



From Flowers to Fabric - Flower Pounding The Art Of Transferring Natural Pigments

Capture the beauty of your garden blooms by turning them into stunning botanical prints!

You can enjoy the flowers you grow in your garden year-round when you learn the art of flower pounding. This simple process starts with fresh flowers, a hammer or mallet, and fabric made of natural fibers such as cotton, linen, bamboo, or hemp.

We've prepared the cotton bags for you for this project, but instructions are included at the end of this instruction sheet so that you may duplicate this project at home.

Gather Your Flowers, Leaves, and Stems From The Garden

Fresh-picked flowers provide the best color intensity. Some blooms change color after transfer and may look more faded or purple may turn to blue.

It's best to use flowers with bright colors, and single petal arrangements such as Johnny Jump-ups, cosmos, phlox, coreopsis, balloon flower, marigold, blanket flower, dahlias, zinnias, violas, pansies, etc.

Create Your Design

- When you've collected your flowers and foliage it's time to create your design. 1. Place the fabric on a hard surface such as an old cutting board. I don't recommend you try this on your kitchen counters or dining table.
2. To prevent the dye bleeding onto the back of the gift bags, you can insert wax paper into the bag to separate the layers.
 3. Arrange the flowers face-down on the bag. Cover them with a barrier cloth, paper bag, or paper towel.
 4. When pounding flowers it's best to start gently on the outer edges and work towards the center. You may have to go over some flowers more than once to get the intensity of color you're looking for. Remember we aren't playing whack-a-mole necessarily, unless you choose to use this class as anger management therapy! Then feel free to wallop all you wish! We don't judge here!
 5. Let the flower print dry for a few minutes before removing the plant material. I wouldn't wait longer than 5 minutes though as it becomes more difficult to remove it from the fabric.
 6. Lastly you're going to want to heat set your bag when you return home. Lay a sheet of parchment paper or thin scrap of a bed sheet or flour cloth over the design and iron

on low heat setting without any steam. This will help the color to set permanently to your project.

7. Care: Hand washing in cool water without harsh soaps will help keep the dye from fading. Line dry and iron if needed.

Materials Needed For This Project

1. Fabric item made of 100% natural fibers. We're using 100% cotton gift bags.
2. pH neutral detergent. (I use Molly's Suds Unscented)
3. Washing soda, or sodium carbonate. (I used Arm & Hammer All Natural Super Washing Soda.
4. Alum, or aluminum potassium sulfate for mordant. A mordant is a substance used to set natural dyes on fabrics by binding them to the fibers. (I use any Alum you can buy in the spice aisle at the grocery store.
5. Fresh flowers and foliage.

Tools

Small Bucket, hammer or mallet, hard flat surface for pounding, barrier cloth or paper - paper towel or grocery bag works well, cardboard, iron and ironing board, sheet of paper.

Prepare The Fabric Ahead Of Time

Remember to use fabric that is all-natural. Synthetics and polyesters don't work well for this project. Cottons, linens, hemp, bamboo or wool work very well.

1. Start by scouring the fabric, which removes oils, waxes and impurities that might interfere with dye absorption. Scour sounds rather harsh, it's just the technical word for gently soaking the fabric. To soak:
 1. In a bucket mix 1tsp of pH neutral detergent and 2 TBS of washing soda with 1 gallon of warm water for 5 minutes. Then hand wash and rinse with water until it runs clear.
 2. Next, soak the fabric in a mordant solution. This will help the dye bind to the material. Mix 1 gallon of hot water with 2 teaspoons of alum in a bucket and soak for 2 hours.
 3. After 2 hours add 1 tsp of washing soda in 1/2 cup water and add it to the alum solution with the fabric. Let this soak for at least 8 hours. Wring out the fabric and line dry it without rinsing.
 4. Once dry iron the fabric flat.
 5. Then you're ready to go!