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*Modern
Home
Dyeing*

EXTENSION SERVICE
U. S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating
S. D. STATE COLLEGE, BROOKINGS

Modern Home Dyeing

By ANNA D. WALKER*

A world without color! What a drab uninteresting place it would be! Color makes food more appetizing, rooms more livable, and wardrobes more individual and beautiful.

The 52½ million women in the United States can help a great deal in stabilizing our national economy during this period of reconversion from wartime to peacetime production by limiting their buying of scarce articles and materials to immediate needs. Regardless of how plentiful materials may become, economical homemakers will always have the urge to save the good material from garments in the wardrobe by making it over in some way. Whether the garment is recut for a child or restyled for an adult the problem of suitability, of the color is important.

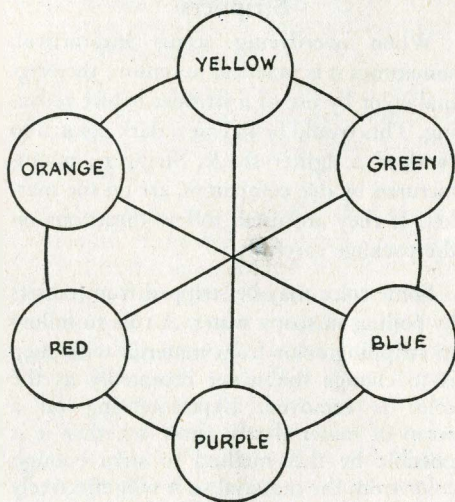
Mother's coat could be made-over for Johnny, because the material is suitable and good; but the gang will know it's mother's old coat if it is left the same color. To make the new garment look like it really belongs to a boy, a package of dye and its skillful use will save the day for Johnny and save on the clothing budget as well.

Often clothing which is good in line, does not fit into the wardrobe because of its color. That sale dress would be a good investment, but for its color which goes with nothing else in the wardrobe. Why not buy it and dye it to harmonize with the key color of your wardrobe? What about the wool dress or sweater which looks a little faded? Would a good dye job restore it to an active place in the wardrobe?

Knowledge of Color Facts Makes Dyeing More Fun

Colors are described by (1) name, (2) brightness or dullness, and (3) lightness or darkness; for example, light grayed blue. If further description is necessary it is described in its relation to another color such as: light, grayed-green blue.

When colors are arranged in a circle, opposite colors are complementary. When *placed* together, complementary colors brighten each other and form sharp contrasts. When *mixed* together complementary colors grey or tone down each other. For example, a bright green is grayed by adding a bit of red. Colors may also be grayed by adding black or grey, but the color is apt to be muddy. Colors not on the color wheel can be made by mixing several colors. If a golden brown is needed, a small amount of orange added to brown will give the desired color. Old gold is produced by adding a bit of purple (its complement) to the yellow.



*Extension Clothing Specialist

Selecting the New Color

Remember that the old color of the garment should be considered in selecting the

new color. New dyes combine with dyes already in the cloth, so a knowledge of over-dyeing is essential. The following over-dyeing chart may prove helpful:

Overdyeing Color Chart

Results you may expect from dyeing one color over another are listed in this chart. For example: Red over red makes darker red. Red over blue makes purple. Red over yellow makes scarlet, etc.

	Over red makes	Over blue makes	Over yellow makes	Over brown makes	Over orange makes	Over green makes	Over purple makes
Red	darker red	purple	scarlet	reddish brown	light red	dull brown	reddish purple
Blue	purple	deep blue	green	very dark brown	dull dark gray	bottle green	bluish purple
Yellow	scarlet	green	deep yellow	golden brown	yellow orange	light green	greenish brown
Brown	brownish red	almost black	yellowish brown	darker brown	yellowish dark brown	dull greenish brown	chocolate
Orange	light red	dull dark gray	light orange	tobacco brown	deep orange	yellowish green	reddish brown
Green	almost black	greenish blue	light green	olive green	myrtle green	darker green	dull dark green
Purple	reddish purple	plum	almost black	very dark reddish brown	light dull brown	dull dark purple	darker purple

Pink over light blue makes lavender.

Pink over light yellow makes shell pink.

Pink over light orange makes coral pink.

Follow the Rules for Best Results

Strippers

When overdyeing seems impractical, sometimes it is practical to remove the original color by use of a stripper before redyeing. This would be in case a dark color is to be dyed a lighter shade. Strippers, manufactured by dye companies, are on the market. If they are used, follow directions on the package carefully.

