



# Activity 15: Project

## Make a dye from stinging nettles

Location: Anywhere

**D**uring both world wars the stinging nettle provided fibres for uniforms, webbing and rucksacks and a dye to colour them. It is the dye from the leaf that this project is concerned with.

To dye cloth properly so that the colour won't wash out requires a pre-treatment with a substance called a mordant. We can dispense with that because we only want to see the colour once.

### What to do:

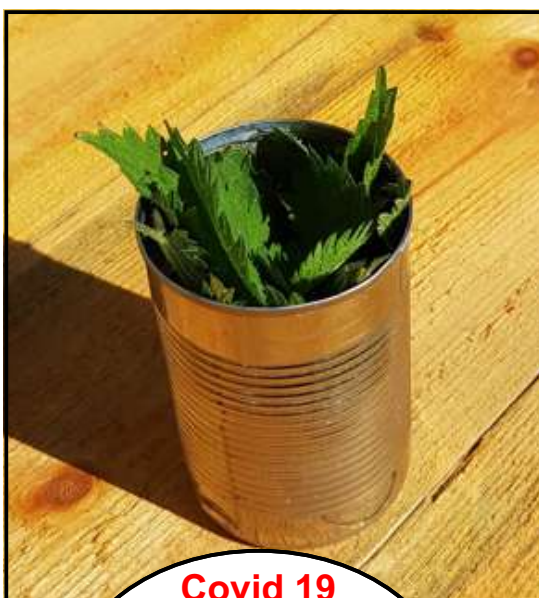
- Put on work gloves and pick enough nettle leaves to fill an empty baked bean tin (see picture below).
- Half fill with water and press the nettles below the surface.
- Put the tin on the picnic stove and bring to the boil.
- Keep it hot for an hour (not boiling, just hot).
- Wearing the gloves, pour the water into another tin or tray. This is the dye.
- Place your scrap of white cotton into the dye and then spread it out, or hang it up, to dry.
- All done! What colour do you get? Take a picture!

## Nettles



### You will need

- Courage to pick nettles
- A patch of nettles away from home
- Two empty tins (Baked beans type)
- Work gloves
- A picnic stove
- A bottle of water
- A scrap of white cotton to dye
- A camera to remember the moment



*The project involves stinging nettles. If they touch your skin they will sting. For this reason you will need work gloves.*

*Once you have the work gloves on you are safe.*

## Work gloves



*You must have gloves and cover your wrists*

### **Covid 19 Discipline**

**OBSERVE SOCIAL DISTANCE**

**Beavers/ Cubs:**  
Must be with responsible adult

**Scouts/ Explorers:**  
Parents must be informed.  
Work with a friend.