

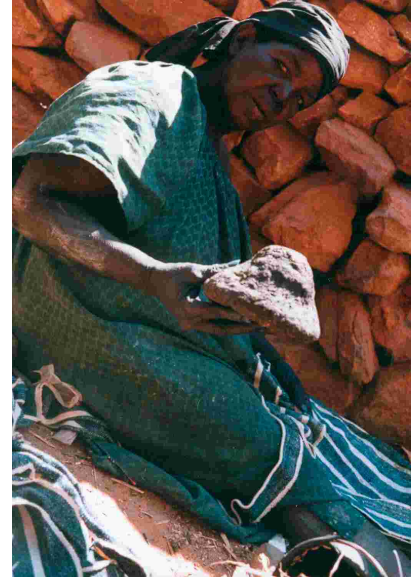
Botanicolor

the ethnobotanic of dyes and fibers

Cultivated lice?
Banana paper?
Apples on oaks?

What's going on here?

A history, a science, a future
and a handful of interesting plants.



Dyeplants and fiber plants.

We present our selection of this fascinating area of useful plants,
important raw materials and natural colours of our ancestors.

Cotton, linen, hemp,
red roots, yellow flowers and Indigo blues,
these are things which attract us all,
since thousands of years and still today.

from 15 June to 15 September 2001

Concept, research and execution: maja & max willis
www.luminousgreen.net

Botanic Gardens of the University of Basel, Switzerland

From the middle of June until the end of September 2001 an exciting and fascinating exhibition named 'Botanicolor' took place in the Botanical Gardens of the University of Basel, Switzerland. The aim of the exhibition was to present to the public a special selection of useful plants and to give the visitors a 'hands on' experience the subject matter.



The exhibition was partitioned into two main topics, on one side dyeplants, on the other, fiber plants. Between them an information board was set up, onto which many examples of colored textiles as well as natural fibers and dye samples were affixed. The public could handle the materials and come into closer contact with the subject.



Many basic principles were introduced with pictures and texts, primarily concerning the cultivation, production and botanical backgrounds of the different natural colors and vegetable fibers. 'Botanicolor' was researched and arranged by Maja and Max Willis.



The most important aspect of the exhibition was the presence of the plants themselves. Many visitors experienced in person tropical Indigo and cotton for the very first time in their lives. Some were amazed to see our Sisal Agave or the Ramie plants whose fiber products are well known.

On August the Second, 2001, Maja and Max hosted a guided tour of the exhibition, which was announced in the Baseler newspaper and through the Institute of the Botanical Garden. Almost fifty interested people took part. Maja gave a tour through the plantings and explained some of the botanically most interesting aspects. Afterwards Max lectured on 'the past, present and future of natural fibers and dyes.' A question and answer session followed.



Altogether the exhibition 'Botanicolor' was a great success. Many visitors returned home with new ideas and knowledge of the world of useful plants. The authors learned a great deal, not only through their research of the topics but also about the composition and presentation of a diverse public exhibition.

Maja Willis completed a one and a half-year internship at the Botanical Gardens and in October 2001 began her study of landscape planning at the Technical University Berlin. Max Willis continues in his work with the arts with luminousgreen.net.