

Knitting Spring

A knitter's attempt to capture spring with onion skins and packets of Kool-Aid
by Michelle Edwards

an illustrated essay featuring wools



from the Lion Brand Yarn Company



Inspired by the Rafael Alberti poem, *Going Back Through Color*, translated by Mark Strand

"Don't lose the colors that open paths for you in your small walled garden this afternoon. Look. Here they are. Touch them. They are the same colors that live in your heart, a little faded now."



It's been a long, cold and very white winter. And I have been dreaming of color!



Could I knit spring? I wondered one morning over coffee.



Thinking about how perfect Lion Brand's new yarn, LB 1878 and Woolspun, would be to dye, I began to plot and plan.

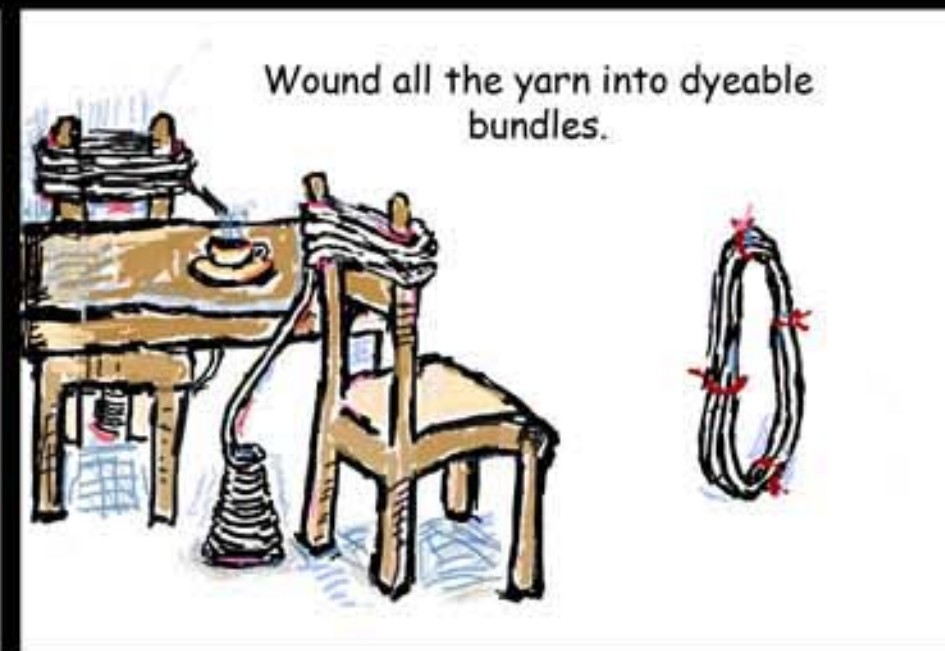
I decided to stick to the easiest form of dyeing, kitchen dyeing. With Kool-Aid. And because I had been dreaming of yellows and golds, onion skins.



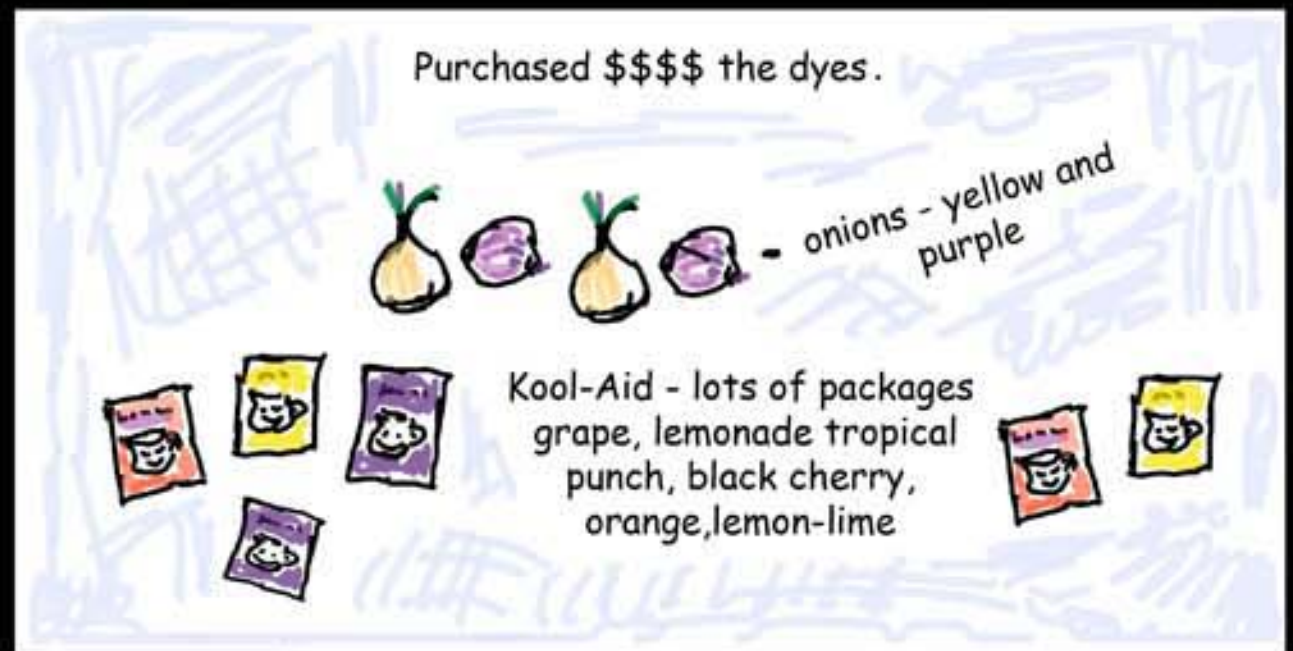
Here's what I did.

