



a new hue

{ by Katrina Walker }

Become a silk dyeing expert,
and then hand-dye a light and airy
silk scarf with minimal effort.
Finish the scarf using a variety
of techniques.



Silk Secrets

All silks dye beautifully, as long as they don't have a finish applied to them. Some silk noil might still have the sericin, or silk gum, in the fiber, which often results in uneven dyeing or resistance to dyeing. Silks with a smooth texture, such as satin and Habotai, yield the most vivid, shiny colors when dyed. Matte textured silks, such as georgette, chiffon and crepe have more subdued effects, but are equally beautiful.

When choosing a scarf shape, consider how the scarf will be worn. Long rectangular scarves are generally the easiest to wear and tie. Square scarves are very traditional, but are more limited in wearing options.

When selecting fabric for a scarf, the width and length should be appropriate to the fabric weight. Charmeuse, for example, is best showcased in a narrower width, as wide fabric bunches around the neck. Cut chiffon, on the other hand, to nearly any width, as the fabric is lightweight enough to avoid bulkiness.

When dyeing fabric, it's essential that the dye is compatible with the fiber type. Acid dyes work best with protein fibers, such as silk and wool. Alkaline dyes work best with cellulose fibers, such as cotton and rayon. While protein and cellulose fibers can be dyed using fiber-reactive dyes, the finished result varies with the fiber used.

There are several techniques for dyeing silk, depending on the desired look. To achieve all-over color, dye the silk in a sealable plastic bag or a plastic container. For further embellishment, paint designs on the dyed silk. Or add long fringe for drama. Read on to find



Tip: Create a unique hue by mixing different dye colors.



the technique you like best to make a scarf that suits your style.

In the Bag

Supplies

- 14"×72" rectangle of white silk chiffon or georgette
- Instant set silk dye (See "Sources.")
- Heavyweight gallon-size sealable plastic bag
- Eyedropper or pipette
- Rubber gloves & paper towels

Wet the fabric and gently squeeze out the excess water.

Using rubber gloves and an eyedropper, combine one cup of cold water and 20 drops of dye in the bag. Test the dye color and intensity by dipping a paper towel in the dye solution. Add more dye one drop at a time to intensify the color, if desired.

When the solution is the desired color, place the scarf into the bag and seal the top. Swish the scarf around in the bag until the scarf absorbs the color.

Remove the scarf and rinse it with cold water until the water runs clear; hang to dry.

Serge or finish the scarf using the narrow hem or fringe technique at on page 47.

Hot Hues

Supplies

- 14"×72" rectangle of white silk chiffon or georgette
- Instant set silk dye (See "Sources.")
- Large plastic container
- Eyedropper or pipette
- Rubber gloves & paper towels

Prewash the silk fabric; air dry. Don't use fabric softener or heat from a dryer.

To prepare the dye, fill the container with just enough water to immerse the fabric.

Using rubber gloves and an eyedropper, add dye one drop at a time until the desired color intensity is reached.

Test the dye color and intensity by dipping a paper towel in the dye solution.

Submerge the fabric into the dye solution. Soak the fabric until the desired

color intensity is reached. The longer the fabric soaks in the dye, the deeper the color.

Remove the scarf from the dye, and then rinse it with water until the water runs clear; hang to dry.

Serge or finish the scarf using the narrow hem or fringe technique at right.

Finish with Flair

Supplies

- 14"x72" rectangle of white silk chiffon or georgette
- 1/2"-wide stiff flat paintbrush
- Acrylic fabric paint (See "Sources.")

Dye the fabric to the desired color, following the manufacturer's instructions. To create the featured scarf, use a weak concentration of black dye to obtain the dark green color. Hang the scarf to dry; press.

Position the scarf lengthwise over a flat work surface. Using a stiff flat brush and sweeping strokes, apply fabric paint horizontally across the scarf. Apply several strokes as desired; allow the paint to dry.

When the paint is dry, turn over the scarf and follow the first paint strokes to paint the scarf right side.

Serge or finish the scarf using the narrow hem or fringe technique at right. ➤

SOURCES

Jacquard Products provided the Lumiere fabric paint: 800-442-0455, jacquardproducts.com.

Palmer/Pletsch provided the Perfect Sew liquid wash-away stabilizer: (800) 728-3784, palmerpletsch.com.

Silk Things carries Colorhue silk dye: (425) 821-2287, silkthings.com.



finishing

NARROW HEM

Supplies

- 14" x 72" rectangle of white silk chiffon or georgette
- Matching silk thread

Dye the fabric to the desired color, following the manufacturer's instructions. Hang the scarf to dry; press.

Straight stitch ¼" from each long raw edge. Fold each edge ⅜" toward the fabric wrong side; press, and then stitch following the previous stitching line (A).

Grade the seams to ⅛" to reduce bulk.

Fold the fabric ½" toward the wrong side; press. Stitch close over the previous stitching line (B).

Repeat to stitch the scarf short edges (C).

FRINGE

Supplies

- Liquid wash-away stabilizer
- Removable fabric marker
- Serger
- Matching serger thread

Apply liquid wash-away stabilizer to each scarf long edge, following the manufacturer's instructions. Set the serger to stitch a narrow rolled hem. Serge the long edges.

Beginning at one scarf short end, mark twenty 22"-long horizontal lines spaced 1" apart. Repeat to mark the remaining scarf short end. Cut along the lines. Serge each raw edge.



Tip: If wearing a scarf around your neck or head isn't your style, tie the scarf around a tote or handbag handle for a splash of color.



to dye for

Try these ideas to achieve unique dyeing effects:

- Scrunch or twist the fabric before placing it into the dye bath. The dye will concentrate in the creases, creating an abstract pattern.
- Knot the scarf in various areas or tie it with string or a rubber band before dyeing.
- Dip the fabric into the dye, lift up the fabric, and then lower it back in the container, submerging less fabric in the dye with each dip to create an ombré, or gradient, effect.
- Cover the work area with heavy plastic. Use a pipette or eyedropper to drop spots of dye onto the plastic in a random pattern. Place the fabric onto the dye-covered surface and wipe up the dye using the fabric to create a watercolor effect.
- Fold the scarf into pleats and dip only the long edges in the dye. Thoroughly rinse the scarf in cold water to remove the excess dye. Fold the scarf into pleats in the opposite direction and dip the long edges again using a different color. It's not necessary to dry the scarf between dipping dyes.
- Embellish dyed scarves with fabric paint after dyeing. Use a paintbrush, stamps, silkscreen or stencils to add interest and texture. Or apply hot-fix crystals for even more flair.

Wrap rubber bands around the scarf.



Knot the scarf.

