Greetings all,

It is time to put the garden to bed, remove the jewelry from the ewe, and start making use of the treasures acquired at Hemlock this month. Hard to believe, but I did find something that I could not do without; Alison and I spent Sunday afternoon turning Wensleydale locks into alien scarves (see photo) which we will show you at the October meeting. I love Wensleydale! Two very different pieces made from the same locks--what fun! We also found some intriguing L-shaped knitting needles meant to replace double-pointed sets. I may need to wait to explore their use until the aforementioned garden work has progressed, or next month it will still be waiting for attention.

I look forward to seeing you on the 8th,

Sharon
Minutes from the Meeting on September 10th 2016

Roc-Day: During the meeting we found volunteers for all coordinator spots. This means, Roc-Day can happen. Our president Sharon Gombas remains the overall coordinator.

Anne Furman and Allison found a fiber they considered ideal for the 'Proficiency in Spinning' competition, an undied 50% merino wool, 25% silk, 25% bamboo top from Spunky Eclectic. The challenge will be to produce a two-ply yarn. At the November meeting, each spinner interested in this particular contest will receive 2 ounces of the fiber. If you take two ounces of the fiber home, you commit to submitting a skein to the competition at Roc-Day. After the competition, you can take your yarn home with you. Anne will buy the top with money provided by the Black Sheep Handspinners’ Guild.

We will keep the welcome table at the entrance. It had been a good place in the past to sign up for guild membership and pay dues.

We will not have a printed hand out for the activities happening on Roc-Day, but rather rely on a large poster with a schedule at the wall.

Sarah Anderson Workshop: Majorie Inana presented the different class options for the Sarah Anderson Workshop on May 13/14 2017 at the Lansing Community Center, 29 Auburn Road, Lansing, NY 14882. We decided for a six hours class on Drafting on Saturday May 13th, and a six hours class on Plying on Sunday May 14th. Each six hours class will cost $100. The cost for both classes is $200. Sarah Anderson will provide all the fiber needed for her class, a small material fee about $10 will apply. Registration for guild members opens with the emailing of this newsletter. After Roc-Day registration is open for everyone.

Our teacher, Sarah Anderson, is flexible with her class design and can adjust to specific needs and interests of the group. Please, let Majorie know, if there is something particular you would like to learn. For more information, please, see page 3.

Spinning Retreat: In previous years we had an annual weekend spinning retreat at the end of February. These annual retreat used to be very relaxing, productive, and a lot of fun. Anne Furman, who has organized the annual retreat in the past, feels she no longer has the energy for it. If we want to have a spinning retreat next year, we need a volunteer to organize a retreat.

Respectfully submitted,

Angelika St.Laurent, Secretary

Upcoming BSHG Meetings:

October 8th, from 11am - 3pm at the All Saints Church Parish Hall, Route 34B, in Lansing, NY.

Celtic Festival
Sat. October 8th, from 8am – 8pm
Stewart Park, Ithaca NY, 14850

New York State Sheep and Wool Festival
Sat/Sun October 15th/16th
Dutchess County Fairgrounds
6550 Spring Brook Avenue
SARAH ANDERSON WORKSHOP

Sponsored by the Black Sheep Handspinners’ Guild

When: May 13 and May 14
Where: Lansing Community Center, 29 Auburn Road, Lansing, NY 14882
Time: 9 am to 4 pm
Fee: 1 Day $100  2 days $200

May 13  DRAFTING:

Drafting refers to the way the spinner manipulates or draws out the fiber so twist enters it to create yarn. Different drafting methods produce very different yarns even from the same fiber and different fibers may require different techniques. In this class we will work on drafting techniques that spinners of all skill levels will appreciate including diameter control, understanding twist, drafting for different types of yarn, producing yarn compatible to an existing yarn and finishing techniques.

May 14  PLYING:

This class follows and builds on the drafting class. Students learn to use different types of singles in plied yarns. The class begins with basic plying and then moves into more complex types of plying such as spiral, chain, cable, crepe, boucle and core yarns. We do as many as time permits.

Bring To Class: A wheel in working order, lazy kate, and 3 bobbins. If you have a flick or hand carders bring them too.

REGISTRATION

NAME_____________________________________________________
EMAIL_____________________________________________________
MAY 13________$100
MAY 14 ________$100

Make out check to Black Sheep Hand Spinners’ Guild
Mail check and form to  Marjorie Inana  41 W. Court Street, Cortland, NY  13045

Registration is non refundable and is due by Roc Day at which time registration is open to anyone.
Spinning demonstrations:

Our guild members had been invited to demonstrate spinning on two local events on September 24th, the Homestead Heritage Day and the Eight Square Schoolhouse Open Day.

