



Turmeric Plant dye pairs

Turmeric (*Curcuma domestica*) adds a bright yellow colour and distinctive flavour to food. It is a principle ingredient in many Asian curry powder mixes as well as North African ras el hanout. Turmeric has anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties and is used in traditional medical systems such as Ayurveda. Turmeric is used in Hindu weddings across India. 'Saffron' coloured Buddhist robes are often dyed with much cheaper turmeric. The turmeric plant does not occur in the wild and is a sterile triploid that depends on rhizomes to spread. Curcuma are shade-loving plants of the rainforest understory and other species in the genus are popular tropical ornamentals.

Did you know that turmeric root can be used as a natural plant dye, giving a lovely golden colour to cotton, silk and wool fabrics? There are actually many plants that make excellent natural dyes, be it from their colourful flowers, luscious green leaves or from their roots and shoots. Can you work out which colour dye each of these plants will yield? Draw lines to match the plants correct dye colours, but be careful as the colour of the flowers is seldom the same as the colour of the dye that can be made from the plant.

