

the Bare Necessities

You'll want a generous ragbag with a selection of clothes that you no longer wear. Make sure to have at least a couple of long-sleeved cotton or silk t-shirts (that fit you) as well as the standard short-sleeved variety (these don't need to be exactly your size). If you happen to have a piece of lightweight knitwear to hand (cotton/silk/wool/cashmere/linen/hemp) it will be useful for our first project.

Look for undyed silk shirts at your local thrift store (they offer a wealth of useful detail to harvest from).

Do you have a pile of dye samples? Lovely dyed scarves you aren't wearing? A stash of cloth that has been sulking at the back of the cupboard? They'll all be useful, as will a couple of old sheets (or old tablecloths) if you have them.

The key thing is to stick to natural fibre fabrics. They are better for you and better for the planet. I am assuming most people signing up for this class will have an interest in dyeing with plants and so I recommend undyed/white/greige or even some very pale colours but you could certainly create exquisite garments from a selection of industrially dyed garments if you prefer, and you might find that pre-loved black cloth can provide a nice contrast.

Threads for stitching. Choose those that feel good to hand. Avoid polyester. **

A pair of sharp scissors is a must. I like nice big ones with a good edge and some small pointy ones for snipping into corners (or harvesting buttons).

Conscious Clothing



Those lovely bent safety pins that quilters like will be useful, as well as good quality sewing needles (Clover and Tulip are good brands to look out for).

A heat source. I like an open fire but that is not always practicable for everyone. The butane canister camping stoves are good if you have a tendency to forget to turn things off, as each canister only has fuel for an hour.

Your dyepot can be something as simple as a large food can. If sourcing pots at the thrift store always make sure to hold them to a light source and check for stars (holes). Never use pots for dyeing that you plan later to take back into food preparation.

***In Australia, [Beautiful Silks](#) have a number of lovely silks and silk+cotton thread and yarn mixes and they'll give students a 10% discount (including off postage costs, and will ship worldwide) when the correct code is entered at the checkout. The code will be advised on enrolment. In Canada, [Maiwa](#) offer honest yarn (lace weight is my favourite for hand-sewing) which also comes in a delicious range of naturally dyed colours. If you order from Maiwa and have an address in Canada or the USA, purchases above \$200 are blessed by free shipping. Both companies are also purveyors of cloth and lovely sewing needles.*