

Soap Colorants

by Kerri Mixon, of Pallas Athene Soap & Natural Skin Care (Spring Valley, California)

In general, organic pigments are most effective when used to infuse the oils, rather than the water. The fastest way to infuse the oils with organic pigments is to mix together a portion of the oils and the organic pigment in a pan on the stove. Do not allow the oil-pigment mixture to heat over 145°F. Keep the mixture warm for 10 minutes to an hour, depending on the intensity of the color desired, and then strain the organic pigment material (herbs, flowers, etc.) from the oil. Next, add 200 IU natural d-gamma tocopherol (vitamin E) per pound of oil to greatly prolong the life of the organic pigment. Generally, inorganic pigments do best when added to the lye water, at any stage before mixing it with the oils. Please, refer to the related article, "Understanding Colorants."

Use any of the following colorants to color one pound of soap; colorants may be combined to create additional colors: (OP=Organic Pigment, NIP=Natural Inorganic Pigment, SIP=Synthetic Inorganic Pigment, BEN=Colorants that are beneficial to skin—demulcent, humectant, or vulnerary, EV=Colorant changes and evolves to this final color after soap is cured)

Red

- ½ tsp paprika (OP)
- ¼ tsp dried red brazilwood (OP)
- ¼ tsp dried red sandalwood (OP)
- ⅛ tsp red iron oxide (SIP)
- ⅛ tsp red mica (SIP)
- ¼ tsp red montmorillonite (NIP)
- 2 tbsp dried "blood red" hibiscus petals (BEN, OP)
- ⅓ cup fresh dark red rose petals (BEN, OP)
- 1 tsp dried red dulse (BEN, OP)

Yellow

- ½ tbsp dried chamomile flowers (BEN, OP)
- 3 tbsp fresh chamomile flowers (BEN, OP)
- ½ tsp dried yarrow (BEN, OP)
- ¼ tsp turmeric (OP)
- 6,000 IU beta-carotene (BEN, OP)

Blue

- ⅛ tsp ultramarine blue (SIP)
- ⅛ tsp blue mica (SIP)

Orange

- 2 tbsp dried orange hibiscus petals (BEN, OP)
- 1½ tbsp dried safflower petals (BEN, OP)
- ¼ cup fresh calendula flowers (BEN, OP)
- ¼ tsp annatto (OP)
- Replace up to 10% of oils with unrefined wheat germ oil
- Replace up to 30% of oils with unbleached palm oil

Green (or combine blue with yellow)

- 2 tbsp dried horsetail, *Equisetum arvense* (BEN, OP)
- ¼ cup fresh horsetail, *Equisetum arvense* (BEN, OP)
- 1 tbsp dried green kelp (BEN, OP)
- ½ tsp dried comfrey (BEN, OP)
- ¼ cup fresh plantain leaves (BEN, OP)
- ¼ cup fresh rosemary (BEN, OP)
- ¼ cup fresh chickweed (BEN, OP)
- ¼ tsp green montmorillonite (NIP)
- ⅛ tsp chromium oxide green (SIP)
- ⅛ tsp green mica (SIP)

Purple (or combine blue with red)

- ⅛ tsp ultramarine violet (SIP)
- ⅛ tsp purple mica (SIP)
- 2 tbsp dried black hibiscus petals (BEN, OP)
- 2 tbsp dried alkanet root (BEN, OP)

Brown (or use green OP or red OP without adding the vitamin E)

- 5 oz cold brewed coffee, use for lye water (BEN, OP)
- ½ tsp powdered unsweetened cocoa, never use chocolate (OP)
- ¾ tsp dried red beetroot (EV, OP)
- ½ tsp dried red henna (OP)
- ½ tsp paprika (EV, OP)

Black

- ⅛ tsp black iron oxide (SIP)
- ⅛ tsp black mica (SIP)

White

- 1 tbsp bentonite (NIP)
- ½ tsp zinc oxide (NIP, SIP)
- ½ tsp titanium dioxide (SIP)

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