Gathered up all my wool.

Fisherman's wool
465 yards worsted
Woolspun 500 yds. Bulky
2045 yards fingering



Wound all the yarn into dyeable bundles.



Purchased \$\$\$\$ the dyes.

onions - yellow and purple

Kool-Aid - lots of packages grape, lemonade tropical punch, black cherry, orange, lemon-lime



Changed into my dyeing outfit.

pre-stained shirt
black pants



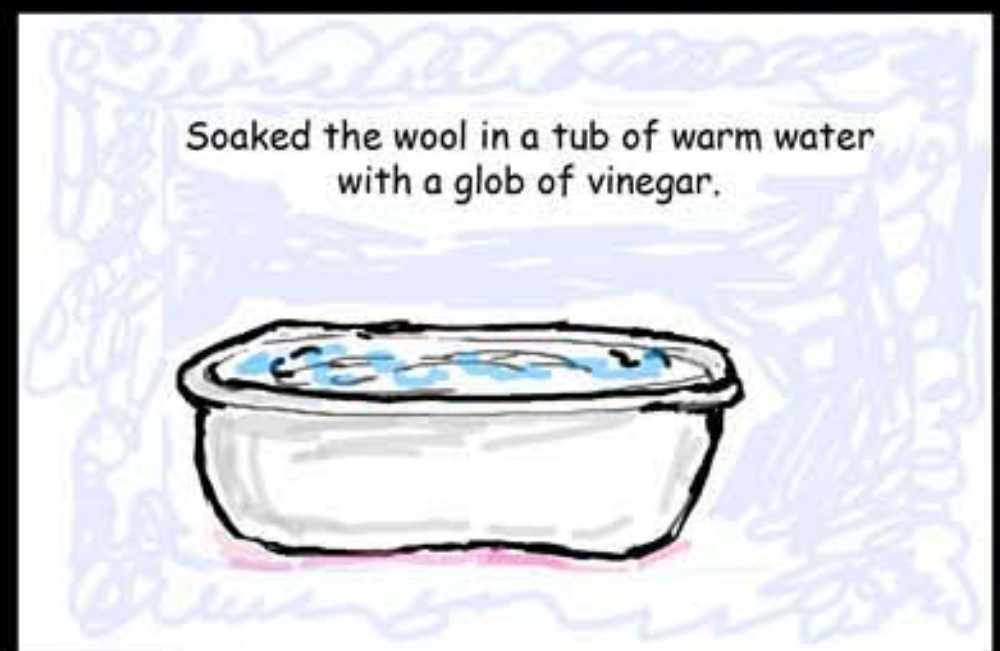
Assembled the equipment.

