MADDER (Rubia), a genus of plants of the natural order Rubiaceae, very nearly allied to the genus Galium or Bedstraw (q.v.), and differing from it chiefly in having a juicy fruit resembling two small berries growing together. The species are found in the tropical and warmer temperate parts, both of the Old and New Worlds, and are important for the colouring matter of their roots.

The most important is the Common M. or Dyewax M. (R. Tinctoria), a native probably of the south of Europe as well as of Asia; and now very extensively cultivated in most European countries, and also in the East Indies, China, &c. It is a perennial, with weak stems and whorls of 4–6 elliptic or lanceolate glossy leaves, the stem and leaves rough with sharp prickles; small greenish yellow flowers, and black fruit.—Munjoct (q.v.), or Indian M. (R. Munjota or Cordifolia), ranks next to it in importance.—The roots of R. Peraeprina and R. Lucida are also used in some parts of the Levant. R. Peraeprina is found in the south-west of England, and is called Wild Madder. It is very similar to R. Tinctoria. The roots of R. Revisius and R. Balsamis are used in Chili and Peru.

There is no material of greater importance to dyers than M. (R. Tinctoria), not only from the great beauty of the colours obtained from it, but also from the ease with which it can be worked, and the great variety of its applications. Although the M. plant thrives best in warm climates, it may be, and is successfully cultivated in northern districts. The Dutch province of Zealand has long been celebrated for the large crops of M. produced there; and until about 40 years since, our dyers rarely used any other than Dutch M., which was always sent ground and packed in large casks; but with the improvements in dyeing, it was discovered that the roots grown in warmer localities possessed not only much superior qualities, but could be made to produce other and more beautiful shades of colour. Besides a genial temperature, M. requires a rich, deep soil and careful cultivation. It is usually propagated by cuttings or by shoots from the stocks of old plants; these are set about a foot apart, and in rows, three feet from each other; the planting takes place in spring; and sometimes the roots are lifted at the usual harvest-time for madder (October or November). In France and Germany, the markets are supplied with one year old (called by the Germans reibe), eighteen months old, and three years old, which is the best, and called by the Germans kropp, or M. pur excellens. The roots are carefully raised with forks, to prevent breaking them as much as possible; and after the soil is thoroughly shaken off, they are dried in stoves, and afterwards thashed with a flail, to remove the loose skins and any remaining soil still adhering; they are then cut, or broken in pieces, and packed for sale, or they are sent to the mills to be ground. In Turkey and Italy, where the solar heat is great, the stove is dispensed with, the roots being dried in the sun. The more the roots are freed from the epidermis, the better the quality of the M.; hence, before it is ground in France, many manufacturers employ mechanical means, chiefly stoves worked by machinery, which rub off and separate the soft, dark-brown skin which covers the roots—this process is called rolege. One year-old roots cannot be profitably dressed in this way, and are therefore ground with the epidermis. Much of the inferior Dutch M. is also ground without dressing, and such is called mull in trade. The grinding is effected in mills with vertical stones, and the meal is passed through sieves of different degrees of fineness, which gives rise to various qualities in the market. These qualities are
The Madder-lake, also known as the Madder-plant, is a species of plant that has been cultivated for its dyeing properties and medicinal uses. It is native to the Mediterranean region and has been grown for thousands of years for its red coloring properties. The dye extracted from the plant is known as madder, and it has been used in various applications, including textiles, leather, and cosmetics.

The madder plant has several varieties, each with its own unique color range. The red variety is the most common, but there are also purple, pink, and orange varieties. The plant is grown in fields and harvested when the roots are mature. The roots are then dried and ground into a powder, which is used as a dye.

The dyeing process involves soaking the cloth or other material in a solution made from the madder roots. This process can be repeated to achieve the desired color intensity. The madder dye is strong and can be used to create a range of colors, from deep reds to light pinks.

Madder dye has been used for centuries in various cultures, and it continues to be used today. It is still grown and harvested in many parts of the world, particularly in countries such as Turkey, India, and Egypt. The dye is also used in the production of other items, such as candles and cosmetics.

The madder plant is not only valued for its dyeing properties but also for its medicinal uses. The root of the plant contains a range of active compounds, including anthraquinones and flavonoids, which have been shown to have anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antimicrobial properties.

Overall, the madder plant is a versatile and valuable resource that continues to be harvested and used in various applications. Its vibrant red coloring and medicinal properties make it a valuable commodity in many parts of the world.