



April 12, 2022

Contributed by Myra Gons

DYEING EASTER EGGS NATURALLY THIS YEAR

When I was little I was intrigued by the beautiful golden shades of the Easter eggs my grandmother dyed using onion skins! I decided to try natural dyes for my own grandkids, so I turned to —what else?..... the internet.

I couldn't believe all the gorgeous colors the websites promised I could get using only fruits, vegetables, spices and teas! So I collected a rainbow of ingredients and got to work cooking up my dyeing solutions. As I boiled and steeped the colorful foods I envisioned the colorful array of Easter eggs I would be able to share with my family. But....

Many of the liquids were not at all appetizing, and some weren't at all what I expected. Case in point: I chopped and boiled about a cup of red cabbage, and the result was a grayish purple or purplish gray. Yucch! The beautiful green matcha powder turned the hot water brownish green. And the freeze-dried raspberries I had steeped ended up brownish red. I had also decided to use onion skins (both red and yellow), freeze dried blueberries, pomegranate juice, red zinger tea, turmeric, chili powder, paprika, and spirulina (a supplement made from algae that will turn your smoothie bright green).

I simmered the cabbage, onion skins, and berries for about 20 minutes, then strained them into jars. I steeped the herbs and tea also about 20 minutes. Just like when dyeing with food coloring, I added a spoonful of vinegar to each jar of steeped, strained liquid. I got a surprise when I added vinegar to the cabbage jar: the grayish purple solution turned bright pink! Cool! The next into each jar were the eggs. I knew from my "research" that the process was much slower than traditional egg dyes, so all the jars went into the refrigerator overnight.

The results were fun to discover, some as expected, a few disappointments, and a couple of interesting surprises. The biggest surprise was that the pink cabbage liquid dyed the egg blue! While I thought the matcha and spirulina eggs would be bright green, I like what I got. I had expected the raspberries, pomegranate juice and red zinger tea to dye the eggs pink, since those all stain our clothes pink. I won't bother with those again - see the bottom row in the picture. For pink eggs, I'm going to try beets next time.

Have fun dyeing your Easter eggs with natural ingredients this year! Let me know what colorful results you get!

