

Mordanting Silk

Art 185LJ 2023

You need:

Your silk fiber/yarn/fabric/clothing

Detergent, for example “Unicorn power scour”

Alum (aluminum sulfate)

IMPORTANT! When you clean and dye silk materials, don't boil the material. Keep the temperature below 170f or so.

1. Measure

Weigh the silk (when it is dry). You will need 15% of alum of the weight of your material. If you have 100g fiber, use 15g mordant.

2. Clean (“scouring”) the material

Clean the textile using a pH neutral detergent. “Unicorn power scour” or “Synthrapol” for example. If you are washing fabric, it's OK to use a washing machine, if you are washing a piece of clothing you might need to hand wash it.

3. Mix and water and alum in pot

Use a pot big enough to allow your textiles to move around in the pot. Fill with water, put the alum in it, stir well.

4. Simmer the material

Put the textiles in and bring up to around 170f or less. Let simmer a little, move the material carefully to make sure the alum reaches all parts.

5. Wait

Turn off the heat. Leave the silk in the alum water for several hours, overnight for example.

6. Rinse

Rinse very well.

7. Dye or dry

You can now dye the textile or let it dry until you are ready to use it.