

# Mehndi Henna Kit™ Instructions



*All the tools and supplies you need to begin are included in this kit:*

Henna powder  
Eucalyptus oil  
Citrus/sugar solution  
Applicator bottle  
Straight pin  
Wooden mixing stick  
Cotton balls to apply the citrus/sugar solution  
Cotton swabs for wiping away small mistakes  
Toothpicks for editing the design and thinning lines

## *Directions:*

- Pour water into the henna powder bottle up to the line.
  - Mix with wooden mixing stick.
  - Pour Eucalyptus oil into the mix.
  - Mix very thoroughly for 5 minutes.
  - Let the mixture age for 45 minutes.
  - Stir briefly before use. Use within 24 hours for best results.
- If it is difficult to squeeze out paste - the addition of a few drops of water may be necessary.
- Thoroughly wash the skin before applying henna. This removes lotions, body oils and old skin which act as a barrier to the henna stain.
  - Apply henna to skin.
  - Gently squeeze the applicator bottle to release the henna. If tip gets clogged, use the straight pin to remove debris.
  - Let henna dry on skin. (10 to 15 minutes)
  - Moisten the design by lightly applying the citrus/sugar solution with a cotton ball. This will set the henna for a long lasting and darker color. Do not over saturate the design with the citrus/sugar solution as this will dilute and spread the henna and fine lines will thicken. Once the henna assumes a black and glazy appearance, you can reduce or stop the application of the citrus/sugar solution.

- Leave henna on skin as long as possible, (up to 12 hours for best results) to set and darken the design. 3 hours of set time usually results in a dark solid color.
- Remove the henna with a cotton ball and vegetable oil.
- Avoid wetting the area for a day. Color will darken overnight.

If you are prone to allergies or have sensitive skin do a small test design and wait a day before proceeding with something more elaborate.

Good luck, and have fun!

## *Tips:*

Test the applicator flow on a paper towel.

Start with a simple complete design and then add complexity.

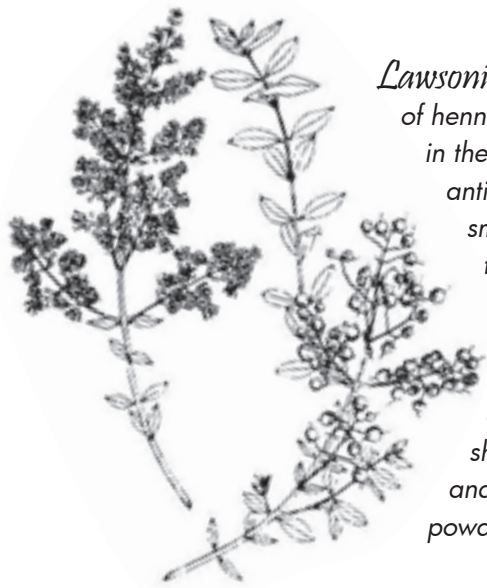
Improvise, change a drawing mistake into part of the design.

Remember henna stains, work carefully. Keep it off your hands and finger nails (use gloves), your clothes, porcelain sinks and counter tops.

Leave the henna paste on for up to 12 hours for the best (darkest) results. If you plan to go to bed before removing the henna paste, wrap the area with a paper towel and tape to protect the design and avoid staining your bedding.



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*Lawsonia Inermis*, the source of henna, has been cultivated in the tropics since early antiquity. The shrub bears small yellowish or red fragrant flowers in rich panicles and sheds its leaves in the dry season. To prepare the dye, leaves and young shoots are cut, dried and pounded into a fine powder.

### *The Mehndi Henna Tradition*

For over 5,000 years, the people of India, Africa and the Middle East have practiced the beautiful and mysterious art of painting on the body with preparations using the henna plant. In India, and here in the West, the art form is referred to as Mehndi.

A special henna powder and specific liquid ingredients are mixed to a dark paste. Using an applicator, linear designs are drawn on the body. After the paste has set, the paste is removed and reddish brown markings remain on the skin. These designs last 7 to 12 days on the skin, fading gradually until they disappear. This is why Mehndi is likened to a temporary tattoo.

