

37500 - 37510 Henna

C.I. Natural Orange 6
engl.: Egyptian privet, henna
french: henna

Henna is usually sold as a greenish or gray powder, rarely as leaves. It comes from the Egyptian dyeing shrub *Lawsonia inermis* (Lythraceae family), also called henna shrub or Cyprus shrub. The plant is native to European and African Mediterranean countries, Madagascar and northern Australia. It is also cultivated in the Orient, mainly in India.

The coloring principle of henna is lawson, which is formed from the glycosides hennoside A, B and C by splitting off the sugar. Furthermore, henna leaves contain about 10% tannins. Henna dyeing has a very old tradition. It was used by the Arabs even before Mohammed, Moroccan cultures were mentioned in the 12th century and Emperor Frederick II issued a decree on henna in the 13th century. In Persia, henna was a very important export. Apart from textile dyeing, henna was used in ceremonial dyeing. In North Africa, for example, entire wedding parties dyed the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet red to celebrate. Fingernails and not least hair are also dyed red with henna. A Moroccan hair dye is known as "Cheh", which is a mixture of henna with mugwort (*Artemisia*). Another henna product is a mixture of henna powder with powdered indigo leaves called "reng". "Mehudi" is an Indian henna product in which weakly woody, thorny shoots are mixed with leaves. It was used in leather dyeing.

Henna belongs to the oxidation dyes, it can be used to directly dye proteinaceous fibers (wool and silk) as well as cellulosic fibers (cotton, viscose) without mordant. The color shades range from brownish orange to bright red and brown. On wool, you get beautiful bright orange tones, which become a little more brilliant with alum, for example. Henna must always be dyed at relatively high temperatures to produce beautiful bright colors. A dye bath should have between 80 and 90°C, hair is wrapped with a warm cloth during the dyeing process. The light fastness of dyed textiles is between 3 and 4, the wash fastness between 4 and 5.