

# The Henna Page Guide to Henna



Henna is used on brides for their weddings in India, the Middle East and Africa.



- The “Night of the Henna” is the oldest and most famous henna celebration.
- Both men and women have a “Night of the Henna” just before their marriage.
- Henna is supposed to be lucky for a bride, and to make her beautiful.
- Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and Jewish brides have a “Night of the Henna”.



# Henna:

## Lawsonia Inermis

- Henna is a small tree that grows in many countries.
- There are henna traditions in North and East Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.
- There are many words for henna: mehendi, mehndi, camphire, and kopher.
- The word for the art form is the same as the word for the plant.



# Henna plants like heat and drought



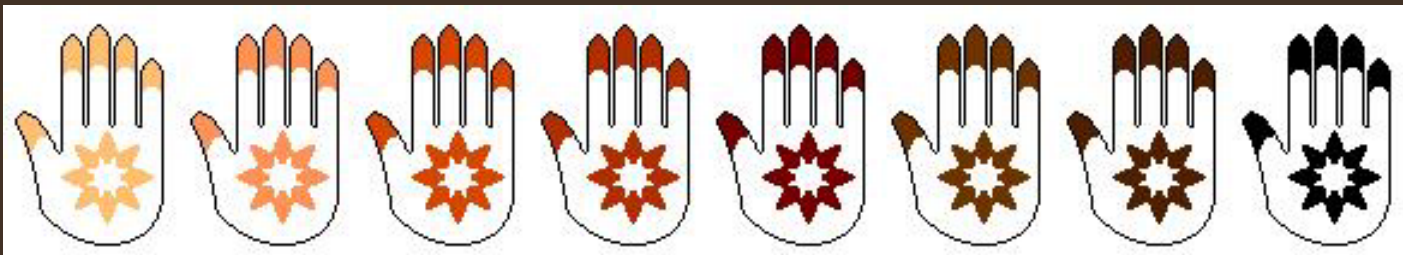
- Henna wilts if nighttime temperatures are below 50F or 11C
- Henna will thrive in summer heat to 120F or 48C.
- Henna grows better in dry soil than damp soil.
- Henna from hot, dry climates has more dye.
- Learn more about henna plants at <http://www.hennapage.com/henna/encyclopedia/growing/>

# Henna has: Lawsone : 2-Hydroxy 1,4 Napthoquinone



- This is a red-orange dye which binds to keratin.
- This dye will safely stain skin red-orange.
- Henna stains range from pale orange to nearly black.
- Fresh henna from hot climates makes the darkest stains.

<http://www.hennapage.com> © 2005





# Henna stains skin.



- Henna stains palms and soles best because that skin is thickest.
- Henna stains exfoliate from the skin in 7 – 30 days.

# Henna is not the same as a tattoo.



- Tattoos are made by piercing the skin and putting pigment under the skin.
- Henna stains the outermost layer of the skin, and does not pierce the skin. Henna does not hurt. It feels cool and pleasant on the skin.
- Henna stains will fade away as the outermost layer of the skin exfoliates. Tattoos are permanent.



