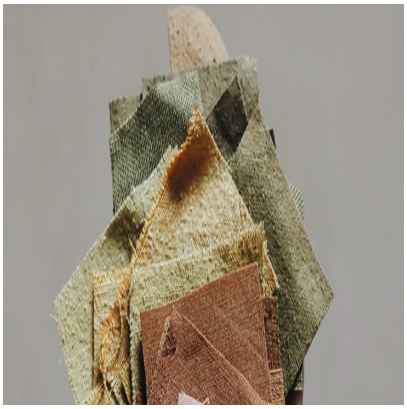


The Colours of Autumn: Finding Time To Be Creative

Description



WIllow leaves

Recently, I forced myself to take some time during one of my busiest times of the year, to purposefully go into nature and forage for sources of colour. I particularly love experimenting with new plants, seeing colour magically emerge from the dye bath. I love learning about the nuances of plants and familiarizing myself with their characteristics. Itâ??s always exciting to gather plants throughout the changing seasons and see this reflected in tones that result from my dye baths.



FS BLEACHED RTD Linen Swatches dyed with Willow

For the longest time, I have wanted to experiment with the leaves of the weeping willow tree. The bay leafed willow with its glossy green leaves grows abundantly along the river banks of Ireland. This graceful tree features heavily in Celtic stories and legends. The Celts celebrated the Willow for its capacity for healing and growth. On a practical level, the flexible branches were perfect for building, weaving, fencing as well as basketry. The Celts and many other cultures used willow branches to construct dwellings with wattle and daub, making it a valued part of life.



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FS BLEACHED RTD Linen Swatches dyed with Willow

The Willow was a sacred tree to the Celts both for the wide range of materials it provided and for its unique beauty and spiritual presence. In Celtic culture, Willow is known for its ability to relocate after being uprooted, either by nature or by man. A fallen Willow can float downstream, and set down roots wherever the current takes them. In this way, more than any other tree the Willow became a symbol of resilience and overcoming adversity.

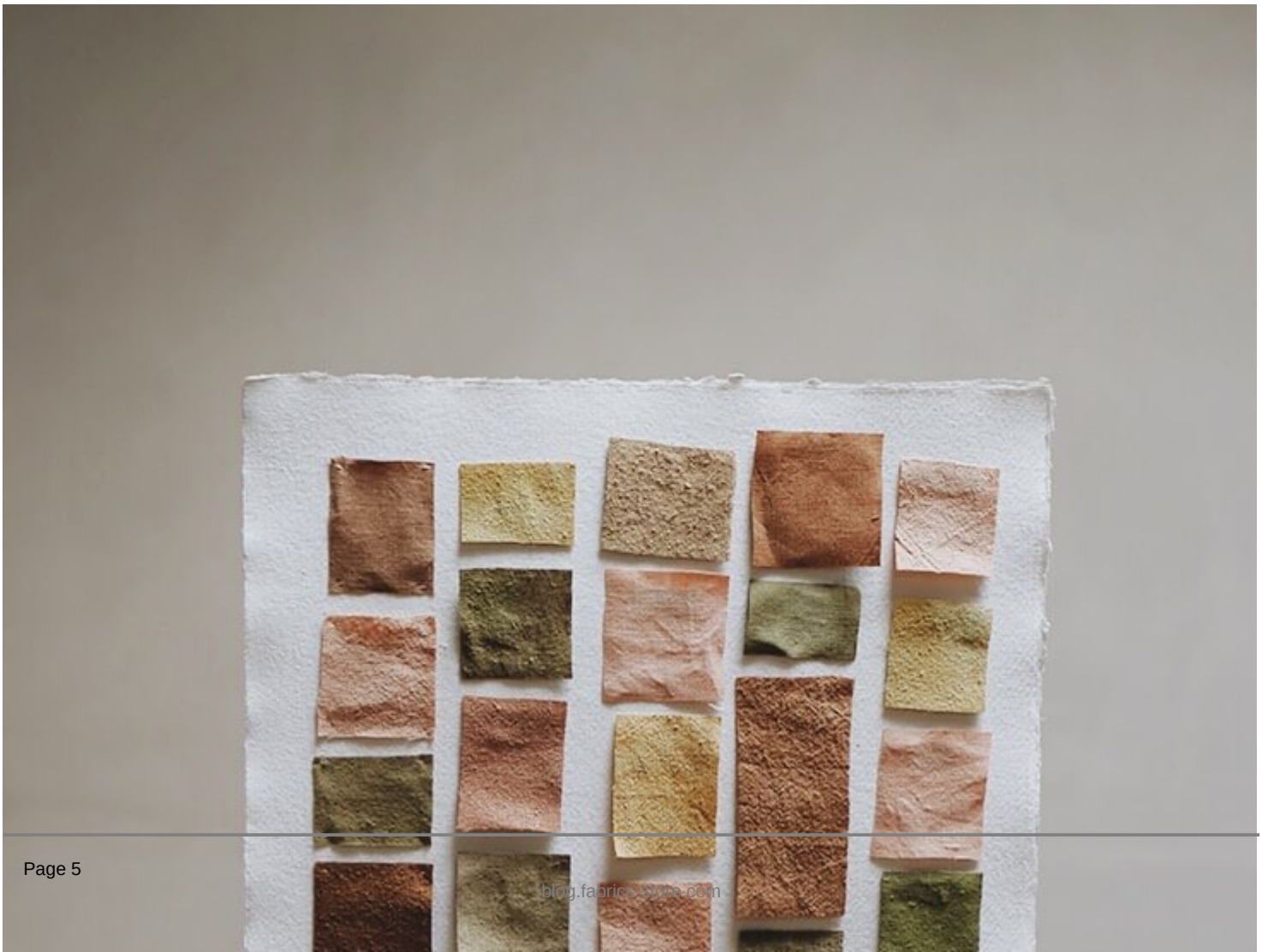
Medicinally, the bark was utilised as a traditional medicine for more than 3500 years. The active agent within willow bark is salicin, known to reduce inflammation and pain and this ingredient formed the basis of the discovery of aspirin.



FS BLEACHED RTD Linen Swatches dyed with Willow

As a dye, the leaves of the willow yield warm pinks in the dye pot and can be modified to give shades of pinks, plumbs and mauves. To create a dye, I separated the leaves from the stalks. Then I gently simmered the leaves in water for roughly 4 hours. I removed the pot from the heat and let it cool overnight. The next day I returned it to the heat and simmered for another 4 hours. I strained out the leaves and added a few pieces of FS BLEACHED PFD Linen to the dye bath. I also added some small swatches of linen and left them in for various lengths of time. The leaves released a beautiful soft pink dye, warm, calming and surprising.

I find so much pleasure in arranging my swatches in small groupings on my studio walls or the pages of my dye journal. It helps me see what colours work well together. I find untold inspiration in the soothing colours of plant dyes. Seeing the colours side by side, helps me understand the relationship of colour. It also inspires my work and the textiles I dye.



FS BLEACHED RTD Linen Swatches dyed with Willow

Getting outside, being in nature, taking a break from that which overwhelms challenges or burdens is the most immediate way to find reprieve from it all. Finding a way to incorporate this into your creative life whether itâ??s through natural dyeing, finding inspiration in the changing colours of the season, or just creating the space to step back momentarily from life is always worthwhile.

FS BLEACHED Linen Comes in a variety of weights, if you are going to dye the fabric, please choose BLEACHED Linen without any finishes

CATEGORY

1. NATURAL DYEING
2. TUTORIALS

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Date Created
November 11, 2021
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