

## SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

## HOW TO DYE MOSSES, GRASSES, AND FLOWERS.

A German paper, with an unpronounceable name, tells how they dye grasses and similar articles in Germany, from whence large quantities are sent to this country:

**To Dye Moss.**—Green: Boil  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb of alum in 1 quart of water, and dissolve  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of finely triturated mineral blue in it, and a dark green dye is the result. Or a very beautiful green dye may be made with indigo—carmino and picric acid, adding water to reduce it to the desired hue. As picric acid is rarely to be had of uniform strength, the exact proportion cannot be given. The same dye may be used for grasses.

**Black:** Two ounces of logwood in 1 quart of water,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of alum, and 3 oz. of copperas, the whole boiled together and the moss dipped into it while hot. Or two parts of logwood and one of Fleabane, thoroughly boiled together, and a little green vitriol.

**Red:** The best way to make this color is to boil as much red aniline in rain-water as will produce a pretty red. The dye should be hot when the moss is dipped.

**To Bleach and Dye Everlasting Flowers.**—Bleaching: Put a number of flowers, which have previously been placed in a warm chamber to cause them to open, in a vessel containing a solution of chloride of lime,  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce of soda, and 2 quarts of water. Cover the vessel and leave it as it is in a moderate temperature for four or five days. During this period the flowers first change to an orange color, and afterward to a blueish-white. As soon as these changes show themselves, take the flowers out and pour off the fluid, and fill it up again, using this time only 1 oz. of chloride of lime and no soda. Let the flowers remain in this until quite white, subsequently drying them in a warm oven.

**DYEING.**—Carmino: 1 loth (about two drachms) of Munich lac,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  drach) ultramarine blue, dissolved in 12 loth (about 6 ounces) of warm water. Rose:  $\frac{1}{2}$  quint of extract of safflower dissolved in 1 quart of cold water. Dark blue: 1 loth indigo extract in a quart of water. Cornflower blue:  $\frac{1}{2}$  loth blue aniline, 2 loth spirits of wine, in 1 quart of water. Violet:  $\frac{1}{2}$  loth violet aniline, with the same proportions of water and spirit. Light blue:  $\frac{1}{2}$  loth Prussian blue, dissolved in a quart of water. Dark blue: 1 loth of catechu, boiled in a quart of water. Light green:  $\frac{1}{2}$  loth picric acid, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  quint of indigo in 20 loth of alcohol. Black: as given above. Orange: 3 loth of borax in 2 quarts of hot water, leaving the flowers to steep for some time.

The dyes for grasses, etc., are made in the same way.

## FERN WINDOWS

From a popular English work, called "Fern Paradise," the following useful hints for window decorations are taken: Let us see how the shady windows of a dwelling house may be made beautiful by the presence of ferns. We will begin at the basement. Here we shall find, as in thousands of London and other city houses, a window or windows looking out upon what is popularly called the "area." Such windows are invariably immersed in shadow, and, given up as they are to the domestics of the households, one may perhaps not infrequently see, as one passes, the windows adorned by modest pots, containing geraniums, calceolarias, fuchsias, or the golden-green leaf and golden flowers of the sweet but modest musk plant. Rarely do we see ferns in such windows. But why should they not be there? Let them by all means be mixed with such flowers as will thrive in those windows. But when flowers need to be excluded, by reason of the uncongeniality of the situations, let the ferns at least remain. By the tasteful arrangement around and about such windows of virgin cork, with provision of "pockets" for ferns, or by the skillful use of cement and pieces of stone, or brick disguised as stone by a sprinkling of the dry powder of cement,—due provision being made for drainage,—an "area" window might be made really charming. Or suppose the basement windows of a house are half below the garden or area level. In such cases there will be a space commonly called a "well" outside such windows, having usually three bricked sides, in addition to the window side. By putting a glass top or frame to such a space an admirable little fern-house will be created, in which ferns will thrive, and find excellent protection against winter frosts. With trowel and cement it will be easy, in a "well" like this, to establish a miniature "fern paradise."

## BRASS FINISHING BY ACIDS.

Many articles of brass cannot readily be finished by the file or by abrading substances, owing to the intricacies of their surfaces. Especially is this true of brass castings of an ornamental character. But a most elegant finish can be obtained by means of acids, which may be protected, if desired, by means of a lacquer or varnish; the acid finish, however, is generally preferred without the addition of a varnish. If the work to be finished is greasy it should be cleaned by heating and dipping in acidulated water—vinegar and water, or washing soda in water—and then in clear water. The finishing bath may be either nitric acid two parts, water one part; or one part sal-ammoniac, one part sulphuric acid, one part nitric acid, one part water; all by measure, and the sal ammoniac to be dissolved in water until a saturated solution is obtained. The article should not be allowed to remain in the acid more than ten seconds, then taken out, plunged into clear, cold water, thence into hot soapy water, and dried in hot sawdust.

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