



How to make plant dye designs at home

Transferring the natural dye from flowers to cloth or paper is called flower pounding.

You can search on the web to find many flower pounding projects.

Here is how it was done at VanDusen Botanical Garden:

You need:

Leaves and petals - only pick leaves and petals from a living plant if the owner of the garden says it is OK.

Light coloured cloth or paper.

Tape - removable if you put your design on paper.

A chopping board or other hard board.

Old newspaper.

Hammer or smooth rock.

1. Collect petals and leaves.

Collect leaves and petals with a shape and that you like.

The green leaves will keep their colour when they are hammered.

Some petals keep their colour and some change colour when they are hammered, so find a few different colours to experiment with.

2. Transfer the leaf and petal colour to cloth or paper.

Lay your leaves and petals on a piece of cloth or paper in a design you like.

Tape them down to hold them in place - use removable tape on paper.

Layer some newspapers on the chopping board, and lay your design on top.

Use a hammer or smooth rock to hammer the colour of the leaves/petals into the cloth/paper.

Remove the tape and crushed leaves/petals.

What's going on?

The green colour in the leaves is called chlorophyll. In living plants, chlorophyll traps the sun's energy for plants to grow.

Other chemicals give flowers their colours. The bright colours attract animals to pollinate them.

People have been making dyes from plants for a long time. The leaves, petals, bark and seeds of plants have all been used to make different dye colours.