



Community Colours: The AlgomaTrad Dye Garden Project

A community dye garden is being established at the site of the future AlgomaTrad Centre on St. Joseph Island. Generously supported by funding from the Ontario Arts Council's Artists in Communities and Schools program, the garden will provide sources for natural dyes and pigments for future classes, workshops, and community art projects at AlgomaTrad, beginning at Family Camp week and the Fall Heritage Festival 2019.

Natural dyes have been used throughout history and offer a rich, complex, and harmonious palette. They come from a variety of sources, including forest plants, minerals, and even animals, and many can be grown in a garden, or foraged from the surrounding landscape. Depending on the plant, colour can be distilled from the leaves, flowers, roots, bark or seeds. A dye material's visible colour doesn't always betray the colour of dye it will yield -- which is where the fun comes in!

Experimenting with materials dyed and decorated with locally-sourced colour facilitates a deeper connection to the environment and an appreciation for the ways things have been made for generations. Working with colours from the dye garden will offer students the ability to investigate, experiment, and discover the connection between themselves and the plants and the pigments, the dirt and the dyes, the past and the present. It will encourage a closer look at the colours found in nature, and a renewed interest and appreciation in the community colors of our traditions and heritage.

This year, AlgomaTrad is offering the Local Colour Lab, a natural dye class with Tuija Hansen and Miranda Bouchard, centring on dyes derived from both dried and fresh garden, backyard and household sources. We're also bringing all the materials together by making collaboratively-crafted table runners for the AlgomaTrad centre! The dye garden project, now and in the future, will generate new possibilities for learning about and connecting to heritage craft and community.

For more information about the Community Colours Dye Garden project, including ways to get involved by helping us build the garden, donating plants for the garden or dyestuffs for dye baths, contributing workshop supplies, making things with us, or other ideas, please contact Julie Schryer (music@algotrad.ca) or Miranda Bouchard (miranda@thinkingrock.ca)!

We gratefully acknowledge Community Colours Dye Garden project support by:



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