



BURIED BUNDLES

STITCHED STORIES
SUMMER 2021



Buried bundles

This Stitched Stories guide shows you how to prepare textile pieces to obtain interesting marks after burying for a few weeks. The reaction between iron and tannin is what causes the marks to be made. Burying the bundle and keeping it damp for a period of time helps the reaction along.

1. Find some rusty metal, look carefully when you are out walking, check in any old piles of stuff in your neighbourhood, or if you really can't find any, make your own, by leaving steel or iron objects outside for a while in wet weather. Any rusty objects will do, food cans, nails, screws, hinges, bolts, whatever you can find.



2. Make a tannin solution, by soaking a good tannin source in hot water. Good sources of tannin are black tea, or twigs such as rose cuttings, eucalyptus, blackberry or raspberry. You could save your used teabags or tealeaves for a few days, rather than using new.



3. Soak some pieces of fabric in the tannin solution. The best fabrics to use are made from protein fibres (eg wool, silk) or cellulose fibres (eg cotton, linen, bamboo, viscose, hemp). The fabrics can be plain or printed, and you can add stitching to them first if you wish. Synthetic petroleum based fibres won't take the marks well, but if you have a piece of nylon (polyacetate) fabric, that should work.



4. Wring out well and lay flat, add any dyestuffs you want to try. Suggestions would be tannin-rich leaves (eg bramble, herb Robert, raspberry, rose, sumac), pieces of red or brown onion skin, powdered turmeric (although the colour from this will fade), more tealeaves.



5. Now bundle really tightly with your rusty objects. For example you could wrap the fabric around a can or flat piece of metal, or tie or stitch pieces of the metal into the fabric. Make sure there is really good contact between the fabric and your metal. You can achieve this by wrapping tightly with string or strips of torn fabric such as old sheets. If you like you can use more than one layer of fabric in your bundle.



6. You can also add in salt or vinegar to aid the process, but if you do this, don't bury your bundle near your favourite garden plants!
7. Bury your bundle(s) in a place where you will remember them, cover them completely with soil and leave them for a few weeks or months. If the weather is very dry, water them regularly to keep them damp.



8. When you can bear the suspense no longer, dig them up, rinse them off and take a look.



9. Wash your pieces with a gentle detergent and iron.



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