

Steamers are easy to adapt from cooking pots. Don't panic if you haven't ever worked with steamed dye-setting. It took me twenty years to realize I really did need to learn how to steam fabric. The colors are fabulous! The steam sets the dye crayons. It's fast! Now I think *everyone* should own a steamer.

Choose one of these options:

1. Buy a vegetable steaming basket and use it to elevate fabric above simmering water in a large cooking pot. This is an easy solution if you are working with small items like scarves.
2. Buy a large tamale pot - this is an easy choice because it already has a platform in it so it's easy to elevate the cloth bundles above the water. It's also larger than the vegetable basket.
3. A canning pot will also work, because it has a rack inside that can hold the fabric bundles.



NOTE: If you are using either of these options, lay fabric out on newspaper and fold it up in the paper to prepare it for steaming. Or roll fabric and paper together into a bundle - and rubber band to secure. The point of the paper is to keep the wax/dye from touching the rest of the fabric, where it might bleed during steaming.

Slightly larger and more versatile:

4. Add a *stovepipe* to extend the length and width of fabric the steamer will accommodate. Buy a length of plumbing duct at the hardware store. One edge will be open. Use metal plumber's tape to seal the open edge on the duct pipe. Now you have an extension for the steamer. (see the Steamer diagram in order to get an idea of how this all comes together.)
5. The last part needed is a core around which the fabric is wrapped when it steams. Buy a roll of flexible black plastic fencing - sold at stores like Lowe's or Home Depot. This is inexpensive but there will be enough to share - or use in the garden!
6. Now put it all together. Wrap fabric in clean newsprint, roll it around the inner core. Secure with pins or rubber bands. Set the core inside the steamer, above the simmering water. Put a towel on top to absorb moisture, and cover the whole thing with the cooking pot lid. Set the timer for 30 minutes to an hour - based on how much fabric you wrapped around the core, and go have a cup of tea.

NOTE: Don't let the water level rise above the platform inside the steamer or the dyes will bleed during steaming.



HOLLOW CORE MADE FROM HARDWARE CLOTH AND COVERED IN CHEESECLOTH

HOLLOW CYLINDER MADE FROM GALVANIZED METAL

LARGE TAMALES POT OR CANNING POT

RACK TO SUPPORT HOLLOW EXTENSION

HOT PLATE

