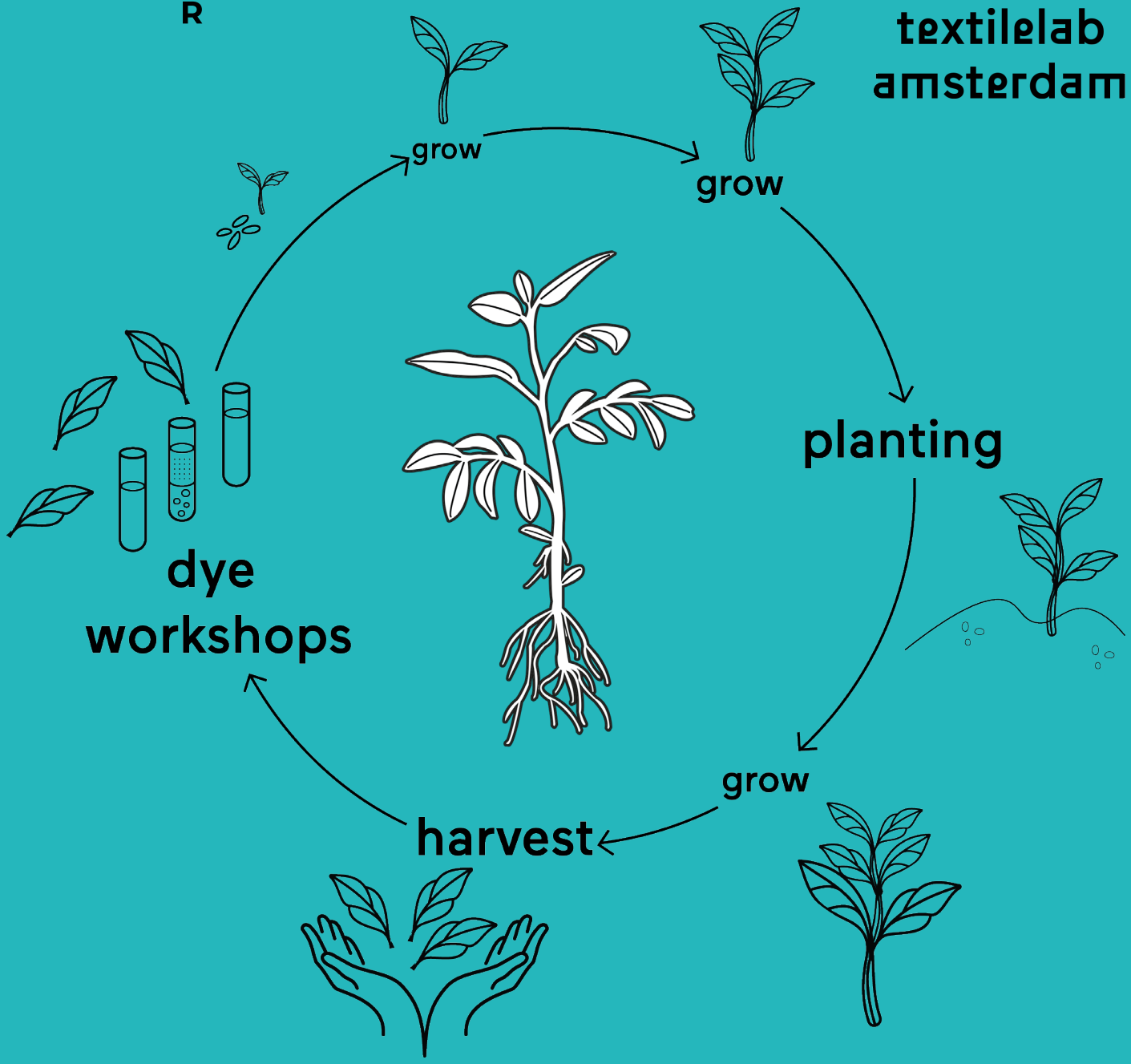
LOCAL COLOR

waag

textilelab amsterdam




# FRESH INDIGO DYE WORKSHOP

# Local color

Local Color is a 2-year project by Waag's TextileLab Amsterdam. It investigates the conditions for local, small-scale production of biochromes as organic dyes for textile paint, all within the city of Amsterdam. The circular city can be an environment that facilitates plant-based biochromes, creates awareness and supports local cooperation. The resulting biochromes can be used for natural textile dyes, helping individuals and the textile industry to shift away from toxic and polluting synthetic dyeing methods.

