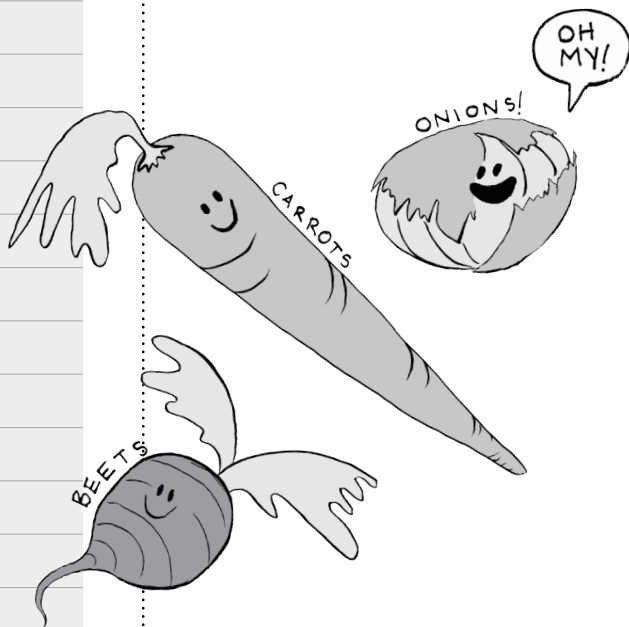


To Dye For!

Has your old T-shirt seen better days? No need to let it die. Dye it instead!

Next time your family boils colorful veggies, don't dump the water. Use it to brew natural dyes the way the colonists and pioneers did. Then use the dyes to jazz up your shirt and give it new life. Note that this activity requires using a stove to boil water, so have an adult help you.



SUPPLIES

- colorful veggies like beets, carrots, gold onions, red cabbage, or spinach
- large pot
- stove
- water
- strainer
- glass jar
- cold water
- white vinegar
- cotton T-shirt
- rubber gloves

1 Choose your color. Wild about red? Beets do the trick. Carrots produce orange, naturally. Gold onions make yellow, red cabbage produces purple, and spinach gives you green. Put the vegetables in a pot and cover with water. Boil them, and then drain the colorful liquid and strain out any lingering solid bits. Store the liquid in a glass jar until you're ready to dye the shirt.

2 Before you use the colored liquid you'll need to make sure the dye will set and take hold in the fabric. To make the dye-set liquid, pour 4 cups of cold water (950 milliliters) and 1 cup of vinegar (240 milliliters) into the large pot. Place the T-shirt into the mixture. Then put the pot on the stove, and set the burner to simmer. Allow the shirt to simmer for a full hour, checking on it now and then to make sure the liquid doesn't boil away completely.

Trash Flash

In the Middle Ages, dyers soaked fabrics in vats of old urine to set dyes!

Hint: When it's time to launder your completed veggie-dyed shirt, wash it separately in cold water. The dye will last longer and won't stain anything else.

3 After an hour, remove the shirt from the pot. Rinse it in cold water.

4 Now you're ready to work with the colored liquid. Return the pot and T-shirt to the stove. Pour in the colored water, and set the burner to simmer again. Keep an eye on the pot. When you are happy with the color, turn off the heat. Wear rubber gloves to handle the shirt because the dye will stain your skin. Keep in mind that the color will dry a few shades lighter than it looked in the pot.

