

## Herbal Infusions for adding natural coloring

There are many herbs that will provide natural color to soaps, lotions, body butters, and scrubs while also providing other health benefits. Sometimes, you can just mix the herbs directly into your product (like for bath salts and sometimes soaps). But more often, you will want to use an oil infusion. Organic matter doesn't have as long a shelf life as an oil that has been infused.

My rule of thumb is when using flower petals, you want to fill your jar about 3/4 of the way and then pour your oil to cover it completely. Petals should always be dried and organically grown. When using powders, I usually find that 1 oz. powder to about 12 oz. oil works well. My oil of choice for infusions is Sunflower oil because it is very light. Others swear by Grape Seed Oil. It too is very light in texture. Still others prefer olive oil but olive oil has its own distinct scent and is a little heavier. Personally, I'd rather use a lighter, unscented base for this purpose. So you see, there is no right or wrong, just personal choice.

I like using mason jars or empty pasta sauce jars for their size. The steps to any infusion are basically the same. Here are a few samples to get you started.



Achiote - also known as annatto seed. Depending on how much you use, this will produce a yellow to orange color in whatever you are coloring.



Alkanet Root - This powder will produce shades of purple or blue. Generally, 1 oz. of powder to 12 oz. of Sunflower oil. For this batch I wanted deep purple, so I only used 6 oz. of oil.

Turmeric Root powder - used for both its healing, skin conditioning properties and for color. It will produce shades of yellow and sometimes golden brown.



Calendula - Calendula petals infused in Sunflower oil will provide the healing benefits of this flower. It may create a slight yellow tinge but is intended for healing as opposed to color.

Lavender buds or buds and leaves - Lavender is also used for healing as opposed to color.

### Procedure 1:

\*Fill your jar with the appropriate amount of powder or dried herbs/flowers first. Cover with appropriate amount of Sunflower oil. (for powders 1 oz. to 12 oz. oil - less oil for deeper colors; for flower petals fill jar 3/4 full and fill jar completely with oil to cover). Tightly cover jar with lid. Shake well to make sure the oil soaks into the powder or petals.\* Store the infusion for 5-6 weeks in a cool dark place. Occasionally shake during the 5-6 weeks. After 5-6 weeks, strain the oil through a fine strainer, cheesecloth, or similar cloth into a clean jar. Gently squeeze or press to get all oil. Oil is now ready for use. Discard the powder sludge. Petals can be used immediately in bath salts, scrubs or soap. If you can't use the petals the same day, discard them.

### Procedure 2: The "quicker" way

Follow above directions from \* to \*. Place covered jars upright in a crockpot. Fill the crockpot with enough hot water to cover jars about 3/4 up. Do not cover lids with water or allow water to reach edge of lids. You probably will not be able to put the cover on the crockpot, but that is not necessary. Set to high setting and "cook" for 4-6 hours. Turn off the crockpot and allow to cool completely. strain the oil through a fine strainer, cheesecloth, or similar cloth into a clean jar. Gently squeeze or press to get all oil. Oil is now ready for use. Discard the powder sludge. Petals can be used immediately in bath salts, scrubs or soap. If you can't use the petals the same day, discard them.

Enjoy!