

Today in Columbus History: On May 30, 1859, an ad appeared in the *Daily Sun* for Barlow's Indigo Blue for bluing clothes. Bluing? Most modern homemakers have never heard of this process, but in the 19th and 20th centuries people would use a bluing agent in the rinse to whiten yellow or dingy white fabrics (sheets, towels, handkerchiefs, underwear, etc.). In the old days bluing powders were made from indigo, a plant that was grown in South Carolina and Georgia in the late 1700s – mainly to provide blue dye to European markets. Indigo had been used for centuries to dye clothes; in a more diluted form it can be used to whiten them. Bluing is still available. It's cheap and has gotten good reviews (4.5 rating out of 5). Maybe we should try it!

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Our snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu>

BARLOW'S
INDIGO BLUE,
FOR BLUEING CLOTHS.
A F W grains dropped in a tub of water being sufficient for a whole wash.
Sold by JOHN W. BROOKS,
April 21, 1859 Druggist.





This is *Indigofera tinctoria* -- "True Indigo." I have it growing in my back yard. The person who gave me the first rootings said it was "Faux Indigo," but it appears it's the "true" variety. I need to try to make some dye. You actually make it from the leaves -- not the flowers.