

# DYEING BASKET REED

## BASIC DYEING PROCEDURES

Use pots that will not react with the dye: unchipped (on the inside) enamel, pyrex, stainless steel. Clean plastic buckets or trash cans will also work.

Keep dye utensils separate from kitchen utensils. Keep all dyes and assisting chemicals away from children and pets. Wear rubber gloves, especially when working with liquids. Do not breathe in fumes from a simmering dyepot.

## PREPARING THE REED

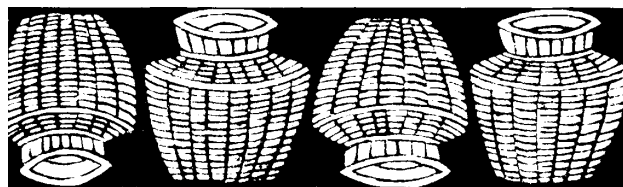
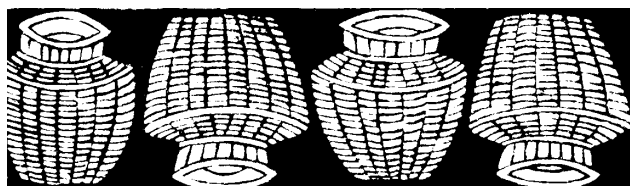
Soak reed for about one hour, rinse well. It will take less dye per pound to dye reed than yarn or cloth, because the color does not penetrate to the inside of a piece of reed. Use less dye for paler shades, with the same amount of water and reed. And more dye for deeper shades.

## PREPARING THE DYEBATH

Dissolve the dye in a quart or so of boiling water, add one tablespoon salt per packet of dye. Pour enough boiling water to cover the reed you want to dye into a plastic bucket or trash can or a large pot. Add the dye liquor, mix completely. Add the presoaked reed. Lay the reed in loosely to avoid overcrowding, which can cause streaking. Let stand from one hour to overnight, depending on the depth of shade you want. You can remove some of the reed any time after the first hour for shading effects. If you are using a vessel that can safely be heated on the stove, you can do so to get deeper colors.

Rinse the dyed reed in cool running water until the water runs clear. Hang the individual strands to dry; leave plenty of room between them to prevent the long term dampness that causes mildew. Always be sure the reed is thoroughly dry before storing. When resoaking the reed for use in a basket, use a separate container for each color—there will be a little bleeding.

Your dyebath can be saved for later use. It will yield lighter shades each reuse. Store in a sealed container in a dark and cool place. The bath will finally be exhausted, with no usable color left.



## GRADUATED SHADES

Many baskets are especially nice with graduated shades of the same color. To obtain light, medium and dark shades of the same color, dissolve a teaspoon of dye powder in 13 teaspoons of water (that's a quarter cup plus one more teaspoon).

Prepare three dyepots using about a quart of boiling water for each. To the first dyepot add one teaspoon of your dye solution; to the second add three teaspoons; and to the third add nine (using up all thirteen). Scale up or adjust as you please.

## RAINBOW DYEING BASKET REED

Rainbow dyeing basket reed is easy and cheerful. Start by winding a loose coil of reed, no more than half a pound in weight (you may want to prepare several at once). Tie in two or three places with cotton string - loose loops, tight knots. Soak in water for about fifteen minutes.

Choose three or four colors of dye - Cushing Direct Dye, or any other good quality basket dye. Dissolve one of the colors in hot water and bring to a simmer in an enameled or stainless pot (one not used for cooking).

Pour the hot dye bath into a rubber wash tub. Prop a coil of reed in the tub so that only a section is submerged in the dye (a third of the coil or a little more if you plan to use three colors equally, a quarter or so if there will be four). Add boiling water if needed to adjust the depth of the dye bath. Let the reed coil soak for at least 30 minutes, longer for darker colors.

Rinse the reed.

Repeat this procedure with a second color of dye. Rotate the reed-coil so that an undyed section goes into the new bath. Where dyed sections overlap, the colors will mix, yielding additional, related, colors.

Keep dyeing undyed sections until all the areas you want to dye have color. Rinse well, undo coil, and hang the pieces to dry.

*An after-bath of ®Retayne will improve colorfastness with any of these methods.*