# Japanese Indigo

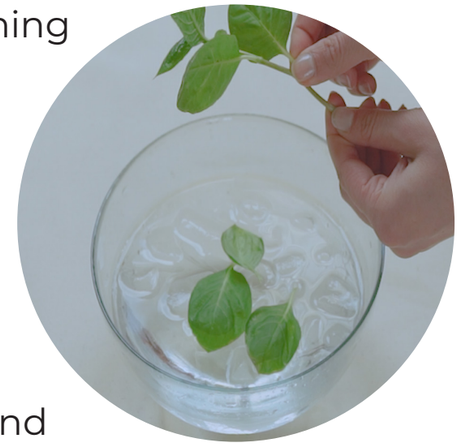
This lush, green plant with its large leaves and long stem may not look like a main character of the natural dye rainbow at first glance but there is more to it than what meets the eye. Known as Japanese Indigo or Dyer's Knotweed, it has made quite a name for itself by producing the remarkable indigo blue. While this color can be found in various plants in different parts of the world, the *Persicaria Tinctoria* has historically mainly been used as a dye plant in Japan and Southeast Asia.

Despite being an expat in the Netherlands, it thrives quite well in Dutch soil. Japanese Indigo is an annual, low-maintenance plant which loves to have its roots submerged in moist soil, entangled with its neighbours. It feels quite at home in rainbow weather: a good sun + rain combo.

**With some love and care, this little friend will show its contentment and gratitude for sure.**

# How to start

## PLANT HARVEST



Preferably cut the plants in the morning before the sun hits them
Cut stems from the top part of the plant, where you still leave some room for new sprouts
Strip the leaves from the stem.
Be careful not to crush, bruise or squash the leaves
If you can't use the leaves right after cutting; put them in ice cold water and leave in the fridge for max 1 day

**Choose one of the following methods based on the availability of dye matter (indigo leaves):**

1  few leaves **STRESS RELIEF PRINTING**

2  a handful of leaves **SALTY INDIGO MASSAGE**

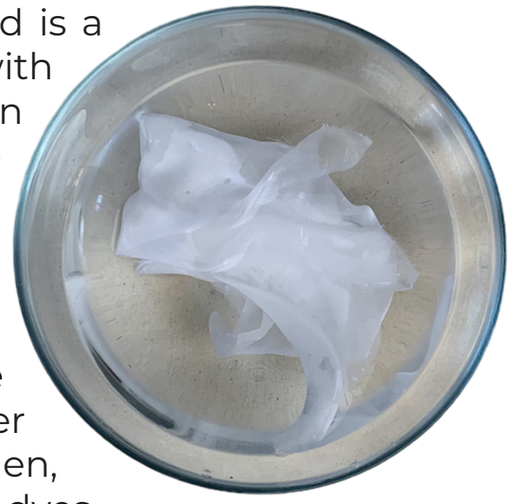
3  plenty of leaves **ICE COLD SMOOTHIE**

There are several ways for dyeing with Japanese indigo, each offering unique outcomes. This workshop will explore how to obtain shades of blue on silk fabric by using the **plant's leaves in its fresh state.**

# Fabric Preparation

## Introduction:

Preparing your fabrics beforehand is a crucial step for a successful dye with colors coming from nature and can have a great effect on the outcome as it increases the fabrics ability to absorb and hold the color within its fibers.



Results may also vary based on the fabric composition. Always prefer natural fibers, such as cotton, linen, wool and silk, when doing natural dyes.

For this workshop we are using 100% silk chiffon

## How much Indigo do I need? FOR METHOD 2-3

Using a scale, measure Weight Of the dry Fabric (WOF)

*(The scarves we use today are 4g per piece)*

Gently wash the fabric and soak in water before dyeing

When making a dyebath out of the fresh leaves, aim to gather min 200% dyematter in relation to your WOF

*(In our case this would mean; min 8g of leaves )*

**Repeat the dyeing cycle multiple times with fresh leaves to achieve deeper shades of blue**


## Method 1 STRESS RELIEF PRINTING

On a dry fabric, position the indigo leaves in a desired pattern

Fold your textile to cover both side of the leaf

When your textile is fine, you can easily get the stain through 4 layers of textile

Pound the leaves onto your fabric using the hammer

Remove and rinse the fabric



## Method 2

## SALTY INDIGO MASSAGE

## Method 3

## ICE COLD SMOOTHIE

Sprinkle a tsp of salt on top of the leaves

Massage leaves until some juice is coming out

Add the fabric to the pot and massage further

Allow it to sit for max **15-20min** occasionally stirring the fabric to ensure an even color

Remove and rinse the fabric

Blend the leaves with ice cold water in a tall container, adding salt to the mixture

Mix it all until the leaves are very small and you end up with a smoothie like texture. Make sure no air is incorporated while blending. Aim to keep this process max 5 min until the addition of fabric to the dyebath.

Add your fabric into the dye bath

Allow it to sit for max **15-20min** occasionally stirring the fabric to ensure an even color.

Remove and rinse the fabric

# Happy Dyeing!

Now you're all set to explore the magics of natural dyeing using fresh Japanese Indigo. You can use this page to note down your findings:

Any question, ideas or surprising results?

Feel free to reach out to us
via email: textilelab@waag.org or @textilelabamsterdam

Scan the qr-code
and join the
**Local Color community**

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