## Can dark skinned people use henna?

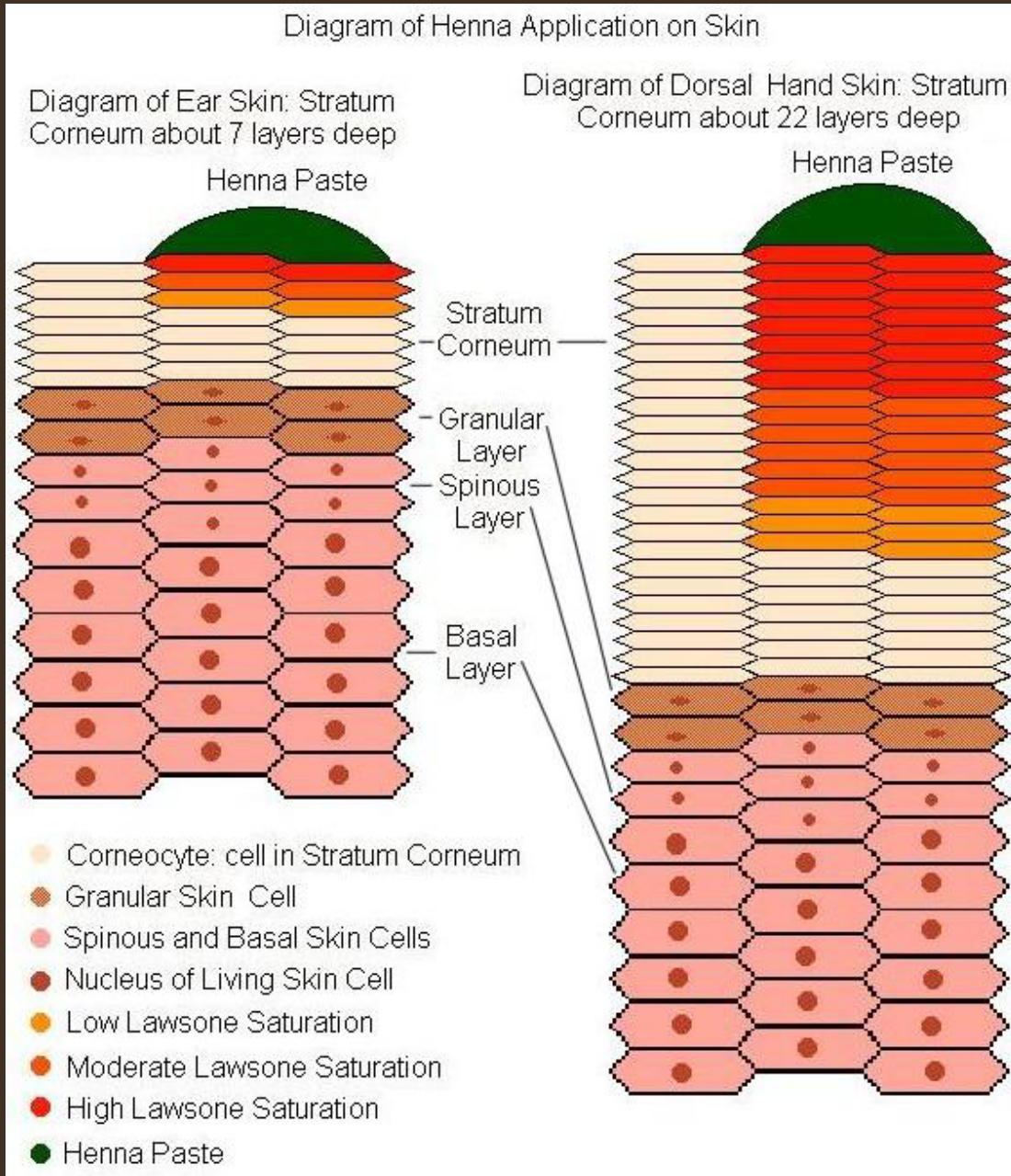
- People of all skin colors can use henna.
- Henna is as beautiful on dark skin as on light skin.

Learn more about henna and dark skinned people at:  
<http://www.hennapage.com/henna/how/darkskin.html>

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# Henna and skin



- When you put henna paste on skin, the lawsone penetrates and saturates the top layer of skin cells just as a drop of ink penetrates and saturates layers of paper.

Diagram of Hennaed Skin 24 Hours After Application:  
Paste Removed and Stain Partially Oxidized

