

Ice Dyeing Using PRO MX Dyes

Please read directions carefully before starting.

PRO MX reactive dyes are designed to give even, reproducible colors when dissolved in water and applied at room temperature. Applying them as a dry powder over ice or snow allows dyes to separate into their component colors, and makes the dyes strike the fabric at different rates. The results are surprising, always beautiful, and never the same twice!

When using these dyes for ICE DYEING, Please keep in mind that you will see the components of the mix not a solid color. For Example: When using BLACKS you will see the individual colors from the mixture and not a solid black.

Safety First: As with all methods of dyeing, be sure to follow safety instructions. Wear old clothes and rubber gloves. Utensils and containers used for dyeing should never be used for food preparation. Always wear a protective mask when working with undissolved dyes. See our Studio Safety Guidelines.

What to Ice Dye

Any plant fiber (cotton, linen, rayon, or bamboo) that can be dyed with PRO MX Fiber Reactive Dye can be used for ice dyeing. To prepare them for dyeing, the fabrics should be washed to remove any dirt, oils or sizing that may be in them, do not use softener.

Supplies

PRO MX Fiber Reactive Dye Powder
Soda Ash
Synthrapol
Dust mask
Rubber gloves
Buckets or tubs
Baking rack or screen for laying fabric on that is dedicated only to dyeing
Containers to catch the melted ice/dye mixture
Ice or snow

How to Snow Dye

1. Prepare soda ash solution. Dissolve 9 Tbsp of soda ash in one gallon of warm water. This soak solution keeps for a long time at room temperature in a closed container and can be reused to soak more fabric.

2. Soak the dry fabric in soda ash water for at least 15 minutes.

4. Lay out fabric or other items to dye. Remove the fabric from the soda ash container, and while wearing gloves wring it out. Do not rinse! Place the damp fabric on a plastic covered surface.

For basic ice dyeing, scrunch up the prepared fabric (that was soaked in soda ash) evenly on the surface, making little peaks and valleys. Fabrics could also be roughly pleated or twisted or arranged in different patterns.

Carefully transfer your scrunched or folded fabric to a surface that will allow liquid to drain as the ice melts. Use a surface like a screen or tray with draining holes, and put this over a sink or other basin to catch the liquid as the ice melts.

5. Place ice on top of the damp fabric. Pile the ice on top of the fabric in mounds or spread it evenly across the surface depending on the texture of the ice you chose. You can use ice cubes, crushed ice or fresh snow if it is available or create your own snow using a snow cone machine. The texture of the ice/snow is a factor that can be used to create different effects, but all will work well.

6. Sprinkle the dye powder on top of the ice. Use a spoon and wearing a mask sprinkle the dry dye powder directly on the ice/snow, distributing dye across the surface of the ice.. Some of the powders may go directly onto the fabric which is fine; they will be dissolved by the ice as it melts. You can use several colors if you prefer. Results may be bold and high contrast, with some white areas.

7. Put the tray somewhere where it can melt and drain into a container. When ice has melted and some of the fabric is exposed, cover the fabric loosely with plastic, and move the tray to a warm place, that is at least 70 degrees, so it doesn't dry out. Allow the dyes to set for 24 or more hours, or overnight.

8. Rinse out. Rinse the dyed fabric several times with room temperature water. Then wash with very hot water and a little Synthrapol. Continuing rinsing until the water runs clear. Never drain the ice/dye mixture onto soil, as this can be harmful to plants and wildlife.

Note on colors: Some dyes are made of only one color, and will not separate into component colors when used. These colors are marked "manufactured colors", using them will result in light and dark shades of a single color. Most PRO MX Reactive Dyes are made of mixtures of colors, and these may separate and strike the fabric differently when used. For example, PRO MX8194 Ultraviolet separates into blue and rose, and is ideal for ice dyeing.