The henna plant comes from Egypt where it was called Egyptian Privet. In the Caribbean it was called Jamaica Mignonette. Henna was brought to India as a state gift from the Egyptians. Queen Mumtaz who ruled in the 1600's was the first Indian queen to be decorated with henna. The Taj Mahal was built to honor her. Today, it is common to find Mehndi artists practicing their craft just outside the Taj gates. In India, the peacock is a popular motif in Mehndi because it is a symbol of love, luck and abundance. Traces of henna have been found on mummies from as early as 1200 BC. As long ago as 632 BC, the prophet Mohammed was said to have dyed his hair with henna.

Traditionally in India and Morocco, Mehndi is drawn only on the hands and feet. But you can apply it anywhere. Feel free to create your designs on arms (perhaps as arm-

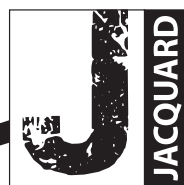
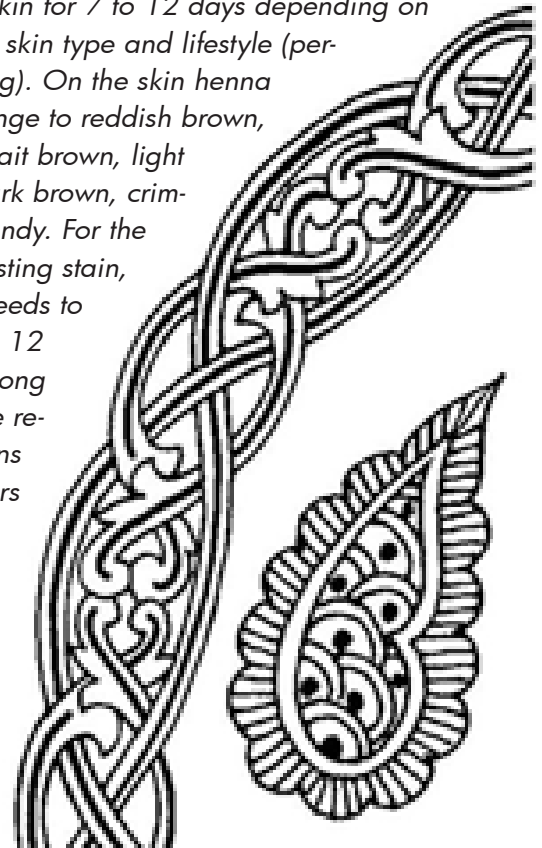
bands), on legs, around the naval, behind the neck... or anywhere you want. Henna does not work as well on the face or chest, the color usually comes out quite light and fades quickly.

Traditionally, Mehndi is an important part of wedding ceremonies. The hands and feet of the bride are decorated by members of her family or professional henna artists (called Hannayas in Morocco). The intricate designs cover her hands and feet like a lace glove or stocking. Wedding rituals differ between countries, but the common belief is that Mehndi brings good luck. Ornamenting the bride's body with henna is believed to bring love, prosperity, health, safety in childbirth, protection from harmful spirits and assure happiness in health. If the designs last a long time on the bride's skin, the love between the couple will last forever.

In the West, henna is most commonly used to dye hair. But with the new popularity of tattoos, henna and the art of Mehndi is now considered a safe, painless and non-permanent alternative form of body ornamentation.

### *Things you should know about practicing Mehndi*

Henna stains the skin for 7 to 12 days depending on body temperature, skin type and lifestyle (perspiring and bathing). On the skin henna can vary from orange to reddish brown, to russet, café au lait brown, light brown, through dark brown, crimson red and burgundy. For the darkest, longest lasting stain, the henna paste needs to remain on the skin 12 to 15 hours, or as long as possible, before removal. Henna stains only the outer layers of the skin. As the skin exfoliates the design will disappear completely. Re-application of henna over an existing design will deepen the color and forestall fading.



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