



COCHINEAL is derived from the dried bodies of the female of the *Dactylopius coccus* insect which live on the prickly pear cactus in Mexico, Central and South America and the Canary Islands. Most commercial Cochineal is exported from Peru and is used in food, cosmetics and drugs. As a natural dye Cochineal gives a huge range of reds, fuchsias, pinks and purples. It is usually available as the dried insect or as a concentrated powder extract. It has excellent light and wash fastness. Use 3-8% of dried insect WOF for a medium depth or 1% WOF of extract.

Cochineal is sensitive to acids and bases so part from using mordants, Cochineal red can be turned orange by adding white vinegar to the dye bath and fuchsia by adding soda ash. Be careful when you wash your fibre after dyeing that the soap you use is neutral PH or your dyeing will change colour.

If you're using Cochineal Extract the dye can be dissolved in hot water and added directly to the dye bath. Follow the same dyeing method from **, and use the same mordanting method.

MORDANTING

PROTEIN

Use alum at 15% WOF

CELLULOSE

Use tannin at 8% WOF

Use alum at 15% WOF or

Use alum acetate at 8%.

For xmas reds add cream of tartar at 6% WOF to the alum mordant bath or the dye bath.

For purples add iron at 2-4% WOF to either the mordanting bath or the dye bath

DYEING Grind or crush the insects into a fine powder. Cover with water and boil for 30 minutes then strain the liquid and put to one side. Put the cochineal pulp back into the saucepan and boil again for another 30mins. Repeat this twice more. The remaining pulp can be stored in water in a glass jar for several weeks and be reused. ** Use the stock solution to make up your dye bath. With the mordanted fibre. Adjust the depth of shade with the amount of stock solution. Bring the dye bath slowly to the boil and continue to simmer until you're happy with the depth of shade. Rinse well in warm water. The remainder of the dye bath can be saved for later use.

