

## Resources for Production Dying - Pam Ramsey

**Dye** – For classes, I generally use Dharma Brand Acid Dyes. (Dharmatrading.com) There are economical, easy to work with and have good light fast properties. Any good wool dye will do, and I also use Gaywool and Cushing which I carry in the shop. Jacquard also is good as is Greener Shades. GS has a limited palette but can produce just about anything with mixing.

**Mixing** – I like to mix on the heavy side – about 3/4 of a tablespoon in the 16 oz. jars. Add the dry dye powder and THEN about 2 table spoons of hot water, mix until dye is dissolved and then add the rest of the water. Hot is fine, it doesn't need to be boiling. Have all your friends who have picnics and barbecues save their plastic spoons for you, they are great for mixing dye, but be sure there is no greasy residue on them. I usually run them through the top rack of the dishwasher to ensure there is no food left on them.

**Supplies** – Although I get some of my Dye supplies from Dharma, I have found Uline is a great source as well. Uline.com I get my jars as well as my squeeze bottles for painting from them. You do have to buy a case of 24 at a time, but they are fairly economical and you can always split a shipment. I wait until Home Depot has a sale and then pick up the foam brushes, at about 69 cents apiece. I also like using pipettes from any science supply house for specific measurements. Plastic wrap, I get at Sam's Club in the catering area. It's food grade and holds up to heat better than what the grocery stores sell. Table covers, etc. at Sam's Club and you can get a whole package of plastic aprons if you are going to be doing a lot.

**Care and Clean Up** - I do a marathon dye mixing all at once and may do 30 bottles or more at a time. It holds pretty well in storage. If it seems to be separating, heat it up if you have a dye dedicated microwave, otherwise add some hot water and a bit more dye. Once the jars are empty, wash in hot soapy water, rinse and let dry. Don't run through the dishwasher. Check for cracks regularly. The foam brushes can be rinsed of excess dye and reused until they begin to fall apart. When they start separating from the handle, time to toss. They're usually good for several sessions. I label each jar, both the jar and the lid with magic marker and even though clean, try to always have the same color.

**Vinegar** – use white vinegar and get the cheapest you can, I go through several gallons a month so watch for sales. I'm going to start carrying citric acid in the shop for production dyers.

**Tips** - Don't do your dying on a nice counter top, there is always some leakage, or an oops, Sam's has decent folding tables for a reasonable price and if you get dye on them, well, so what? Watch garage sales. Outside is best for ventilation, but not always possible. If dying inside, be sure you have some windows open and cover any surfaces you don't want dye on. Put all food and food dishes away and be sure not to cross contaminate. Have several rolls of cheap paper towels on hand for cleanup. I get super cheap plastic table cloths at Walmart in their picnic section. Usually 3 for \$2.00 and I reuse them until they fall apart.

I tend to not get particularly anal about length of color runs, but I am anal about testing and record keeping as I may have to produce the same colorway over and over many times. Get a small cheap notebook and keep with your supplies, when you come across something you really like, record it so you can do it again. Make note of each color progression, length and what color, what dye used and any mixes you did. Also note what type of yarn (blends will dye differently than straight wool. I use graph paper and colored pencils to design as I go. That way, I can produce the same yarn over and over again.