

Since powdered drink mixes are readily available and reasonably non-toxic, this is easy to do in your own kitchen. No specialized equipment is needed.

Words of caution:

1. Avoid inhaling the powder.
2. It stains! Avoid getting it on clothes and wear rubber gloves. Spreading newspapers over your work surface is a good idea!

Kool Aid dyeing is an acid dyeing technique - acid reacts with protein fibers to set the dye. Protein fibers include wool, alpaca, silk, and cashmere – basically, animal fibers. So, it doesn't work on cotton or synthetics.

Food Coloring – McCormick or Easter egg dye

- McCormick **Neons** come a four pack of pink, green, blue and purple.
- The **Primary** set is red, yellow, dark green and dark blue.
- Red, yellow, dark green and black are *also available* in larger bottles.
- Neon pink and the primary red are almost the same color
- Dark blue and dark green are so dark that they need to be diluted if you are mixing colors.

Kool-Aid - Use the unsweetened soft drink mix, not pre-sweetened mixes!

Black Cherry = Burgundy

Great Bluedini=Green

Cherry= Christmas Red

Pina-Pineapple=Bright golden yellow

Ice Blue Raspberry= Turquoise

Raspberry=Darker purplish pinks

Lemon-Lime=Bright Christmas Green

Sharkleberry Fin=Pink

Strawberry=Light Pinks

Tropical Punch=Deep reds

Go beyond pre-made shades of Kool-Aid. By adding two flavors together, you can make great new colors.

General Instructions:

Place 1 ½ quarts of water plus ½ cup of white vinegar in a pan and bring to a boil. (Can keep water hot in a crockpot.) Take water from pot and place in clean container such as a plastic cup. NOTE: Always remove the water with a clean container, making sure that NO coloring gets into the water-vinegar reservoir. Put small amount of Kool-Aid or food coloring into container and stir until dissolved. Place a 6-8" square of wool into the cup, submerge and stir a bit. Check color frequently – the longer you leave it in the dye the more intense the color. Wring out over cup to retain maximum amount of dye in cup. Rinse if desired.

Can add a different color to the same cup - can combine Kool-Aid & food coloring. As the water cools, the dyeing process will not be effective. Experiment!

Why work with wool

- No edges to turn
- No right or wrong side of fabric
- No worry about cutting on straight of grain

Sources for wool

True wool felt is a nonwoven fabric, made by heating, agitation, washing and pressing loose wool fibers so they mat together and become interlocked. Felted wool is made by shrinking woven wool in a washer and dryer. It is the heat, agitation, friction and pressure that shrink wool, not the water. After the felting process wool will have shrunk about 30%.

Wool on the bolt is expensive and the felting process adds more cost, resulting in a rather expensive product. But since the felting process is relatively easy, you may want to save some money by trying it yourself. Can use right off the bolt, but check out Thrift stores, Goodwill, even your own closet.

Choosing usable garments

Ideally choose 100% wool but can use down to ~80% - Check the labels on garments. The lower the wool content, the less the fabric will felt or shrink and the more it will tend to fray as you work with it. Wool comes in a great variety of weaves from very fine to fairly loose. The looser the weave the higher you want the wool content. Some may not turn out as well, with a more ragged finish than you like for applique – but they might work as backgrounds. EXAMPLES

Felting Wool

- Cut away zippers, seams, pockets, waistbands, open darts
- Wash in warm/hot water cycle with a little detergent and a moderate amount of water
- Dry on regular warm drying cycle and remove promptly
- Check lint trap (wash in zippered pillow covers)
- If you think your wool needs more felting, repeat process

DO I HAVE TO FELT WOOL THAT IS HAND DYED? Because the dyeing process for wool is done with very hot water, the wool is already felted.

Dyeing Wool

Perhaps you have found wool and have done the felting process, but it isn't the colors you had in mind. You can try dyeing the wool – a simple process using Kool-Ade, food coloring or Easter egg dyes - EXAMPLES

Applique

The best thing about wool applique is the minimal work that you have to do before you get started in contrast to Hand or machine applique!

The supplies needed to begin wool applique are things that most quilters already have in their sewing kit... a pair of small, sharp scissors, applique pins, water based glue, embroidery needles and floss. Some peoples like to use perle cotton but floss is nice because of the huge range of colors available... (and I have a ton of it left over from cross-stitch work.) Three strands of floss equals size 8 perle cotton. If you like the look of variegated thread but don't have colors you like, mix two or three strands of various hues on one needle. EXAMPLE (Joan Shay's Appli-Bond Needles from Ramona's)

- Trace onto freezer paper OR lite Steam-a-Seam 2 (regular is too thick)
- Cut out, outside the drawn line
- Iron onto wool
- Cut on the drawn line
- Baste to background – pressing, pinning, spot gluing, thread basting
- Stitch – Blanket stitch most common

☺ There's no rule that says wool must be used only with wool. Using prints with wool in the appliques can add interest. (i.e. Sue Spargo) Piece a background to add interest & save money.

- EXAMPLES
- Cotton, homespuns or flannels
 - Marcus Fabrics – Sueded flannels
 - Suede
 - Quilt Shop quality craft felt
 - In general, do not be tempted to buy craft felt – but possible to use as backings, to save money

☺ Think outside the box - don't just look for patterns specifically designed for wool. Any applique pattern can be adapted...you probably have some in your pattern stash that would be perfect.

EXAMPLES (Clem's painted medallion, Lace Book)

Many of the wool designs are primitive styles. These are quite simple and you may not even need a pattern. The copier is your friend! Check Pinterest!

Embellishment

Add interest to designs with a variety of materials – rickrack, roving, yarns, buttons, beads or 3 dimensional wool flowers EXAMPLES

Books:

Pennies from Heaven – Gretchen Gibbons
 Heart-Felt Wool Applique – Lorinda Lie
 Embellishing with Felted Wool – Mary Stori

Examples:

Along the Garden Path – Gretchen Gibbons , Circular table topper, Bluebird Table runner , Pumpkins, Scottie Pillow, Jane's Pillow, Sandy's Heart, Sewing keep - Sue Spargo, Baa Baa Black Sheep
 Clem's Sue Spargo Wall Hanging, Basket bed quilt (in quilt show)

Dyeing Demonstration: