

Making a natural dye from Black Walnuts

1 Collect Black Walnuts in September or October, when the husks are still green.

2 Place whole nuts (or husks, if you want to use the nut meats) in a fabric bag, old pillowcase or nylon stocking.



Underneath the lime green husk of black walnuts is a hard shell with sweet nutmeats inside.

3 Cover with hot water and soak for three days or more.

4 Remove nuts and strain liquid. Heat it until it is warm but not boiling.

5 Dampen the materials that you wish to dye with clear water.

6 Immerse the materials in the dye bath. Stir until the materials have reached the desired color. Dyes from Black Walnuts will produce various shades of brown.

7 The dye may also be painted or sprayed onto materials.

8 Allow dyed materials to dry overnight. They should be colorfast the following day.

9 Store the dye liquid in glass containers (it may eat through plastic if stored long enough). Add vinegar to prevent mold, or store the liquid in the freezer.

Note: Be sure to wear rubber gloves and to protect surfaces while you work. Black Walnut husks produce a dye that will stain whatever it comes into contact with! You should also be extremely careful not to let the dye liquid come into contact with your eyes.