Sue, Jean, and Carmen spinning at the Southworth Homestead.

Nancy’s Ellis Hollow Sheep demonstrating wool growing and head budding.

Laurie, Sharon, and Tammy demonstrating spinning at the Eight Square School House.

Photos: Wayne Harbert
Backyard dyeing fun!

By Susan Verberg

Having laid my hands on half a dozen skeins of plain white wool yarn, and having the resources of a homestead, I decided to combine the two and under guidance of my friend Angelika try my hand at all natural plant dyeing this summer.

But where to start? And what to buy? Isn't dyeing quite an intricate and expensive challenge better left to the experienced and initiated? In part that is true, it is quite handy learning to dye from someone who has done it before. But it does not have to be difficult or expensive at all - it can be as intricate as you decide to make it. If you're looking for a specific shade, and want to be able to duplicate, mine is not the way for you. But if you're happy to get color, and even happier if it is mostly the color you intended - you can get a surprising amount of dyeing fun out of an ordinary back yard.

We both prefer natural fibers so we used a selection of linen, cotton and wool fabrics and fibers. I quickly learned that plant based fibers and animal based fibers do not take color the same way; plant based fibers are made from cellulose which is fairly resistant to taking dye. Animal fibers are made from protein and are relatively easy to dye. Both need a little help to create a good connection between fibers and dye and this process is called mordanting.

From looking over Angelika's shoulders and listening to her explanations the past few years - she loves dyeing with natural materials - I did pick up some dyes need mordanting, some fibers need it too, but not always or in the same amounts... but why? As it turns out fibers and dyes are not all that compatible, there isn't a lot for the dye to adhere to. So to give the dye a place to stick, something is added that both sticks to the fabric and to the dye. In the case of cellulose fibers a tannin mordant is needed, followed by a metal mordant and in the case of protein fibers a metal mordant is enough. It is possible to dye wool without mordants but it won’t be as vibrant, unless certain plant dyes are used, like black walnut, making the separate mordanting step unnecessary.

Two good sources for tannin mordants are sumac and rhubarb leaves. As rhubarb is easily available in spring, and sumac easy to find in summer and fall these two make a good three season source of natural tannin mordant. With both sumac and rhubarb the leaves are used, not the wood; for each pound of dry yarn use four pounds of greens. Put leaves in a big pot, cover with water, bring to a boil, and boil for an hour. After an hour remove the greens, add the cellulose yarn and let sit for another hour, or two. Another source for tannins would be black tea, but as that is highly concentrated it would also act as a dye and darken the yarn significantly. Sumac does too, but not as significantly and therefore does not interfere with the dyeing process as much, making it a better tannin mordant for brighter colors (and it's free).
A good metal mordant is alum, or aluminum sulfate, which is fairly inexpensive and sold over the internet at stores specializing in dyes. Use 10% for wool or up to 20 % for fine yarn like silk, cotton or linen, of the dry weight of the yarn. Add enough water to submerge the yarn, bring to a boil, turn off, add the damp yarn and let steep for an hour, or so. Do not boil fibers, especially wool roving and tips, as the rolling bubble action of boiling can naturally felt it!

Mordant the evening before and let the yarn sit in the mordant overnight - that way the yarn is cooled down enough it can easily be squeezed or wrung dry for the next step, the dye bath. Keep in mind that each mordant results in slightly different color dyes, so choose accordingly. For instance chromium really brightens colors (but is poisonous), alum gives clear colors, tin brightens colors and can also be used as an afterbath (adding it to the dye late to darken), copper gives the best greens and iron darkens, and is often used as an afterbath. Both copper and iron can be made at home: copper can be added by dyeing in a copper pot or by letting a copper pot scrubber sitting for a while in vinegar, and an iron solution can easily be made by adding vinegar to iron scraps (like nails and pieces of cheap fencing) in a glass jar - but be careful not to screw down the lid as the exothermic reaction might respond unexpectedly!

Using plant materials it is not all that difficult to dye yellows; pale yellow, lime yellow, greenish yellow, brownish yellow - most plants give some sort of yellow dye. Like ragweed dyes a greenish yellow, birch & poplar dyes yellow, any of the rosacea leaves dye yellow, and bindweed dyes a light green yellow. It's the other colors that are harder to find. Onion skins can dye a bright orange and reportedly, bindweed roots dye a slight pink, as do rhubarb roots (but I'm not digging up my patch!). Willow leaves and bark dye a cinnamon brown, black walnut a deep brown at first draw and a cinnamon brown at the second. We also tried some odd ones like daffodil heads (yellow) and Tagetes flowers (also yellow) and honestly, if there is any indication of dye (it stains your fingers while weeding) get a bunch, boil it down, and see what happens!