cups
paint brushes
squirt bottles

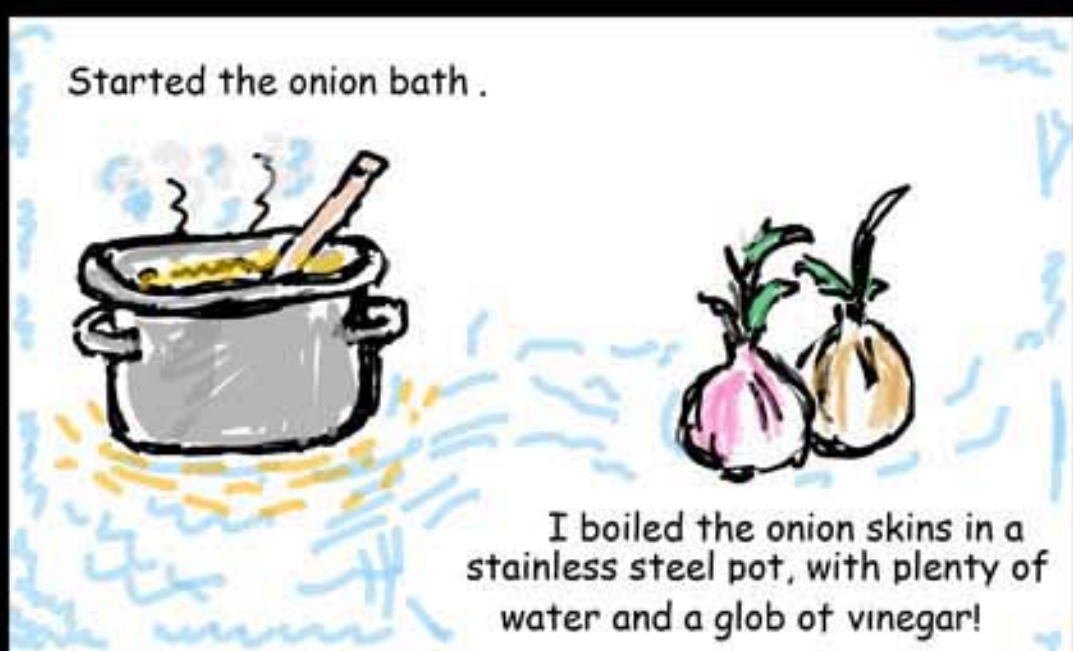
microwave

bowls for soaking and dyeing the yarn large enough to hold the yarn and small enough to fit in the microwave

small tubs work well, too



Soaked the wool in a tub of warm water with a glob of vinegar.



Started the onion bath.

I boiled the onion skins in a stainless steel pot, with plenty of water and a glob of vinegar!



Waited and stirred my pot for hour or so until I had the color I wanted.

Into the pot went the wool! I let the yarn soak up the color, stirring it often to make sure the whole skien was being dyed and boiling the whole mixture for about another hour. When it looked like the color I was dreaming of, I turned the burner off and let everything cool down.



Rinsed out the excess dye. Hung wet yarn up to dry thoroughly.



Kool-Aid Time!

Mixed the Kool-Aid to desired color intensity. Using a funnel I poured it into squirt bottles, and cups. Reserved some packets to apply directly on wet yarn.



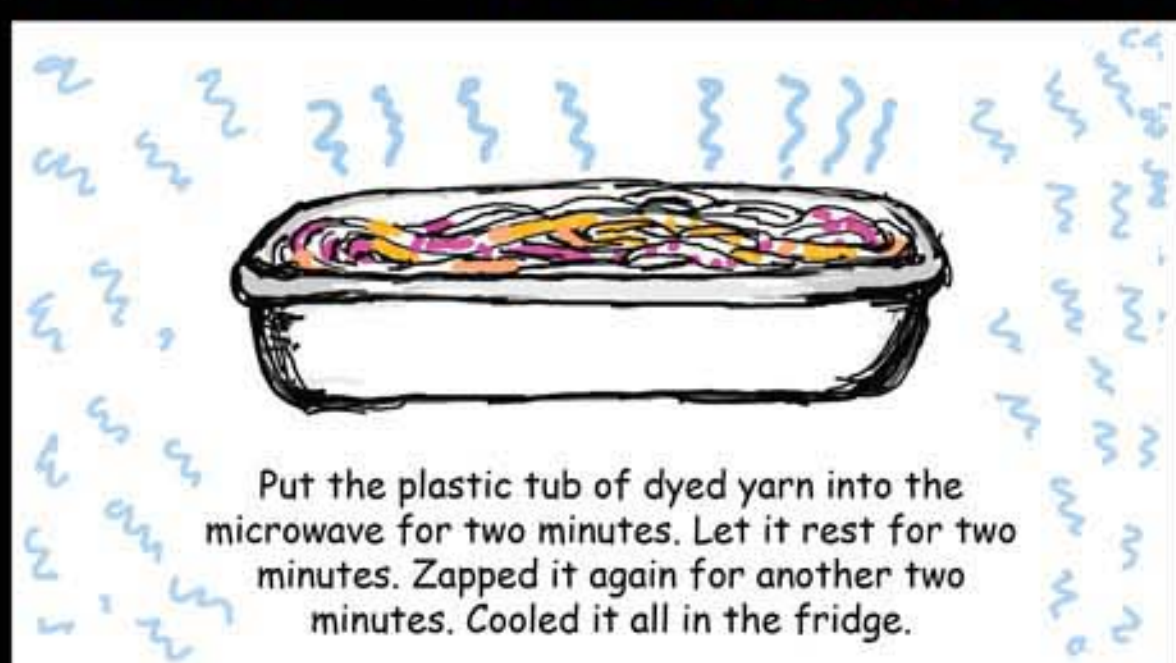
Squirt! Brush! Pour! Sprinkle

Experimented!

Played!

Celebrated color!

No rules in this sandbox!



Put the plastic tub of dyed yarn into the microwave for two minutes. Let it rest for two minutes. Zapped it again for another two minutes. Cooled it all in the fridge.



Bathed all the cooled yarn, rinsing out all excess dye. Hung up all yarn to dry.

Cleaned up. Admired yarn. Sat down with a cup of tea.



Snow fell outside. The wind was fierce and loud. A warm Kool-Aid scented cloud hovered in my kitchen. Harvesting the skien from the drying rack, I was a woman rich in color. Ready to knit myself a piece of spring.



Spring Knitting Plans

- Spring shawl using a Pattern for Life (see archive article) and knit in alternate rows of LB1878 and WoolSpun

Roll yarn into balls and arrange artfully in a wicker basket. Place where it can be viewed and appreciated

Gift to worthy knitting pals