

## DIRECTIONS *for dyeing* WOOL YARN

Dyeing wool yarn with our Cushing's "Perfection" acid dye is simple. You prepare your yarn; you prepare a dye bath; and then you simmer your yarn in the dye bath until the color is taken up. These instructions are written for a basic 100 gram skein (approx. 1/4 lb. or 4 oz. of yarn.)

**SAFETY:** It is generally recommended that you use separate utensils for dyeing than you use for cooking; but remember, you have cleaners under your sink that you use every day on your cookware that are more dangerous when concentrated than our dyes. Common sense says clean your utensils thoroughly and rinse completely, and you will be fine. You will want to have dedicated utensils for measuring dye and simmering your solution as you do more. Most people dedicate an old pot and spoons to dyeing until they purchase specific equipment. You will want rubber gloves (or nitrile gloves) to prevent staining your skin. Be careful not to inhale the dye powder; it is ground very fine. A simple dust mask provides protection.

**Prepare your yarn:** Your yarn should be clean. Unwrap your skein into a loose loop and tie without cinching so it doesn't tangle. Soak your skein for at least 30 minutes in lukewarm water with a few drops of a mild detergent such as Ivory Liquid. This "wetting" prepares the yarn to take up the dye. You cannot soak too long. Drain the wool but do not let dry.

**Prepare your dye bath.** About 1/4 cup of vinegar is sufficient for one skein; but more vinegar does no harm and can help overcome difficulties caused by variations in your water chemistry. Use enough water in your pot so that your yarn will be completely covered and can be stirred. About a gallon will work for one skein. Use a water softener if your water is particularly "hard."

Depending on how much dye you use, your material will be a darker or lighter shade of the color you have chosen. You can add dye during the cooking process, but you can't subtract it. Some people add dye powder directly to the bath; but we recommend mixing one envelope of dye in two cups of boiling water, and then adding portions of this solution to your dye bath. This dye solution will stay fresh for several months in a jar with a tight lid. If you decide to add dye during the process, remove your yarn and return it to the bath once you have added dye and it is completely mixed. (Adding dye when your

material is in the dye bath can result in spots and variations; but some people love this effect.)

As a start, 1/2 cup (if you mixed an envelope in 2 cups of water), or 1/4 of the powder in your envelope will dye one skein to the full depth of the color you have chosen. Remember, you can make your yarn darker but not lighter.

When you have your dye bath ready, add your wet wool and begin to heat. You want your water to simmer, but not to come to a full boil. Gently stir your bath regularly as it heats and simmers. You will notice that the dye bath will become clearer and clearer as the dye solution is taken up into the material. All of our dyes contain multiple pigments, so be aware that different component colors have different temperature curves, meaning that as you dye, one of the component colors may take up and your yarn will turn a different shade than you expect while your bath changes color as well. If the material is removed from the dye bath prematurely, uneven or off shade dyeing may result. This is why we stress the importance of letting the material simmer for a good while, 30-40 minutes or until you have the shade you want and your water is mostly clear.

After the dye bath has exhausted, remove the dye pot from the heat and allow the material to return to room temperature. Rinse the material with cold water and let dry. Some people like to wash the yarn - just place the yarn in a container containing a little mild detergent mixed in hot tap water and let soak with a few gentle stirs, then place in clean hot water one or two times until it is rinsed. Do not pour hot water over your yarn, or change the temperature of your wash or rinse bath too drastically, you may felt your wool. Let the yarn air dry.