Except for a few dyestuffs, like goldenrod, most dye baths benefit from prolonged exposure. A good rule of thumb is to make your bath in the afternoon, add the yarn, put the colander with greens on top of it (keeps the yarn submerged and keeps steeping more dye) and let it sit overnight. You'll benefit from the cooler evening temperatures to cool down your kitchen again and as an added bonus the yarn is nicely cooled down by the next day to easily be rinsed in cold water without felting. Let it dry, or set, completely - out of the sun - before washing with soap.
In the case of goldenrod, the flowers give the bright yellow color and are a potent dye. The longer it sits, though, the deeper the color gets and at some point the green stems and small leaves, which dye brown, will add, making it even darker. So for a bright yellow 15 minutes tends to be the optimum time. Similar with onion peels; sitting overnight can darken the orange towards brown. Black walnut is also a powerful dye and needs no mordanting at all for wool fibers, making it a good beginner’s dye. It also has antifungal properties and was used for wool underclothing throughout history to help prevent skin conditions!

For my first project we used well known dye plants like black walnut leaves, goldenrod flowers, stinging nettle and onion peels. We could have weighed the greens, but as our limitation was space in the pots, not the amount of greens, we picked as much as we could fit into each stockpot. As I could fit three stockpots on my stovetop we made three dye baths at the same time, in a similar fashion as the mordant solution: cover the greens with water, bring to a boil and boil for an hour, or so. Remove the greens, turn off the heat, add the yarn - and see the color change...

We dyed plant fibers and protein fibers and got wildly different results - both between the two types of fibers and from what we expected and what actually happened. Unless every variable, including temperature, pH & weights, are carefully controlled, natural dyeing is quite the spontaneous undertaking! For instance; a linen dress I was hoping to dye a deep brown with black walnut turned into a beautiful yellow copper instead - linen really does not take dye very well.

We sure saw chemistry in action: what a difference the nature of fibers makes, how some dyes react to changes in the pH but others not at all, the color difference a bit of metal mordant makes, how some strike enthusiastically quick but others need soaking overnight… to get a taste of all the intricate variables possible while still being such a surprisingly easy and rather satisfying project... I now see how natural dyeing quickly can become quite the passion!

Harvesting as much dyestuff as fits the pot.

Dyed wool skeins, left to right:
1. Nettle with copper mordant.
2. Nettle with sumac mordant.
3. Goldenrod with alum mordant.
4. Goldenrod with sumac mordant.
5. Onion peel with sumac mordant.
6. Black Walnut over onion peel.

Photos: Susan Verberg
**Membership Form**

*Please type or print*

Date: __________________________

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Name:__________________________________________________________________________

Address:_______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Preferred email: PRINT NEATLY ____________________________________________________

Phone #:_______________________________________________________________________

This information will be shared with registered guild members. If you wish to remain anonymous, please let Vicki Marsted know.

Please list your wheel(s) __________________________________________________________

Do you spindle spin? Yes or No (circle)

Do you Knit? Weave? Crochet? Dye? (Natural or Chemical?):

Would you be willing to share your skills with other members (ie: teach beginners, present a meeting topic, demo to the public, etc?)

If you raise fiber animals, please list them here ______________________________________

We need your help on committee(s). If you would like to volunteer, let Sharon Gombas, our president, know!!!

Roc Day
Programming
Newsletter
Membership
Website
Outreach
Treasurer

Our newsletter is distributed electronically. If this is a problem, please contact Sharon Gombas. Please fill this out and either bring it to a meeting or mail it with your check for $20 to: Vickie Marsted, 29 Lincoln St, Cortland, NY 13045
Fancy Kitty Picker with Tung oil finish, leg assembly, top and end caps. New $520 asking $450
Majacraft Rose Spinning Wheel. New $1295 Asking $550 with Majacraft lazy kate Excellent condition.
Majacraft Wild Flyer kit. New $163. asking $90 and second jumbo bobbin $30
Majacraft bobbins new $20 asking $10 each. I have 7.
Valkyrie wool combs and holder/mentor. New $140 asking $90
Knitty Knotty adjustable size and carrying bag $15.
Tentioned Lazy kate with travel bag. $35
Contact Jessica Rollins at 607-382-8022

In an effort to reduce my personal stash, I’d like to sell cotton warp, loop mohair, rug wools, fine wools, rayon and rayon chenille and other interesting stuff at prices ranging from low to ridiculous. I also have a Hansen e-spinner with woolee winder, two bobbins and kate for sale. Contact Karey Solomon at threads@empacc.net.

For Sale from my happy sheep and rabbits in Trumansburg: Navajo Churro roving in a variety of colors and white Angora Rabbit wool.
Contact Sharon Berger 607- 592-4649