

Enclosed are detailed instructions for dyeing Arctic Fox. Many other fly tying materials can be dyed the same way. What I am finding is the easiest is to use acid dyes to get close to the color you are looking for, then shift the color to hit your target with Jacquard Dye-na-Flow. Color charts for most dyes are based on dyeing cotton!

The RIT dye page for formulae for dyeing different colors: <http://tinyurl.com/jnhq727>

Other suitable acid dyes are made by Jacquard, Dharma Trading, and Veniard. Often certain colors useful in fly tying are available from one brand, but not another.

Note: dyeing a good black is always a problem. For furs, I prefer dyeing a black with regular boxed hair permanent color!

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR DYEING ARCTIC FOX**

(NOTE: for damsel nymph patterns I dye fur patches three different colors: rusty olive, a light olive green, and a light mustard gold.)

Wash fur in Dawn dishwashing detergent, squeeze out soapy water, no need to rinse. An even better detergent is Professional Textile Detergent available from DharmaTrading.com. Use just a couple of capfuls to a pot of 160F water to remove oils and waxes from the fur or feathers. Rinse and squeeze out all the detergent.

Shake the dye powder. Most powdered dyes have a high salt content and very little actual dye, so mix well before use!

To prepare dyes: add a small amount of very hot water to the powder, stir, and 'paste up' the dye. Add a little more hot water at a time as the dye dissolves.

When dyeing the fur, I use an inexpensive digital thermometer and try to maintain the temperature of the bath strictly between 150F-160F. DO NOT GO HIGHER THAN 160F for tying materials.

### **Typically, to dye one color:**

Paste up 1 tsp TOTAL of dye powder or dye powder mix (such as 1/2 tsp of one color powder and 1/2 tsp of another).

When the dye is pasted up, add:  
2 cups water, then heat to 150F-160F.

Insert wet material into dye bath, and dye with regular stirring for 30 minutes. Longer times make for more saturated, darker color. For powerful dark colors, sometimes you can dye just for 15 minutes.

**Add 2 TBSP white vinegar** after the first five minutes of dyeing. Add a Tsp of white vinegar every five minutes until 15 minutes of dyeing time is left.

Starting at 15 minutes left in the dyeing time, add a healthy pinch of **Kosher salt** to the dye bath, stir until dissolved. Add a pinch of salt at 10 minutes left and 5 minutes left in the dyeing time.

Pour out dye, rinse dyed material under running water until the water is running clear. Blot to dry. Use a hair dryer to dry furs. Hang most materials on lines and let them air dry or dry with a fan.

### **Here's a description of a basic dyeing setup:**

You should use dishes, pots, utensils set aside strictly for dyeing and not both food prep and dyeing. You can buy old stainless steel pans and bowls at a thrift shop.

On stovetop (gas range is best): stainless steel pan, about 6" diameter, digital water-resistant thermometer, stainless steel fork or clean wood chopsticks.

In sink: stainless steel bowl, about 4-5" across, small strainer

Countertop: Pyrex measuring cup containing 2 cups of very hot water. Also have white vinegar, kosher salt, and paper towels.

### **Other tips:**

The largest piece of fox I dye at one time is 2.5" x 2.5" -- that's a LOT of fox.

Buy RIT at JoAnn using 40-50% off coupons.

Extensive color charts for Jacquard and Dharma Trading acid dyes are available on the DharmaTrading.com website.

There are scant sources for the excellent Veniard dyes in the USA. <http://tinyurl.com/hdsxxgr> Veniard dyes are made in the UK.

If you dye a material sequentially, the order of colors you dye is important. For example, you will get different results if you switch the order of colors. The last color is dominant.

Good Luck!

Wes Wada

[www.flyfoundry.com](http://www.flyfoundry.com)