

Colourful happiness



Norwegian Mushroom Dyers' Forum

was established in 1992 for members of the Norwegian Association for Mycology and Foraging who have a special interest in dyeing with mushrooms and lichens and the following objectives:

- Inspire one another
- Share experiences
- Experiment with mushrooms, lichens and fibres

The dyers in Norway get together at an annual national meeting, and every second year an International Fungi and Fiber Symposium (IFFS) where mushroom dyers from all over the world meet for workshops, lectures and exhibition of mushroom related products is arranged.

The local societies of NSNF arrange courses in mushroom and lichen dyeing. There is more information about mushroom dyeing in NSNF's membership magazine Sopp og nyttevekster which is published four times a year and on the website

soppfargere.soppognyttevekster.no

Membership in FFS is included in the annual NSNF fee.





How to create beautiful colours

Mushroom dyers have developed dyeing with mushrooms and lichens into a craft of its own during many decades. We use different techniques to obtain the colours we want and making them more durable in respect of lightfastness and water resistance. We would like to share our experiences.

The dyeing process is split in two, first mordanting and then dyeing. For these, one only needs a large stainless steel or enamelled pot so that the yarn may float freely in the liquid.

Mordanting

Mordanting means that the fibre (yarn) is immersed in a bath of dissolved metal salts which will bond chemically to the fibre thus increasing the pigments' chances of bonding to the fibre. The resulting colour will be more lightfast and intense than it would have been without mordanting. By varying the metal salts in the mordant, different colours can be obtained from the same mushroom. For some lichens, mordanting is not necessary, and some lichens have to be fermented prior to dyeing to obtain the desired colour.

Dyeing

Mordanted yarn is put into lukewarm water. The dye mushroom is weighed, crushed/cut into as small bits as possible and put into a pot with lots of water. This may be done the day prior to

dyeing. Boil the mushroom soup for one hour and then filter off the bits of mushroom. The ratio of dried mushroom to yarn is often 1:1.

The moist yarn is immersed in the dyeing solution and heated carefully up to 80° C. The yarn is kept at 80 degrees for 1 hour with occasional careful stirring. It may be left to cool in the dyeing solution and is rinsed in lukewarm water and hung up to dry. The dyeing solution may be reused, but the resulting colour will be weaker as the dyeing solution becomes depleted.

Fermentation

The desired amount of lichen is crushed and put in a glass jar with a tight fitting lid. Water and ammonia is added and the glass is left for 1-3 weeks in a warm place and the mixture is stirred regularly. Before dyeing, 2-3 litres of water is added, the mixture is boiled for an hour, filtered and cooled before the yarn is immersed.

Fibre

Although wool comes in many qualities, it consists of protein fibres which bonds well to pigments from dye mushrooms. If the wool fibre is treated carefully and not exposed to superheating or large temperature shocks, a great variety of colours can be obtained. Silk fibres are more sensitive than wool fibres. Vegetable fibres such as linen and cotton require more complex mordanting and dyeing processes.

Four excellent dye mushrooms

Cortinarius semisanguineus

has a light brown cap (2-7 cm diameter), strongly red-coloured gills and a yellow stem and grows in coniferous forest all over Norway. 50-100 g dried mushroom to 100 g wool/50 g silk yield a wide span of red colours on alum or tin mordanted fibres.



Photo: Margrethe Steenberg



Photo: Grete Hølleland

Tapinella atrotomentosa

is a large gilled mushroom with a yellow-brown cap (8-15 cm diameter) and a black stem which has a dense coat of brown-black velvety hairs. It grows on decayed conifer logs and stumps and is common in the south of Norway. A variety of green colours is obtained on tin, alum and iron mordanted yarns. 35-50 g of dried mushrooms to 100 g wool/50 g silk.



Photo: Margrethe Steenberg



Photo: Gerd Kallak Hveding

Hapalopilus rutilans

is a soft, small (1-15 cm) light brown (cinnamon) coloured polypore which normally grows on dead, deciduous wood (birch, hazel and rowan). It is common in the south-eastern part of Norway and is much sought-after as it yields various shades of violet on tin and alum mordanted yarns. 15 g of dried mushroom to 100 g wool/ 50 g silk will usually give a satisfying result.



Photo: Tine Primmer



Photo: Inger Wegner

Phaeolus schweinitzii

is a relatively large mushroom (10-30 cm diameter). The top of the cap is velvety felted and coloured in various shades of brown and has a yellow edge which is most pronounced on young specimens. It grows either on its own or one on top of another at the foot of pine or larch and is quite common in the east of Norway. Young specimens have a high content of a yellow pigment. 4-8 g of dried mushroom to 100 g wool/50 g silk yields a yellow colour when tin is used as the mordant and a green colour when iron is used. Dyeing with older mushrooms requires more of them!



Photo: Arne-Eige Torsælen



Photo: Hilde Sommer

Three colourful lichens

Lasallia pustulata

grows on stones and rocks along the Norwegian coastline. It can be up to 8 inches in diameter. The top is grey-brown with characteristic blisters or bubbles. The underside is grey-brown to black. The fruiting bodies are rare, black and bowlshaped. The lichen is common in the south of Norway and scattered all the way north to Finnmark. 50 g is fermented and yields an intense red-violet colour to 100 g wool.



Photo: Enar Tindli



Photo: Anna-Elise Torsetten

Xanthoria parietina

forms orange to yellow leaf rosettes, diameter approx. 10 cm, on deciduous trees with a rich bark, especially European aspen, and on coastal rocks. It has numerous red-orange fruit bodies and is common all over Norway, but is not found in the highlands. 100 g dried, fermented lichen to 100 g wool yields a blue colour.



Photo: Anna-Elise Torsetten



Photo: Inger Walker

Cetraria islandica

is a green-brown bush lichen which grows on the ground and is 8-10 cm tall. It has wide lobes with white spots on the underside and is reddish at the base. It is common, grows in large colonies in pine forest and is sometimes called bread lichen. 200 g of dried lichen to 100 g of wool yields a nice yellow colour.



Photo: Enar Tindal

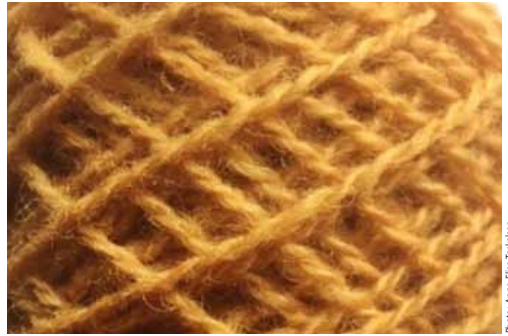


Photo: Anna-Elise Toresken

Are you fond of outdoor life?

Do you enjoy foraging?

Do you feel happy when you have access to colours, yarn, needle and thread, knitting needles and a crochet hook?

If you can recognise a few dye mushrooms and lichens, the path to the dye pots is very short!

***Welcome to the wonderful world
of the mushroom dyers!***



The Norwegian Association for Mycology and Foraging (NSNF)

is a voluntary non-profit organization which promotes knowledge and use of mushrooms and edible plants. Our 5000 members are organized in 36 societies spread across Norway.

The Norwegian Dyers' Forum (FFS) is our oldest and largest forum mostly for those who have a special interest in dyeing with mushrooms and lichens. All members of NSNF may join FFS at no extra cost. As a member of NSNF you will get our members' magazine, updated offers of our courses, forays and other fringe benefits. You can get more information on our website soppognyttevekster.no/medlemsskap

Norges sopp- og nyttevekstforbund

soppognyttevekster.no

