

WELCOME TO OUR STORE

SUPPORT OUR WORK →



## ADHERING NATURAL DYES WITH LODHRA

JUNE 1, 2022

↑ Share

*Image Courtesy of Dr Pushyamitra Joshi*

“Lodhra is a sentiment that connects us with rich traditional heritage and to our roots going back to ancient times”, says Dr Pushyamitra Joshi, Founder, **EcoFab**, Indore, Madhya Pradesh state, India. His work involves working with rural artisans to promote natural dyeing and hand-block printing as well as personally create a range of natural-dyed fabrics.

“Lodhra, a tree belonging to the genus *Symplocos* and native to parts of India, has been valued for centuries, if not millennia, in India. There is a continuous tradition of lodhra being used in Ayurveda, the traditional medicine system in India, for the healing properties of the tree’s bark and leaves. Ancient historical references also tell us that parts of lodhra trees were used for dyeing fabric as its leaves yield yellow colour and its bark brown colour”.



*Cloth dyed using lodhra mordant and Indian madder natural dye. Image Courtesy of Dr Pushyamitra Joshi*

He adds, “More importantly in relation to textiles, lodhra was used as a mordant that helped fix colours of natural dyes that cloth was dyed in. However, its use as a mordant declined in India, though interestingly artisans in Bali, Indonesia, use lodhra as a mordant. The technique of using lodhra as a mordant is believed to have travelled from India to Bali centuries back”.

Dr Joshi sources lodhra bark powder from a local Ayurveda store and a natural dyes supplier from Jaipur, and dried lodhra leaves from a couple involved in organic farming in Uttarakhand state. These are used as a mordant for natural dyeing of fabric at a simple dyeing set-up at his home. The lodhra bark powder/dried leaves are boiled in water for an hour and then the fabric is dipped in it for four to

twelve hours. After this the fabric is dried thoroughly and then dyed with a natural dye as required.



*Shefali Vaidya wears a Maheshwar silk sari that was dyed with manjistha, after mordanting with lodhra, by Dr Pushyamitra Joshi*

Dr Joshi credits lodhra with being a valuable mordant because it is a plant-based mordant rather than a mineral-based mordant; it binds colour well; it gives a beautiful vibrancy to natural dyes; works effectively on natural-fibre fabrics and natural-fibre yarns; and is part of India's textile heritage.

“Lodhra has aluminium content naturally present in its bark and leaves and this helps it work as a mordant. It is particularly effective when dyeing cloth with natural dyes that yield red colour such as Indian madder, European madder, red sandalwood; lac/shellac secreted by insects; and tannin-based dyes like pomegranate peels. It yields deep and vibrant shades of colour, and better fastness of colour especially on cotton. In addition, it is safer to use and dispose of after use in comparison with mineral salt based mordant like alum”.

Dr Joshi has dyed cloth with natural dyes using lodhra. One textile is an eye-catching sari - for an exhibition Natural Dye Stories, Bangalore, 30th April-3rd May 2022-that has three shades of red. For this, the entire sari (5.5 metres) was mordanted with lodhra and then dyed with red sandalwood.

Subsequently more than half the sari was mordanted again and dyed with European madder. Then one metre of the end panel was mordanted and then dyed with Indian madder. The result is a lovely textile of three colour shades that are testimony to the attributes of lodhra and natural dyes.

[← Back to blog](#)

1 comment



selvedge



---

ELLEN FINAN • NOVEMBER 28, 2022

## Leave a comment

Please note, comments need to be approved before they are published.

---

## Quick links

[SEARCH](#)

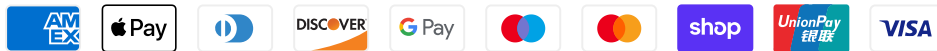
[ABOUT US](#)

T&Cs

FAQs

PRIVACY POLICY

Subscribe to our newsletter by entering your email address below. "I just wanted to say how much I admire your informative and inspirational newsletters - I always look forward to them!"  
Tricia, San Rafael, USA

 →

© 2024, Selvedge Magazine Powered by Shopify