Diagram of Ear Skin: Thin Corneocyte  
Layer Absorbs Less Lawsone

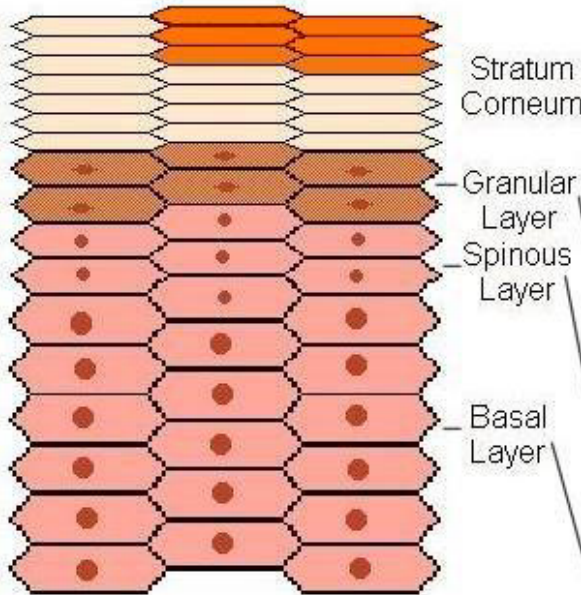
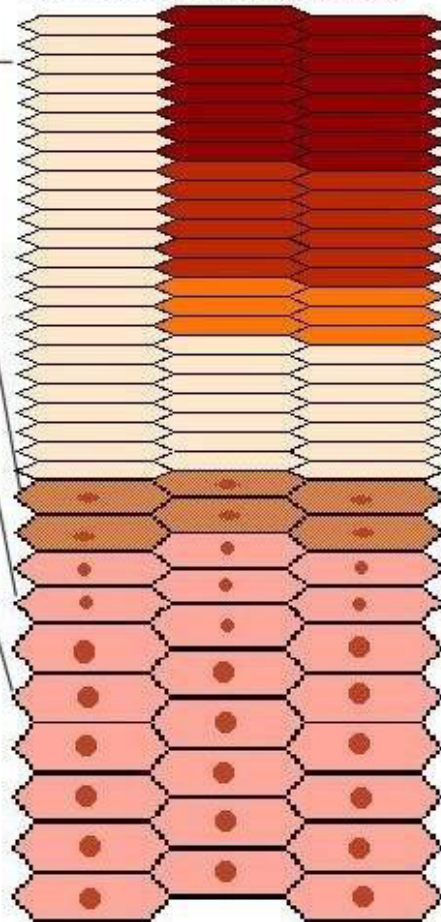


Diagram of Dorsal Hand Skin:  
Thicker Corneocyte Layer Absorbs  
and Oxidizes More Lawsone



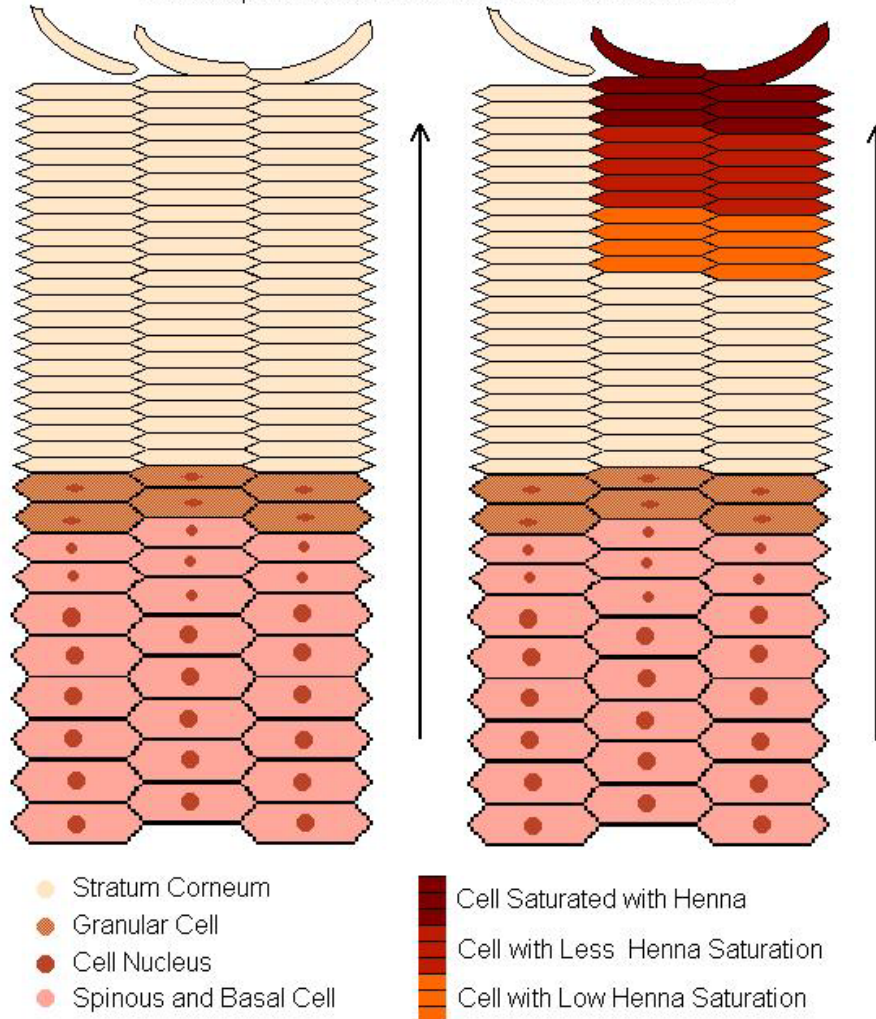
Corneocyte: cell in Stratum Corneum  
Granular Skin Cell  
Spinous and Basal Skin Cells  
Nucleus of Living Skin Cell

