# Dyeing of Wool with New Zealand Native Plants

Most plants are best used freshly picked although some may be stored providing, they are completely dry. Bark and berries require an equal weight per weight of wool. Leaves and flowers require double the weight. Mordanting is required for fixing the colour, except when using substantive dyes e.g.: lichen. Bark and lichen may be pulverised and soaked for 24 hours prior to extraction *for* improved colour. The colour of plant extract is no indication of the dye colour.

**Mordants**

**Alum**

* 1g alum
* 1g potassium sodium tartrate
* 100ml H2O

**Chrome**

* 1g Potassium dichromate
* 100ml H2O
* Must be prepared immediately before use

**Iron**

* 0.5g ferrous sulphate
* 1g potassium sodium tartrate
* 100ml H2O

**Copper**

* 0.5 g copper sulphate
* 100ml H2O

**Method**

1. Cover plant material with water and *simmer* for:

* 20 minutes for leaves and flowers
* 1 hour for bark.

1. While extraction is occurring, place wool in mordant solution and simmer for 30-45 minutes.
2. Immerse mordanted wool in plant extract (remove plant material) and simmer until desired colour is obtained (15 minutes - 1 hour).

**Dyeing with New Zealand Native Plants**

1. **Kaka Beak**

Colour: Red

Kaka Beak produces a beautiful red dye, especially from the flowers.

1. **Harakeke (Flax)**

Colour: Yellow to brown

The leaves of the Harakeke plant can be used to create various shades, from yellow to brown, depending on the method.

1. **Totara**

Colour: Brown

The bark of the Totara tree can be used for a brown dye.

1. **Manuka**

Colour**:** Pink to red

Manuka flowers can provide a soft pink or red dye.

1. **Kauri**

Colour: Yellow-brown

Kauri bark can be used to create a yellow-brown dye.

1. **Cabbage Tree**

Colour: Yellow to golden-brown

The leaves can be used for dyeing fabric in shades of yellow to golden brown.

**Lichens**

No mordant is required for dyeing. Use weight of lichen to weight of wool. Cover wool and lichen with water and boil until the required colour is obtained (up to 2 hours). A stronger colour will be given by a lichen growing in a sunny position.

**Orchil Dyeing**

If lichen is fermented in an ammonia solution for three to four weeks brilliant colours may be obtained.