



## Directions for Using Cushing's Acid Dyes on Feathers

Acid dyes are suitable for feathers, wool, mohair and nylon. They do not work well for cottons and cellulose materials, plus linen and rayon. Silk may or may not dye well with acid dye depending on its composition. These directions are more specific for feathers. If you intend to dye another of the materials mentioned above, the process is similar. Let us know and we can send you a copy of the general directions.

- 1) Soak Your Feathers:** The material to be dyed should be soaked in a mild Ivory dish detergent solution for a few minutes. Use one tablespoon of detergent or more per gallon of water. The soaking solution should be soapy. Soak for 5-10 minutes before dyeing.
- 2) Prepare the Dye Bath:** Use a container that is much larger than you need to allow for stirring and to contain splashes. A large stainless steel pot or white enamel pot is best because it allows you to see the color of the material and the dye solution. Do not use pots that will later be used to prepare food. Do not use aluminum pots or tools.

Soft water or distilled water is best used to prepare the solution. If using tap water that is particularly hard a softener should be added. Water should be sufficient to cover your feathers and have room to flow between them, and allow for stirring. The term "acid" refers to the relative pH balance of the dye bath. We recommend the use of common white vinegar to change that balance. Generally, one cup of vinegar to a pound of feathers is plenty. Note that you cannot add too much vinegar, but too little will prevent dyeing. Water softener or mild detergent is then added depending on the "hardness" of your water. Finally the dye powder is added and stirred thoroughly. Apply heat and add the pre-wetted material. Continue to stir as the temperature rises to a 180°F, reduce heat and hold that temperature for 30-40 minutes. Feathers can be removed at any time, but full color will not be achieved until the dye is absorbed. This is why we stress letting the feather soak for so long.

- 3) Dry Your Feathers:** Feathers must be kept moving until dry or they will clump. Blot feathers dry with a towel and dry them inside an old pillow case in the dryer on high or by hand with a hair dryer. Feathers like ostrich or emu must be "fluffed" by rubbing between two towels to achieve their best look. If too much static is built up, it can be removed by rubbing with a dryer sheet.

**Have fun and enjoy your results!**

NOTE: Our acid dyes are simple chemicals. The chemistry of using them is complex. These directions are given in good faith, but no warranty is expressed or implied. Test dye prior to committing the finish material. Since we do not have control over the use of our dye, we must disclaim any liability for unsatisfactory results.