

RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL MEETING ON NATURAL DYES HELD IN MORELOS, MEXICO

October 2025

The Third National Meeting on Natural Dyes, held from 28 to 31 August 2025, concluded successfully its activities in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico.

The event, organized by the Secretaría de Cultura of the Government of Mexico, through the Fondo Nacional para el Fomento de las Artesanías (Fonart), in collaboration with the national government and the Secretaría de Cultura de Morelos, highlighted the importance of the original communities in the preservation of the artisanal heritage.

With the aim of strengthening artisanal knowledge and techniques regarding the use of colors of plant, animal and mineral origin, through a space that promotes conservation and revaluation in contemporary artisanal production, the event brought together 50 artisans for four days from 17 entities of the Mexican Republic: Chiapas, State of Mexico, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Michoacán, Morelos, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, Quintana Roo, Sinaloa, Tabasco, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, Yucatán and Zacatecas.

The program included keynote presentations, panel discussions, and practical demonstrations, as well as an expo-sale in the Jardín Borda, where the public could purchase pieces directly from their creators.

During one of the lectures, historian José Iturriaga de la Fuente noted that 57 natural dyes have been identified in Mexico, of which 54 are of plant origin, two are of mineral origin, and one is of animal origin, the cochineal insect. The historian noted that Mexico ranks second in the world in cultural diversity, only after India, which reinforces the national and international importance of this knowledge.

During the opening day, in addition to demonstrations of the application of natural dyes, the event featured the keynote address "Natural Dyes in Mexico: Biocultural Heritage," by Arturo Gómez Martínez, Deputy Director of Ethnography at the National Museum of Anthropology. Two panel discussions followed: the first on the availability of dyeing materials in different regions of the country, and the second on the challenges facing artisanal production using these techniques and the opportunities for their commercialization.

Starting on Friday, August 29th, in addition to workshops and a presentation on dyeing and edible plants, the event moved to the Jardín Borda Cultural Center, where the 50 dyers showcased handicrafts and textile products. The exhibition and sale, open to the public with free admission, encouraged interaction with the artisans and learning about their working techniques.



The Secretary of Culture of the Government of Mexico and Fonart emphasized that such meetings are essential to preserving the country's biocultural heritage. The meeting is part of the ORIGINAL national initiative, which the Government and Fonart created in 2021 to protect and strengthen artisans' work and collective rights. Therefore, in 2025, various meetings will be held to promote traditional knowledge, encourage exchanges among artisan communities, and support artisanal production from a cultural, community, and sustainable perspective. Within this framework, dialogue and knowledge-sharing will drive the development of a project that strengthens the ancestral practice of natural dyeing.

This project will be able to enhance contributions from all the stakeholders in Mexico engaged in working to rescue the knowledge of the country's vast potential for natural dyes, whether plant, mineral, or animal, as mentioned at the event by historian Iturriaga de la Fuente. In particular, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) of the Mexican government has produced, in its Biocultural Notebook series, the publication [Plantas y otros recursos tintóreos de México](#) which offers an overview of the dyes used in the country. The National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) has also produced the publication [Tinturas forestales y su uso en el teñido de fibras naturales](#). According to an [article published by La Jornada magazine](#), the Institute for Research and Promotion of Handicrafts of the State of Mexico (IIFAEM) has registered 2,941 master craftsmen and women who dye materials such as wool or cotton using natural dyes. Several Mexican institutions offer qualified training courses on the use of natural dyes, such as the [La Fabrica San Pedro Cultural Center in Uruapan, Michoacán](#).

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