

## Kyla's Walnut Ink Recipe:

I derived this recipe from an amalgamation of several recipes I found on the internet. This one worked gangbusters, so I'm sold.

### Ingredients:

- Black walnuts (or whatever kind --just so long as they have dark-brown ooze when they've been rotting a bit).
- Water

### Equipment:

- Large pot
- Sieve and/or pantyhose for straining.
- Rubber gloves (or dyed hands)
- Jar for the finished product

### Getting started:

In the fall, (I believe I collected my walnuts in early October), collect as many walnuts as you please. A gallon of walnuts will make plenty of ink. If they are green, that's ok, you'll just have to wait a few weeks for them to turn brown before you make the good stuff.

Once you have collected your walnuts, if they have already turned brown, you are good to go, if they are still green, leave them out in a bucket until they've turned brown.

Once all of your walnuts are brown, place them whole, in a pot (stainless steel is probably best—anything else may get stained). There may be maggots—ignore them, after all, you’re not eating it! Cover the walnuts with water, and then add half that much more water. In other words, your ratio should be about 1 part walnuts to 1.5 parts water. Bring the water to a low boil. Boil the walnuts for at least one hour. Dip a brush in every once and a while to see if the ink is getting to the darkness you are after. After about an hour, I turned off the heat, let the water cool a bit, and then took some time with gloved hands to work the hulls off of the nuts, squeeze the pigment out of the hulls with my hands (while everything is still in the pot), and remove some of the pits. At this point, if the water/ink is as dark as you’d like it, you can skip to straining. If not, turn the heat back on and boil some more. Some recipes have folks boil for a day, some just an hour. I boiled mine for about 2, but added some water when it boiled down. The point here is to extract as much pigment as desired from the quantity of walnuts collected. I had plenty of walnuts, so I didn’t worry about getting as much pigment as possible out of the nuts—I probably could have gotten more, had I boiled the mixture longer.

When the boiled mixture reaches your desired level of pigmentation, turn off the heat, and let the mixture cool. Once cool, with gloved hands, remove all remaining pits and then strain the mixture through a sieve. Once through a sieve, strain it through a stocking or a sock. The point here is to remove all of the solids.

What remains is your walnut ink! Simply pour it into glass jars and save.\*

\*As a natural substance, your ink will begin to smell badly after a week or so. I don’t mind, it’s really not bad unless you shove your nose in a bit, but eventually it will grow mold unless you add a preservative of some kind. A little bit of everclear or rubbing alcohol will help preserve it. The mold doesn’t effect the ink, just sift it out, or freeze the ink until use. To slow the growth of mold, I sterilized the containers with boiling water first.