

EUCALYPTUS DYEING

At our volunteer appreciation picnic on November 4, we had a warm gathering of familiar faces, a delicious spread of homemade and local treats, and a fun natural dye party with the bark of the notorious eucalyptus tree.

Simmering in a stainless steel pot was the brew of fallen eucalyptus bark. I tore the long strips into smaller pieces and steeped them in water for a couple days prior to extract the tannin.

As volunteers arrived at the nursery, they each picked up a cotton tea towel which had been scoured and mordanted (treated to accept dye and remain colorfast) ahead of time. Using rubber bands, string, clothespins, and paint stirrers as resists, they folded, tied, and wrapped their towels and then dunked them into the pot.

After all had feasted and visited for an hour, we removed the towels from the pot and unwrapped them to expose warm ochre-brown shades in unique patterns—sunbursts, stripes, and grid effects—that the volunteers created. Below are some of the awesome results!

—Kate Berlin



ARTS IN THE WATERSHED