

**Dying Basket Reed**  
**Bonnie Bowman**  
**727.600.6226**  
**bonnielbowman@gmail.com**  
**www.bonnielbowman.com**

I prefer to use Pro Chem Mx Dyes. You can follow the instructions provided by the company. I find these dyes provide brilliant colors and are convenient to use because they do not need to be heat set.

However because I prefer intense colors I do sometimes apply heat. Since I am too accident prone to risk dying reed on my stove in the house, and find setting up a burner outside is more effort than I care to give, I take advantage of our Florida sunshine by putting black plastic garbage bags over the dye pots or damp reed and let them set in the sun for several hours.

Additionally I have used wood stains, fabric paints, watered down Liquitex acrylic paints and “Magic Metallic” for adding color to my baskets.

For baskets that are going to be used for food service I prefer to stain the reeds with color extracted from food products such as tea, coffee, annatto seeds, beetroot, etc.

***And this is how I dye basket reed:***

**Materials:**

1 hank basket reed temp

Procion MX Dyes

soda ash

iodine free salt

rubber gloves

old clothes and apron,

**dust mask plastic bucket,  
utensils for mixing that are only used for dying**

- 1. Loosen ties**
- 2. Soak reed in in enough water to cover the reed for an hour or so ( use a rock or brick to keep the reed from floating)**
- 3. Dissolve 1 cup of iodine free salt in about 2 cups hot of water add to soaking reed. Mix well**
- 4. Dissolve 2-4 tablespoons of dye powder in a small amount of water. Mix thoroughly, then add to soaking reed. Mix well. (Wear your dust mast during this step!)**
- 5. Let the dye bath soak 2-24 hours, ( best at temperture between 75-95 F) depending on the color intensity desired.**
- 6. To fix the dye, dissolve 9 table spoons of soda ash in to 2 cups of hot water add to the dye bath and mix well. Let the reed soak in the activated dye bath for 24 hours.**
- 7. Pour off the dye bath, you may rinse the reed now, several times until the water runs clear. But I feel I get better result by also heat setting.**
- 8. Heat set (after completing steps1-6) pour off dye bath and place reed into black plastic bags and place in a sunny spot out doors for a day or two then rinse until the water runs clear.**
- 9. (Tip: You may also wish to add the finished reed to a bath of hot water with Retayne added to help with bleeding. I usually do not bother with this step since I have found that dyes will eventually stop bleeding when rinsed enough and are very permanent light fast. However, this may take a lot of rinsing since not all of the Procion dye will bond with the reed.**