

# Acorn Natural Dye for Wool – Fall Dye Projects



The latest darling in my dye pot is acorn natural dye. The acorns produced the perfect pewter gray shade for dyeing wool yarn. Gray is the perfect neutral shade. It pairs with almost any color, and can be used for baby gifts, toy elephants and dolphins. Gray is perfect for both men's and women's clothing and outerwear. Needless to say, I am quite happy with my latest experiments and glad to share [my method](#) with you.

## Preparing the Acorn Natural Dye

Acorn natural dye is a [fall dye](#) that does not require a lot of high heat. I haven't tried this as a solar dye yet but I think it might work.

The first step is to rinse any dirt from the acorns. I left the caps on the nuts. If you have a lingerie laundry bag, place the acorns in the bag. I used one and a half pounds of acorns, (675 grams), a [5 gallon stainless steel pot](#) when making enough dye for 960 grams of wool yarn.

Fill the stainless steel pot about half way with warm or room temperature water. Add the acorns.

Next, you heat the water to almost simmering. Warmth is needed but boiling is not. Keep warm for up to one hour. Turn off the heat and leave the acorns to soak for up to three days.

I felt that there was enough color in the acorn natural dye bath after 36 hours.



## Preparing the Yarn for Natural Dyeing

One factor that is important in natural dyeing is preparing the wool to accept the color. This is called mordanting the fiber. A mordant bath is prepared, [often using Alum](#) for dyeing wool yarn.

When using [products like acorn natural dye, black walnuts](#) and even onion skins, the dye source is rich in tannins and no additional mordant bath is needed. You can simply soak the wool in warm water to get the fibers wet and ready to be dyed. If you choose to mordant, it will not affect the dye outcome but the color may vary slightly from unmordanted fiber.



Move the wet wool yarn from the water and place it in the acorn natural dye bath. Make sure the water completely covers the yarn or wool. Add more warm water if necessary. Also, make sure the yarn is not crowded in the dye pot.

Heat the water again, keeping the temperature under the simmering point. Leave the yarn in the dye bath for up to two days. You will want to make sure the dye bath does not develop any mold, so you might want to bring it to a cool indoor spot.



Showing the color compared to undyed yarn

## **Modifying the Color with Iron Water**

Once you see that the yellow color from the acorn natural dye has developed on the yarn, temporarily remove the yarn from the dye pot. I use a powdered form of [ferrous sulfate](#) but you can make your own iron solution if you prefer. In my recipe, I added one tablespoon of ferrous sulfate.



Color check. I decided to leave it in for another 30 minutes to even the color out.

*(If you make your own iron solution water, add rusty metal pieces and nails to a pint jar. Next add one cups of water and one cup of white vinegar. Shake the jar and allow the iron water to develop over a few days. Because it takes a while for the iron solution to develop you will want to start this at the beginning of the process.)*

Stir in the iron water or iron powder. Next, return the wool yarn to the dye pot. While you may not notice an immediate change, but the magic is beginning to happen! Meanwhile heat the water to a warm temperature.

After waiting at least 30 minutes, take a look at your yarn.

The color will have transformed to a dark gray! While the iron in the water is the ingredient that shifted the color, iron can also weaken fibers, so it's best to cool the yarn and then rinse completely.



While rinsing, I like to add a tablespoon of conditioner to the rinse water. My favorite is the [Unicorn brand Fibre Conditioner](#).

After rinsing until the water is clear, gently squeeze out the excess water and hang or lay flat to dry. Let me know what you think of the results of the acorn natural dye!