

36000 – 36006 Indigo

Indigo is an organic blackish blue pigment. Natural indigo was the only source of the dye until the late 19th century. Today indigo is also produced synthetically and available in various shades.

A variety of plants, such as *Indigofera* species or *Isatis tinctoria*, provide the indigo dye. *Indigofera* species can be found all over the world. The dye is obtained from the processing of the plant's leaves. The leaves are soaked in water and fermented in order to convert the glycoside indican naturally present in the plant to the blue dye idigotin. The precipitate is mixed with a strong base such as lye, pressed into cakes, dried, and powdered. The powder is then mixed with various other substances to produce different shades of blue and purple.

Indigo is among the oldest dyes to be used for textile dyeing. For centuries Indigo was used in many Asian countries, also in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Peru and Africa. The Romans used indigo as a pigment for painting and for medicinal and cosmetic purposes. It was a luxury item imported to the Mediterranean from India by Arab merchants. Indigo has been used in traditional textile dyeing throughout West Africa. From the Tuareg nomads of the Sahara to Cameroon, clothes dyed with indigo signified wealth.

Indigo is insoluble in water and alcohol.

- 36000 Natural Indigo, powder, from India
- 36002 Natural Indigo, pieces
- 36003 Indigo made of woad
- 36005 Indigo, pale blue, precipitated with aluminium hydroxide
- 36006 Indigo, red violet, precipitated with aluminium hydroxide