Low Lawsone Saturation, No Oxidation  
Moderate Lawsone Saturation, Some Oxidation  
High Lawsone Saturation, High Oxidation

# Henna stains darken

- In the first 48 hours after application, the most saturated part of the henna stains oxidize, or darken.

Exfoliation and Regeneration: Each night, a new skin cell layer grows under the skin. Each day, the oldest cell layer sheds at the top of the skin. The cells proceed to the surface in interlaced columns



# Henna Stains appear to fade

- Henna stains appear to fade away in 7 – 30 days.
- The stained skin cells exfoliate and are replaced by new unstained cells growing from underneath.

•For more information on henna and skin, see:  
<http://www.hennapage.com/henna/encyclopedia/skin/>

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# Henna stains fingernails.



- Henna strengthens skin and fingernails, and deters drying and cracking.
- Henna has some anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties.
- Henna is a sunblock.

For more information on henna and fingernails, see:

<http://www.hennapage.com/henna/encyclopedia/fingernails/>

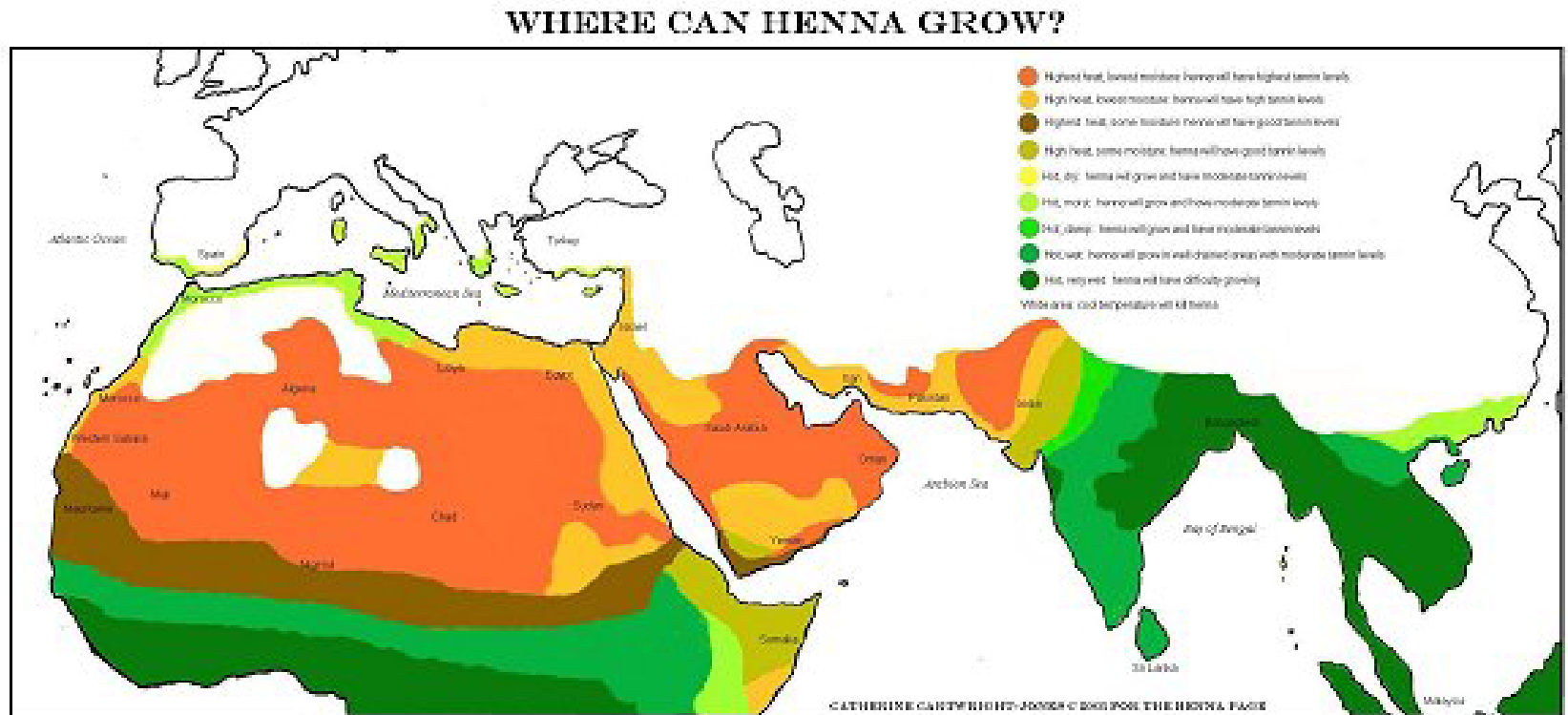
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Henna stains hair reddish and makes it stronger and silkier.



