

in order to darken the color. Urea water (see page 18) acts as white in color mixing with dyes. When you see a color you like, evaluate it. Ask yourself what the base color is, whether it is a light or a dark color, and whether you see any neutral tones. Take your color samples out and compare them to the color you are evaluating. Which color is predominant? Which other colors do you see within your sample?

It is my preference to mix color from the dye concentrates, squeezing some dye into a mixing cup, perhaps adding urea to lighten it, then mixing thickener into this, which will lighten the color a bit more. Remember that you can mix up to equal parts dye to thickener.

Newcomers to color mixing often shy away from the task. Don't! Instead, embrace color mixing as a means of creative expression. You will make mistakes; it is part of the process. But you will also gain knowledge by doing so. Work slowly and methodically, remembering that a little dye goes a long way.

### Tip Getting Good Results

To get predictable results when mixing dye concentrate, I suggest you weigh your dye rather than measure it by the tablespoon. The reason for this is that each dye has a different volume per weight; some are fluffy, while others are dense. For example, 1 tablespoon of fuchsia will not weigh the same as 1 tablespoon of navy. Use a 5 percent solution, 5 grams of dye per 100 ml water.

## Tie this in ...

### Prolonging the Life of Your Dye Concentrate

If you are unable to obtain a refrigerator for your studio, find a plastic box with a tight-fitting lid, just large enough to be stored on the bottom shelf of your family refrigerator and able to contain all of your dye concentrate bottles. This way, the dye is separate from your food supply and will not be confused as something that might be edible. Keep this box very clean, both inside and out, and label it in no uncertain terms.

#### MIXING DYE CONCENTRATE

To mix dye concentrate, you'll need a funnel, a jar, water, and urea pellets. Using a funnel, put 2 tablespoons of urea pellets in a 16-ounce jar. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of hot water, cover, and shake until dissolved. Add  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons of dye powder and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups of water to the jar, cover, and shake again.



### Experiment!

Mix equal parts of thickener to dye concentrate, 1 teaspoon of dye to 1 teaspoon of thickener. :: Take a soda-soaked [see page 19] piece of cloth and squeeze each color off the edge of the cloth. Place the colors in groupings, with reds, blues, and yellows together. In this way, you will have a permanent reference of each color. Batch [see page 19], wash, and store in your three-ring binder.