

# Sewing to Dye For!

## How Sewing & Fabric Dyes Can Team Up to Generate Sales!

By **DIANNE GIANCOLA**, Rit Dye/Phoenix Brands

Have you ever thought about sewing a project in white fabric and then using fabric dyes to create a custom color? I tried this with a table topper and coordinating skirt made for a trade show because I wanted to show off some new colors Rit was introducing at the show. It actually worked quite well. The table skirt was dip-dyed in Violet using an ombré dyeing technique that created shading from dark to light. Sewing the skirt before dyeing was a real advantage because I could plan and see exactly where the shading should be. Dyeing something that's been sewn also means there is lot less fabric to handle when dyeing.

Another advantage to working with all white is that the sewing thread and any trims, tassels or even buttons can be dyed so everything is color matched. Just check the fiber content of these items to be sure they are compatible with the dye. The table topper was dyed using a marbling technique in the same Apple Green dye bath as the cotton tassels so the color matches perfectly. I never would have been able to buy tassels to match the topper. This made me realize that fabric dyes could be a natural add-on product for fabric and quilt shops.

### Dyeing Today

Dyeing is no longer just a quick fix for faded jeans or a tired bedspread. Fabric dyeing is on-trend. Go to your local mall, open a mail order catalog or go shopping online and you're bound to see all types of hand-dyed effects popping up in clothing, accessories and home furnishings.

Ombré dyeing is an old European technique that has returned to the fashion spotlight. The fabric is dip-dyed in a single color creating monochromatic shading from light to dark. As a variation, sometimes the fabric is dipped in two or three colors that blend together, creating the feeling that an artist has dipped and shaded the colors by hand.

Wax-less batik dyeing is another technique that has surfaced to add decorative motifs and patterns to dyed fabric. The leaves on these pillows were stamped onto the fabric using Crafter's Pick Batik-EZ Resist Medium. The resist prevents the dye from penetrating the fabric and then washes out after dyeing. The pillow tops were backed with batting and outline stitched to create a trapunto-like effect.



---

---

*Through inspirational ideas and education, you can offer your customers a new creative outlet with fabric dyes. This will set you apart from your competition. If sales are an indication of growth, Rit reports that the sales of dye in the craft area have experienced double digit dollar growth in key retailers over the past year.*

---

---



Dyes can also be brushed or splattered onto fabric to create a modern pop-art look. Tie-dyeing is back, too, but now it's taking on new color combinations and twists.

Some of you are probably thinking, there's no way I'm going to dye fabric on top of a hot stove. Well, here's the good news -- those days are gone. All that's really needed is hot tap water (140°F). If your water is not hot enough, heat some in the microwave. Most of my dyeing is done in a plastic dish pan or bucket. And for marbled effects, I follow a low-water immersion technique, which uses small amounts of water and dye. Fabric is scrunched and pushed into small disposable plastic containers and then heat set in the microwave. The result is mottled fabric with light and dark variations and lots of texture. I have been successful in dyeing up to one yard of fabric in a large glass bowl in the microwave.

### **About Rit**

Rit is a user friendly all-purpose dye, available both as a powder and a liquid. It's non-toxic and safe to use. No face mask is needed when working with the dyes. The liquid dye is already mixed and is more concentrated than the powder. Designers prefer the liquid dye because it's quick and easy to use, and you can see your results immediately.

Rit will dye more fabric types than most dyes. It will color natural-fiber fabrics, but unlike some dyes, it will also color rayon, nylon, acetate and spandex. It will not color 100 percent polyester or acrylic; however, polyester/cotton blends can be dyed but will produce lighter shades.



Rit has recently updated its well-known line of dyes and now offers 25 exciting color choices and all new packaging. The new color additions are Apple Green, which is a bright, contemporary color targeted to younger consumers, and Cherry Red, which is a true Christmas color.

In addition to the new colors, many of the popular colors have been reformulated and renamed to better reflect today's brilliant color trends. Scarlet has become a deeper, richer color and Evening Blue is lighter and a more green-based blue. Aubergine is now Violet, and Yellow has been renamed Lemon Yellow. Both dyes are opulent, saturated colors that reflect their new names. And, Rose Pink will be called Petal Pink, which more accurately describes this pretty pink dye.

And finally, many of the dye colors frequently used by quilters and crafters, such as Golden Yellow, Sunshine Orange, Fuchsia, Evening Blue, Teal and Taupe, are now available in liquid as well as a powder form.

*Sewing to Dye For! continues on page 36.*

# Sewing to Dye For!

Continued from page 35

## Benefits of Selling Fabric Dyes

While sewing or quilting may be the main focus of your store, there are many ways that fabric dyes can enhance your in-store displays and class offerings. Dyeing fabric is a creative outlet and the same “do-it-yourself” customer who enjoys sewing and quilting will also enjoy creating custom colors. The dyes can be mixed in various amounts to create an infinite number of color possibilities.

Not only will the dyes color fabric, but they can also be used to add color to unfinished wood and wicker. Your customers can color coordinate their custom-dyed fabric with tables, chairs, picture frames, cabinets, shutters, moldings and more. The dye performs like a stain and allows the beauty of the wood grain to show through, adding depth and texture to the finished project.

Recently paper crafters have discovered that Rit dye can be sprayed, drizzled, dripped or brushed onto watercolor paper and turned into greeting cards, album covers and scrapbook pages.

Rit dye will also dye many types of nylon and plastic found in buttons, beads and, yes, golf balls. You’ll be amazed at the attention a basket of dyed golf balls will create! They make fun gifts and favors.

Through inspirational ideas and education, you can offer your customers a new creative outlet with fabric dyes. This will set you apart from your competition. If sales are an indication of growth, Rit reports that the sales of dye in the craft area have experienced double digit dollar growth in key retailers over the past year.

## Classes Sell Product

Teaching your customers how to use the products in your store will help increase sales. The best way to do that is through classes and in-store demonstrations. Those of you who own quilt shops will be pleasantly surprised to learn that cotton batting takes the dyes beautifully and holds up well throughout the dyeing process. It has a soft felt-like surface that can be stitched and embellished in many ways.

Quilt designers cut the batting into fat quarters and dye the batting in the microwave using a low-water immersion technique. Then the dyed batting is cut up, stitched and embellished to create all types of quilted wall art.



---

---

*Your customers are looking for new ideas and inspiration. Why not show them how to add more color to their sewing and quilting projects with fabric dyes! Become the dye expert in your community.*

---

---

