

DYEING TECHNIQUES

As colour is such an important dimension in the design of a woven cloth, it is necessary to be prepared to dye yarn to the appropriate colour. This dyeing stage, like all aspects of designing and weaving woven fabrics, cannot be hurried. It takes time to dye hanks of yarn to the exact tone that is required.

RANDOM DYEING

The majority of fabrics illustrated in this book use yarns that have been dyed in the hank to a particular colour. When these coloured yarns are placed in a warp or weft they will produce vertical or horizontal striped patterns.

If small sections of a hank of yarn are dipped into differently coloured dye pots, or dabbed with differently coloured dyes it produces a multicoloured yarn. When this yarn is woven it creates streaks or dashes of colour along a warp or weft stripe. I call this dyeing technique Random Dyeing.

Designs 23 *Picos de Europa Meadow* and 28 *Candy Floss* use a yarn that has been Random Dyed in the hank, before being warped in the normal way. These Random Dyed yarns show as little dashes of colour along the length of the warp.



Plate 93. Design 23
*Picos de Europa
Meadow.*



Plate 94. Design 28 *Candy Floss.*

The different coloured areas along the length of a Random Dyed hank of yarn rarely lay adjacent to the same colour again. What I really want to achieve with Random Dyeing is to have little patches of solid colour along a warp's length.

When I look at coloured pictures that inspire me, such as sunsets or autumn leaves strewn on a path, invariably the colours are a mix of small patches of different, often closely blended colours, and that type of mix is the aspect of the colours that I like. How do I get a similar ambience in my warps? The answer is clearly to Random Dye an actual warp before it goes onto the loom.

I use Procion MX Cold Water Fibre Reactive Dyes for Random Dyeing a warp. These dyes are suitable for dyeing Cotton or Silk. I make a warp and lay it along the length of a plastic gutter, which is laid on a flat area of ground outside. Following the manufacturers dyeing instructions for preparing the warp ready for dyeing and mixing the dyes correctly, it is then simply a matter of dabbing the warp with the dye colours I desire (Plate 95).

This concept is the first colouring design technique I tried for the design of the first few scarves I wove.

Designs 1 *Pool Shimmer* and 3 *Eucalyptus Foliage* both have warps made in this manner. You may note that the colours I have used in the warps for these scarves are generally very close in Hue, Value and Saturation. This is because I want the subtle contrast in the Weave Structures to be the main design element. I have often Random Dyed warps in a variety of strong contrasting colours, but to fulfil the design criteria for these scarves, a strong colour element to the warps distracts the eye from the subtle Weave Structures that I am trying to accentuate, and is therefore less satisfactory in my opinion (Plate 98).



Plate 97. Design 3 *Eucalyptus Foliage.*



Plate 95. Dyeing the
warp in a gutter.

Plate 96. Design 1 *Pool Shimmer.*



Plate 98. Scarf with Over dominant Colouring.

Design 30 *Green Vineyard* has part of the warp Random Dyed.

Design 4 *Lilac Time* also uses a Random Dyed warp. In this case the warp was prepared and laid in the plastic gutter ready for dyeing. Only two pots of dye were mixed up, a Pink and a Blue. A 50 g hank of yarn was dyed in each of these two colours ready to use as the weft.

The two dye colours were then mixed together in different proportions, until I had seven jam jars of dye ranging from Pure Pink, through different tones of Lilac, through to the Pure Blue. These seven pots of colour were applied to the prepared warp in horizontal bands following the natural graduation of the colours. The middle band of colour had equal parts of the Red and Blue dyes mixed together.

A hank of yarn enough to weave the majority of the weft (about 100 g) was dyed in this same mix of equal parts.

PIECE DYEING

Sometimes it is important that the tones of the colours used in a cloth are very closely related. In this situation I find it easier to weave a cloth in quite contrasting colours and then dye the whole cloth in one dye bath. All the colours of the cloth then take on a tint, tone, or shade of that dye colour.

Design 39 *Soft and Stiff*, was woven with three different Green yarns and one Pink yarn and then dyed in a Pink dye bath. The resultant cloth is in different tones of Mushroom Pink.

OVER DYEING

It is not only White yarns that can be dyed. A coloured yarn will dye perfectly and produce beautiful colours.

A Turquoise Cotton yarn has been over dyed with various Blue, Green and Yellow dyes to produce the range of closely relating colours needed for Design 9 *Seaweed*.

The rich Dark Green colour in Design 38 *Scarlet Ibis* has been produced by dyeing several Orange, Rust and Yellow yarns in an Indigo Blue Dyebath.

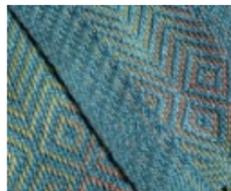


Plate 99. Design 30 *Green Vineyard.*



Plate 100. Design 4 *Lilac Time.*



Plate 101. Design 39 *Soft and Stiff* before
dyeing.



Plate 102. Design 39 *Soft and Stiff.*



Plate 103. Design 9 *Seaweed* with Turquoise
Cotton Yarn.



Plate 104. Design 38 *Scarlet Ibis* with Orange
yarn prior to Dyeing.