everything about flowers, cakes, and knitting...

# *The mordant*

Remember to shake the bottle before using the mordant.

Mordants are salts that have the property of dissolving themselves in water and are used to fix definitively colored substances contained in plants and flowers on textiles. Sometimes they also serve to intensify or change the color.

The colors contained in the plants are not really colors. They are substances necessary for their development and their function is to attract insects to transport pollen from one flower to another. You will quickly learn that there is sometimes a lot of difference in the color of the plant and the final color after fixing it with the mordant. It is a completely natural effect and very characteristic of natural dyeing. With practice and taking notes, you will soon be able to compose with the colors you like best.

The mordants can be used before, during, or after the dye. Entonar (Spanish word) means using a mordant in order to modify a color, changing the chemical nature of a dye bath. With our project, we put into practice the notions of post-mordanting or pre-mordanting according to the technique we choose: direct print or eco-print.



The mordant will produce a permanent bond between the fiber and the color that can also be modified or intensified over time, thanks to the natural oxidation caused by the oxygen in the air or by the soap we will use to wash the garments.

The mordant included in our kit is composed of non-toxic substances, some even edible. They do not require special precautions for textile use. We also recommend not to ingest it and wearing gloves if you are going to apply it another way than with the brush.

It is very concentrated, so you can use it pure (for very dark shades) or you can lower it with water to 50%, 25%, 12.5%.

With different concentrations, you will achieve degraded effects. The quantity of mordant contained in the bottle can be used for a lot more projects than the one include in the box.

## *My tips*

As you can see with all the previous information, the choice of the fiber that you will use for printing or dyeing is essential. Trying several plants on paper will give you some practice and will really help you to compose the design of your garment

I also encourage you to try on any surface that inspires you. In natural dyeing, all factors affect the final result. It is the very essence of its magic

### *First, try on paper*

Sheets of paper are flat and do not move like fabric, they are ideal to start.

Place the sheet of drawing paper on top of the wooden table, then your fresh leaf or petal flat. Place then the clear sheet to keep the leaf in place, so you can see what's going on underneath.

With the edge of the coin, begin to scratch the surface of the leaf or petal, adapting your strength as if you were scratching one of those instantly awarded game tickets.

Mark the contours well from the outside to the center and then go from the center to the edges.  
Lift the plastic sheet and a part of the fresh leaf or petal a little to check that they have been marked. If not, repeat a little stronger.

The flowers, sometimes, have several layers of petals and it is impossible to crush so many at once. To reproduce a flower, you will have to decompose it into parts and recreate its original shape by rearranging the petals on the surface of the fabric.

Again the transparent sheet is placed on top and scratched gently with the edge of the coin.

With the brush and the mordant, go over each element and wait a few seconds.

You will observe that the chemical union operates and the color of the stamp changes.

The blacker is the resulting color, the more tannins the chosen plant contains.

You can try the same plant several times and change the mordant concentration.

You will then obtain a very interesting grayscale. The colors of the flowers follow the same rules, some red can turn violet or simply be intensified.

Each plant structure is unique and reacts with the mordant in a different way.

Do you understand now why the composition possibilities are endless?

When you feel ready, launch yourself to create your first composition on the garment.

Proceed in the same way as on paper.

## *Let's start!*

Before going out to collect your favorite flowers, plants, or leaves, I recommend you to have your kit ready.

Don't forget the coin, any coin works, big or small.

In some tutorials that you can find on the net, there are people who use a hammer and work with folded fabrics for a mirror effect. You can use one too once you have reached a certain practice. Remember that it is not an appropriate instrument for children and the coin perfectly fulfills the objectives we want to reach.

If you can, iron the part of the garment that you want to decorate.

It will be much better but it is not essential.

Have a glass with water and some absorbent paper ready to rinse and dry the brush.

If you wish, you can also work with a less concentrated mordant (read the special section above).

# *How to care for your new garment?*

Once the stamping is finished, it is necessary to fix it permanently.

These colors need to mature before being washed for the first time. The maturation of the color means that to give it durability we need the union of the substances contained in the plant and the mordant to join the fabric by the application of heat and prolonged humidity. Currently, the steam iron has replaced the rooms for this purpose from the 18th century, but it is convenient to let the garment rest for at least 7 days before the first wash.

Common bar soap is a mixture of caustic soda and vegetable oil. The soda acts like sandpaper on the fibers. Rather than washing it, they degrade them down with each wash and completely remove surface colors. That is why I recommend you to wash the garments dyed by hand with a few spoons of fruit vinegar, by hand or in the washing machine with a short program at 30°C.

Thank you for buying your first natural dyeing experience, you will see that it is super fun.

Remember that if you have any questions, you can contact me visiting my web page  
[www.nathalieleturcq.com](http://www.nathalieleturcq.com)

Or you can write to me at [nleturcq@hotmail.com](mailto:nleturcq@hotmail.com)

It will be a real pleasure for me to meet you and guide your first steps.

*Nathalie Leturcq*

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Tintes Naturales - Natural Dyes