Some color may be stripped from fabrics by boiling in soapy water. A rule to follow in stripping color from material with soap is to change the water repeatedly as the color is removed. Experimenting on a scrap of material will show whether it is possible by this method to strip enough color from the material so it will effectively take a lighter shade. Sometimes removing the original color leaves another color. For

instance one brown fabric when stripped of the brown turned green.

To Re-Dye Prints

Prints will never dye a solid color unless all the color is removed with a stripper. However, often interesting effects may be obtained by overdyeing. Harsh colors may be toned down by dipping in dull gray or tan; if colors look faded they may be toned up with a brighter color. If a navy and white print is dyed yellow green the finished print would be navy and yellow green. It is a good idea to test for desired effect on a sample before dipping the entire garment.

Buy the Right Dye

Since so many materials these days are a blend of many different fibers, the wise shopper will buy an all fabric dye which has been made to dye all fibers including

the acetate rayons and nylon. If there is a question as to the nature of the fabric, it is especially important to read the label to see if the dye will color acetates.

However, sometimes very interesting effects are produced by using an ordinary dye on fabrics containing a few threads of acetate rayon. One homemaker reports a lovely effect produced by dyeing a light green suit with ordinary brown dye which left the acetate threads undyed and resulted in a brown fabric with light green flecks.

Tests for Acetate

If you wish to know if the material is an acetate or not, the burning test may be tried. Hold a match to a sample of the material. If it seems to melt as it burns leaving a gummy ball, no doubt it is an acetate rayon which requires a special kind of dye.

Materials and Equipment Needed for Dyeing

1. An enamel pan large enough to float the material and allow plenty of space for stirring. (Dye will not injure the pan, so a baby's bath tub, large dish pan, or boiler may be used safely.)
2. A small container for dissolving dye.
3. A thin cloth and string to make a dye "ball" or a wire strainer lined with cloth.
4. Two stirring rods, long handled enamel spoons, glass towel rods, or smooth hard wood sticks. Broom handles are good for very heavy cloth.
5. Salt or vinegar, according to directions, to set and bring out the color.
6. Dye, the amount needed varies with kind of fabric and the depth of the color desired. Knitted articles and thick woollens generally require more dye. Amount of dye used also depends upon the amount of material.
7. Water.
8. Kitchen scale for weighing materials.

General Directions for Dyeing

1. Measure the garment to be dyed. Length of skirt, blouse sleeve; width of skirt at waist; hips and hem; width of back, chest, sleeve.
Write down for future use.
2. Remove all metal ornaments and padding and weigh the material to be dyed if at all possible.
3. *Follow dyeing directions given on package of dye.* This is important as all dyes are not handled alike.
4. If garment is soiled or spotted, wash; then rinse *thoroughly* to remove all soap.
5. Spots and uneven color may be caused by acid, often from perspiration. To neutralize the acid, rinse garment in water containing 1 tablespoon of household ammonia for each gallon of water.
6. Heat sufficient water to float the garment.
7. While the water heats, dissolve the dye by one of the following methods:
  - A. Make a "dye ball" by putting the dye in a thin cloth, and tying it in a loose ball, leaving the ends of the string for holding the bag. Place bag in a small pan of water and heat until dye dissolves.
  - B. Heat a package of dye in 2 cups of water. Line water strainer with cloth. Strain dissolved dye into the dye bath.
8. Always dye a sample first. Put about a cupful of the dye bath into a small pan. Put in the sample. Heat 5 minutes, stirring all the time. Remove. Add a tablespoon of vinegar or one-half teaspoon of salt according to directions, put material back in and heat 10 minutes longer. Rinse and dry. Examine color. Remember all colors are darker when wet. *The amount of dye and the length of time material stays in the dye bath, are the only factors which determine the shade. More or less water does not affect the*

color. Water is necessary only in order to get the dye evenly distributed over the material. Weigh material for best results.

