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www.FloraFiber.live



Black Walnut

The black walnut tree (*Juglans nigra*) is native to eastern North America. The outer husk of the nut is the source of dye. The colorant is juglone. It is a direct dye, which means that no mordant is necessary when used with a protein fiber. Cellulose may be dyed as well, but that requires a mordant.

Black Walnut provides a rich brown or tan on protein fibers.

The best time to gather the nuts is when they are still green: newly fallen or ready to fall off the tree. If the nuts rot and turn black on the ground the dye may be damaged or contain less dye; although I have dyed with success. Walnuts can be used fresh or preserved in the freezer for year round dyeing.

NOTE THAT WALNUTS WILL STAIN SKIN. WEAR GLOVES WHEN HANDLING!!!

Protein Fibers

- Wool
- Silk
- Cashmere/Mohair
- Alpaca

Dyeing

Place the whole hulls in a pot of water to soak, preferably at least 2 days. About half way through the soaking process, I cut slits in the hulls and "smoosh" to allow the juiciness to ooze out. The water should be a deep brown.

Using a strainer, pour the contents over another bucket or pot to strain the large chunks of walnut from the soaking water. Discard the solids and save the dye "liquor". *Optional - Strain the liquid one more time through cheese cloth. This will remove any residual small pieces from the liquid.*

Straining is important, as any remaining bits of hull will make dark spots on the fiber.

Add wetted fiber to the dye bath, bring it to a simmer, and keep at a gentle simmer for at least 30 minutes for silk (other fibers may take longer).

Remove the dyed fiber and rinse well. Hang to dry.

Resources

[Indigo, Madder & Marigold: A Portfolio of Colors from Natural Dyes](#) by Trudy Van Stralen