

Dyer's Garden		
In medieval times dyeing was done with colour obtained from plants. This is called natural dyeing. The medieval dyeing industry was fairly advanced and had at its disposal not only a host of dyestuffs that could be gathered from the garden but also industrially grown and harvested dyestuffs that were traded across Europe and beyond.		
English Name	Latin name	Information
1 Agrimony	Agrimonia eupatoria	The entire plant is used to make dye and gathered from spring to September, it yields a pale yellow hue. Gathered later and the dye is a deep rich yellow. As the plant contained tannin it would also be used in the dyeing of linen and in the manufacture of leather.
2 Alkanet, Dyer's Bugloss	Alkanna tinctoria	Red dye made from the root.
3 Bear's Breeches	Acanthus mollis	Yellow.
4 Black Hollyhock	Alcea rosea	Black flowers produce lavender to purple.
5 Blue Iris	Iris versicolor	Produced a purplish juice which turned green when mixed with alum and used as a clothes dye in the 14c and 15c. The roots of this plant provided the monks with the compound for producing their writing ink. The flowers were often used to decorate churches.
6 Bronze Fennel	Foeniculum vulgare 'purpureum'	Yellow. In medieval times the leaves were hung over doors with St John's Wort to ward off evil spirits.
7 Dyer's Broom	Genista tinctoria	Yellow.
8 Dyer's Chamomile	Anthemis tinctoria	Yellow.
9 Dyer's Woodruff	Asperula tinctoria	This valuable plant, already known to the Ancient Greeks and Romans, yields a red dye.
10 Elecampane	Inula helenium	Blue.
11 Foxglove	Digitalis purpurea	Apple green obtained from the flowers.
12 Goldenrod, Woundwort	Solidago virgaurea	Leafy shoots - shades of tan and brown; flower heads - bright yellows and golds.
13 Hedge Bedstraw (white)	Galium mollugo	Gives a coral red rather like that of Lady's Bedstraw.
14 Jacob's Ladder	Polemonium caeruleum	Black. Used in the dyeing of linen. This plant was known to the ancient Greeks. Its name suggests religious and biblical associations.
15 Ladies Bedstraw (yellow)	Galium verum	Yellow from the tops & coral red from the roots. Green when yellow is over-dyed with woad.
16 Lady's Mantle	Alchemilla vulgaris	The leaves yield a green dye. Lady's Mantle is also known as <i>dewcup</i> for the way the soft hairs on its pleated leaves catch raindrops and dew. Medieval alchemists collected the drops, believing them to have magical and healing powers.
17 Lily of the valley	Convallaria magalis	Leaves yield a green dye.
18 Lychnis	Lychnis chalcedonica	Lychnis was reputedly brought to Europe from the Holy Land during the crusades by Louis IX of France and it was therefore often known by its other name of 'Jerusalem Cross'. The flowers were used in decorative garlands and to produce a dye.

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19	Madder	Rubia tinctorum	Madder is said to have been introduced by the Vikings. The root required for the red dye was only harvested once a year making it significantly more expensive than other dyes.
20	Madonna Lily	Lilium Candidum	Lily pollen was used as a yellow painting dye. Medieval depictions of the Virgin Mary often show her holding these flowers. The Bible describes King Solomon's Temple as having designs of Madonna lilies on the columns and for Catholics they symbolize purity.
21	Marigold	Calendula officianalis	Yellow.
22	Meadowsweet	Filipendula ulmaria	Yellow. If used with iron it produces black.
23	Nettles	Urtica dioica	Yellow. Dark Green with iron.
24	Pasque Flower	Anemone pulsatilla	Bright green. Also commonly used in medieval times for dyeing Easter eggs.
25	Purple Loosestrife	Lythrum salicaria	Browns. The flowers produce an edible red dye which was once used to colour sweets.
26	Saffron Crocus	Crocus sativus	A strong yellow.
27	Saw-wort	Serratula tinctoria	Gives a yellow rather like that of weld.
28	St John's Wort	Hypericum perforatum	Can give a range of shades from maroon to yellow, green & brown. St John's Wort was mainly used for magic potions during the Middle Ages to protect humans and animals against witches, demons and evil diseases.
29	Tansy	Tanacetum vulgare	Yellow from the flowers.
30	Teasel (Wild teasel)	Dipsacus fullonum	Yellow. Teasel is so called because of the use of the spiny seed heads to tease out woolen fibers before they were spun, a process known as carding, and in raising the nap of finished woolen cloth. In medieval times, teasel heads were fitted into wooden frames.
31	Weld, Dyer's Rocket	Ruseda luteola	This Mediterranean herb is the oldest yellow dye plant in the world and was obtained by the first millennium BC. Pliny described a plant widely grown for its aphrodisiac scent which was also used in treating bruises - for this reason he gave it the latin name <i>reseda</i> , meaning a healer or restorer.
32	Woad	Isatis tinctoria	The plant was pulped and drained and the residue kneaded into balls and then dried and reduced to a powder from which a blue dye was produced. (<i>Think woes = the blues.</i>)
33	Yarrow	Achillea millefolium	Yellow from flowers and stalks.
34	Yellow iris	Iris pseudacorus	Yellow from the flowers, black from the roots when mixed with iron. A bright green dye can be obtained from the leaves. Sometimes called Segg which gets its name from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning 'short sword', and refers to the shape of the leaves.