

## Yummy colour! – How to make paint with garden herbs

You can easily make your own paint using garden herbs or vegetables and fruit. If you have ever spent a day sitting on grass and found your trousers covered in green stains or have tried to hide the tell-tale signs of fruit juice, you will know, how well some plants dye. Although this paint may not be colour-proof and long-lasting (it may actually wash out of fabrics depending on the herbs you chose), food-based colours are safer and just as much fun as normal paint.

### Ingredients:

- Herbs, vegetables or fruits
- Water (if needed)
- Flour (if needed)

### How to:

**Step 1** Collect your garden herbs or other ingredients. We have used nasturtium leaves (which would not have been known in Roman Leicester as the nasturtium plant originates in America, but it is a popular spicy leaf in our modern gardens and can be eaten including the pretty flowers).



**Step 2** Finely chop and grind your herbs using a kitchen blender or a mortar and pestle. Strain the paste through a fine sieve or use a tea filter. You may have to add some water.



**Step 3** Depending on the consistency of your paint, and whether you want to use it like water colours or prefer a thicker consistency, you may want to add some flour. You will definitely want to add some flour for using the paint with stamps.



### FAQs

#### Which plants can I use?

Many plants can be used for dyeing. Leaves tend to give a nice green colour and may dye your paper or fabric permanently in a yellow shade. Lots of berries and other red fruit will result in a greyish blue colour. If you are using these paints with children, always check that the plants or used parts are not poisonous and you are not allergic to them!

#### Did the Romans use nasturtium leaves for cooking or dyeing?

No, the Romans would not have known the nasturtium plant. As with tomatoes and potatoes, the nasturtium originates in the Americas. Watercress and borage are garden herbs native to Europe and have been used in cooking for a long time (unfortunately, they currently do not grow in our garden).

#### Can I eat the paint?

If the plant is edible, you can also eat this simple paint. Please make sure to check whether you and/or your children are allergic to any of the ingredients.

Don't forget to check out Cori's activity sheet on how to make stamps using carrots or other root vegetables.