9. Wet the garment in warm water and shake it out before putting into the warm dye bath. Be sure all cloth is covered at once.
10. *Stir all the time* the material is in the dye bath. Do not neglect this rule because the hotter dye in the bottom of the pan next to the fire will cause streaks unless the dye is kept moving through the cloth.
11. Simmer the dye bath. It is not necessary to boil it vigorously. *It is especially important not to boil rayons, wool, or silk; as boiling injures these fibers.* Cotton and linen may be boiled. If in doubt use a simmering temperature.
12. Remove material from dye bath. Add salt or vinegar according to directions and stir well.
13. Put the garment back in the dye bath and *continue stirring*. Simmer 20 to 30 minutes until correct color results. *Stir all the time.*
14. To test color, remove all material from the dye bath, rinse and dry a sample. If it is not dark enough, put it back in the dye bath and simmer until it reaches the desired color. If color is too dark, pour off part of the dye and add water and continue until desired color results.
15. Remove the fabric from the dye bath and rinse well. **Caution:** Have first rinse very hot, gradually change to a warm temperature. Rapid chilling of wool causes it to shrink and become harsh. Heat wrinkles result from too quick changes of temperature. Rayons which are always weak when wet are weakened further by extreme temperature changes. *Rinse until the water is clear.*
16. Lay material on a turkish towel. Roll to squeeze out water, do not twist or wring.
17. Hang up material or put garment on a hanger to dry. Knitted garments should be left flat.
18. To finish, press while slightly damp on the wrong side and with a warm iron. Too hot an iron may dull the color of a newly-dyed fabric.

Hints for Special Materials and Colors

1. Knitted or crocheted garments are heavy and stretch when wet. Slip the knitted garment in a light weight cloth bag such as cheesecloth before putting it into the dye bath. This will prevent pulling of the material. If knitted garment is not dyed in a sack, support it with stirring rods while lifting. Do not wring. Knead out excess moisture in a clean cloth; spread out flat to dry. Two teaspoons full of glue to a gallon of water may be added to the water in which the garment is rinsed to help keep the shape of the garment.
2. To dye yarn, wind the raveled yarn on a smooth board 15 to 20 inches long, leaving out the end of the yarn. When enough is wound to make a skein, break off the yarn and tie starting and finishing ends together. Tie skeins loosely at about six places. Wash in warm water and rinse.
About twice as much dye is needed to dye yarns as for woven cloth. Fill a pan with dye as near to the top as possible. Slip the skeins over a stick and lay the stick across the dye pan—turn the skeins constantly in the dye to get an even color. Simmer a little longer than for woven cloth.
3. To dye black successfully, be sure and use the correct amount of dye for the weight of material. Under-dyed black is of a bluish or purple shade. Over-dyed black has a brownish cast. If material is over-dyed black this may be corrected by washing in warm water and mild soap. A good true black may be dyed over any color but brown and red. To

- dye black over brown, add one-half package of navy blue for each package of black dye. To dye black over red, add one-half package of dark green to one package of black dye.
4. Weighted silks may not dye evenly. To test for weighting, burn a sample of the material. If weighted, it will be the same shape when burned as before. Generally it is not practical to attempt to dye weighted materials.
  5. Crepe materials will always shrink more than plain fabrics.
  6. Tinting can be used only for light colors. It will not give a fast color. Fast colors require heating to get the dye into the fiber.
  7. Spots, wrinkles, or uneven color may be caused by too little water to float the cloth. Always use at least three gallons of water to one pound of cloth. Wrinkles, especially in wools, also occur if the garment is taken from hot dye into cold rinse water.

Further Dyeing Helps

If your fabric is	These shades will cover successfully
Yellow	scarlet, orange, dark brown, jade green, dark green, navy blue, black
Peach	scarlet, cardinal red, purple, royal blue, dark brown, jade green, dark green, navy blue, black
Orange	scarlet, dark brown, navy blue, black
Light Pink	rose pink, scarlet, purple, royal blue, dark brown, dark green, navy blue, black
Deep Pink	old rose, cardinal red, purple, royal blue, dark brown, dark green, navy blue, black
Bright Red	dark brown, navy blue, black (add green to get a true black)
Wine	purple, black
Orchid	royal blue, cardinal red, purple, dark brown, dark blue, navy blue, black
Purple	black
Light Blue	old rose, cardinal red, royal blue, dark blue, dark brown, jade green, dark green, navy blue, black
Copenhagen Blue	navy blue, black
Navy Blue	black
Light Green	royal blue, dark blue, dark brown, jade green, dark green, navy blue, black
Emerald Green	dark brown, dark green, navy blue, black
Dark Green	dark brown, black
Light Gray	scarlet, wine, purple, dark green, dark brown, navy blue, black
Oxford (dark) Gray	dark brown, navy blue, black
Tan	dark green, dark brown, navy blue, black
Brown	black (add navy blue to get true black)

Notes

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