



Natural Dyes

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At a time when more and more plants and animals are threatened with extinction by humanity's ever-increasing pressure on the land and oceans of the planet, this book sets out to record sources of colorants discovered and used on all the continents from antiquity until the present day. Some 300 plants and 30 animals (marine molluscs and scale insects) are illustrated and discussed by the author, whose passion for natural dyes, with their colors of unequalled richness and subtlety, has taken her across the globe in search of dye sources and dyers. Botanical and zoological details are given for each source and chemical structures for each dye. Dyes employed by different civilizations are illustrated and relevant historical recipes and detailed descriptions of dyeing-processes by traditional dyers are quoted and explained in the light of modern science. Other current uses of such colorants, such as in medicine, and as colorants for food and cosmetics, are also noted. Although natural dyes have been largely replaced by synthetic dyes, increasing worldwide awareness of the harmful consequences of the pollution resulting from the production and use of some synthetic colorants has led to a significant revival and renewed interest in natural colorants. As potential renewable resources, natural dyes are an integral part of the major issue of our time: sustainable development. The aim of this book is to provide a scientific background for this important debate.

Dr. Dominique Cardon is Directrice de Recherche, CNRS Laboratoire d'Histoire et d'Archéologie, Lyons, France. Focusing on research into the history of dyeing and ancient textile techniques, she completed her academic training with technical apprenticeships with weavers and dyers in Ireland and Peru. She is currently involved in field missions and the study of archaeological textiles discovered in the Eastern desert of Egypt and in the Taklamakan desert in Xinjiang, China.