- Henna is effective against ringworm, dandruff, and other fungal diseases.

# Where does henna Grow?



- Henna grows best in in the hot, dry zone from the Atlantic to the Pacific; the yellow and orange areas of this map.
- Henna will die in cold weather.
- Henna gets stale during transport, so henna traditions are primarily in hot, dry areas.



Farmers grow henna in India, Pakistan, Iran, Yemen, and Morocco.



- Learn more about growing henna at <http://www.hennapage.com/henna/encyclopedia/geography/indiahenna.html>
- And <http://www.hennapage.com/henna/encyclopedia/growing/Pakistan/index.html>

# Who uses henna?



- Women use henna for weddings, celebrations, births, birthdays, and any other special occasion when they want to feel beautiful. Men use henna for their weddings, and circumcisions, but not as much as women.
- Sometimes people henna their horses, donkeys, and dogs for celebrations.



# Is henna sacred?

- People who are Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, and some animist religions have all used henna at one time or another.
- People use henna for Diwali, Norooz, Eids, Purim, Passover, and other holidays, but henna is not part of the religious celebration. Henna is part of the social celebration of these holidays, as Christmas trees are a social, not sacred, celebration of Christmas.

Learn more about henna traditions at

<http://www.hennapage.com/henna/encyclopedia/index.html>

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# How do you make henna paste?



- Get fresh body art quality henna powder. Don't use "Henna Hair Dye" powder.
- Add enough lemon juice to make a paste about as thick as mashed potatoes.
- Cover the paste with plastic and let it sit for 12 hours at 70F or 21C

