

# Agriculture Literacy

## Create Your Own Rainbow: Wool Dyeing Activity

Here's a kid-friendly activity to help you create your own rainbow of yarn.



water. Do not move the yarn around too much to avoid felting. Put on gloves and mix one packet of KoolAid per one teaspoon of vinegar and one cup of water. For variegated yarn use more than one color. Carefully pour each color onto the yarn in sections (like pieces of pie). Use chopsticks or a spoon to gently move the yarn a bit to let the color reach the bottom.

**Setting the Dye:** Once the colors have been applied, set the pot on the stove and turn the burner to medium high heat. When the water begins to simmer, turn heat down to a low simmer for about 20 minutes or until the water is clear and the dye has been absorbed into the yarn. You may also use a microwave for heat setting by placing your yarn in a glass bowl, applying the dye and microwaving on High at one minute intervals until the dye is absorbed. Let the yarn cool to room temperature and rinse in room temperature water. Wearing rubber gloves, hang to dry.

**Notes:** Lemonade (yellow) and other colors may be pale. If you want brighter colors, add food dye. Also, most red colored KoolAid packets, regardless of flavor, dye about the same. A slow cooker can also be used to heat set dye. It will take about two hours on high.

Dyeing kits are available from Battenkill Fibers for \$29.95 plus shipping. Each kit contains:

- Four 4 oz. skeins of ecru worsted weight NYS wool yarn tied for dyeing.
- 12 packets of KoolAid and a quart of white vinegar along with dyeing instructions.

Email [mjpacker@gwriters.com](mailto:mjpacker@gwriters.com) or Fax request with complete mailing address to 518-692-2700.

### Supplies:

- White/Light Wool Yarn (synthetic yarn will NOT work)
- Unsweetened KoolAid packets
- White Vinegar
- Pots and Pans (or glass bowls for microwave process)
- Rubber Gloves

**Instructions:** Soak a skein of the yarn in a pot or glass bowl with very warm water for about 30 minutes. Drain almost all of the

### Newspaper Activity:

Pretend you're a reporter for the local newspaper and you need to write about the process of making a wool sweater from gathering the raw materials to the finished product. Use the articles in this series, elements of the story "Weaving the Rainbow" by George Ella Lyon and other resources to discover more about fiber production.

Dyeing yarn photo credit: [www.flickr.com/photos/kaete\\_hh/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/kaete_hh/)