Learn more about mixing henna at

<http://www.hennapage.com/henna/how/mix.html>

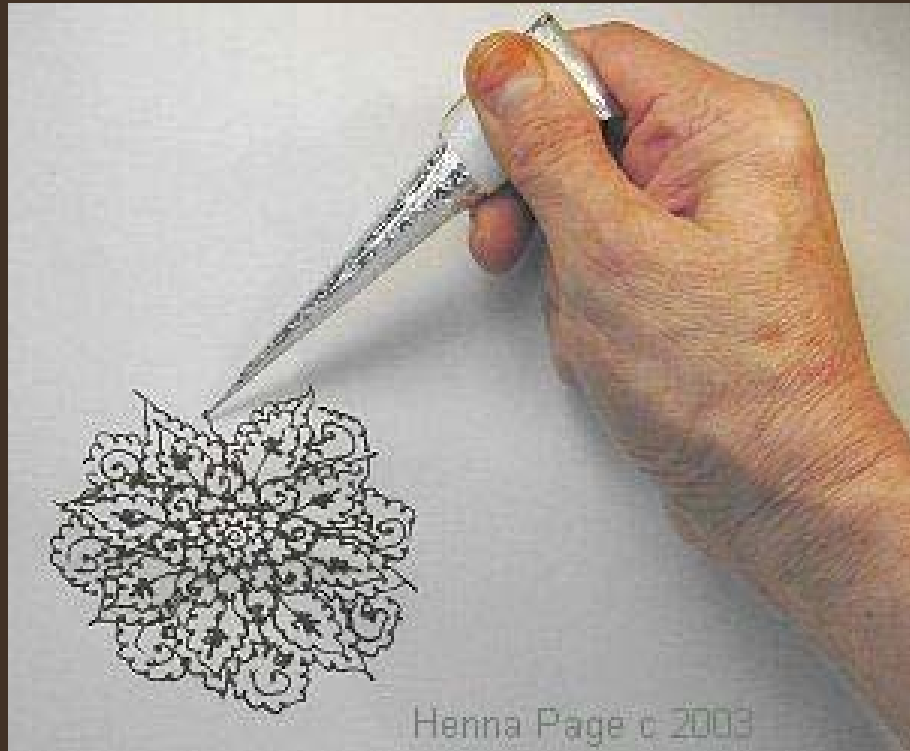
# You can add more things to your henna paste.



- You can add coffee, tea, sugar, and other things to your henna paste after the first mixing.
- You will get darker stains if you add a little Tea Tree essential oil or Lavender essential oil to the henna paste.
- You can add sugar or dextrose to your henna paste to make it smoother.
- Mix enough liquid into the henna paste to make the texture of stirred up yogurt.

Learn more about mixing henna at  
<http://www.hennapage.com/henna/how/mix.html>

# You can apply henna with many different tools.



- Practice on paper until you feel confident enough to henna skin.
- You can practice with fudge topping for ice cream!
- Learn more about applying henna at <http://www.hennapage.com/henna/how/apply.html>



# Strain your henna paste to get fine lines.



- Strain your henna paste through a nylon stocking to remove the twigs and chunks.
- If you strain your henna paste, it will be easier to make fine, delicate henna patterns!



Learn more about straining and sifting henna at:

<http://www.hennapage.com/henna/how/sift.html>

And <http://www.hennapage.com/henna/how/applystrain.html>

# When the henna paste is dry on the skin, seal it.



- Henna has to stay on the skin undisturbed for several hours or overnight to make a dark stain.
- You can seal the henna down with lemon/sugar, pump spray hair gel, or a glue, glitter and water mix.
- Learn more about sealing henna at <http://www.hennapage.com/henna/how/wrap.html>

# Heat will make your henna stain darker



- When the paste is on your skin, stay warm with steam, a heater, or carefully wrap the henna.

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Learn more about wrapping and sealing at <http://www.hennapage.com/henna/how/wrap.html>



# NEVER make a temporary tattoo with black hair dye!



- Henna is NOT black!
- Some people use para-phenylenediamine to make “black henna”. This can cause severe allergic reactions, with blistering and permanent scarring.
- Do not ever get a “black henna” tattoo! Use only safe, natural, red-brown henna.



Learn more about the dangers of “black henna” at: <http://www.hennapage.com/henna/ppd/index.html>

# Learn to be henna artist!



- Put henna on yourself and your friends for joy, for luck, for beauty.
- Henna is fun, and isn't a "forever" body art like tattoo or piercing.
- Henna is not "against" anybody's religion.
- The more you learn about henna, the more you'll enjoy it! Visit [The Henna Page](http://www.hennapage.com) to learn more about henna!
- You can become a certified henna artist through [ICNHA](http://www.icnha.com).

# Enjoy henna, an ancient, beautiful body art.



- Visit [The Henna Page](http://www.hennapage.com) for the history, traditions, art and science of henna, instruction books, suppliers, and and free patterns!
- [TapDancing Lizard](http://www.hennapage.com) has henna books for you.