

# Wools and yarn types

The Natural Fibre Company, Blacker Yarns and Blacker Designs

Pennygillam Way, Launceston, Cornwall PL15 7PJ

Telephone: 01566 777635

Email: [enquiries@thenaturalfibre.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@thenaturalfibre.co.uk)


Website: [www.thenaturalfibre.co.uk](http://www.thenaturalfibre.co.uk)

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BREED (sorted from coarse to fine)	micron	lustre	fibre type	handle	Lace	4-ply (Sportweight)	DK (Worsted)	Alan (Medium)	Chunky (Bulky)	Guernsey	better Worsted	better Woollen		Good for	Bad for	Key Characteristics In Yarn
Devon & Cornwall Longwool	40+	yes	coarse	strong					●	●	●	✓	✓	garden twine	next to skin	Long, strong and coarse, good for carpets too
Herdwick	35+	no	strong	strong			●	●	●	●		✓		accessories	next to skin	Coarse, kempy but great heathered colours
Hebridean	35+	some	strong	strong		●	●	●	●	●		✓		accessories	next to skin	A good dark off-black, strong, lambs can be very soft with slight lustre
Leicester Longwool	35+	yes	strong	strong				●	●	●	✓			outer wear	next to skin	Nice when worsted spun, and using coloured fibre
Cotswold	34-40	yes	medium	medium			●	●			✓			near skin	detail/cable	Strong, lustrous, creamy, long staple good for worsted, lambs fine
Black Welsh Mountain	32-35	no	medium	soft		●	●	●	●			✓		near skin	detail/cable	Soft and a good dark almost black, versatile, nice handle
Boreray	25-40	no	double	medium	●			●	●	●		✓		outer wear	next to skin	Double coat, fine and coarse but feels soft, good natural colour range
North Ronaldsay	25-40	no	double	medium			●	●	●	●		✓		outer wear	detail/cable	Double coat, fine and coarse but feels soft, good natural colour range
Norfolk Horn	32-35	no	medium	medium			●	●	●			✓		outer wear	next to skin	Good, bouncy general purpose medium yarn
White-faced Woodland	32-36	no	medium	medium			●	●	●			✓		outer wear	next to skin	Good, bouncy general purpose medium yarn
Lleyn	31-24	yes	medium	medium			●	●	●	●	✓	✓		near skin	next to skin	Good general purpose medium, semi lustre yarn, can have kemp
Suffolk	31-34	no	medium	medium			●	●	●		✓	✓		near skin	next to skin	Good, bouncy general purpose medium yarn
Zwartbles	31-34	no	medium	medium		●	●	●	●	●		✓		outer wear	detail/cable	Nice bouncy, off-black, handle is between Hebridean and BWM
Portland	31-35	no	medium	medium		●	●	●	●		✓	✓		near skin	next to skin	Nice bouncy, creamy, bulky, use reddish lambs wool for interest
Galway	30+	semi	medium	medium			●	●	●	●	✓	✓		near skin		Good general purpose medium, semi lustre yarn, some dark hairs
Manx Loaghtan	30+	no	medium	medium			●	●	●			✓		outer wear	hard wear	Brown, bouncy, short, bulky, can be blended to soften
Romney	30-34	yes	medium	medium		●	●	●	●	●	✓	✓		near skin		Nice, creamy, long enough for worsted, good mixed and all-rounder
Texel	30-35	no	fine	soft		●	●	●	●	●	✓	✓		near skin		Creamy, quite soft yarn with added interest from Blue/grey colours
Castlemilk Moorit	30-31.5	no	fine	medium			●	●	●			✓		near skin	hard wear	Rare, short, OK in thicker yarns, blend for finer yarns
Ryeland	28-32	no	medium	medium		●	●	●	●			✓		outer wear		Nice bouncy, quite soft wool, two good colours to mix and match
Jacob	28-35	no	medium	medium		●	●	●	●	●	✓	✓		near skin		Very versatile colour range, good alone, blends and dyes well
Mule (BFL cross-bred)	29-32	semi	medium	medium		●	●	●	●		✓	✓		near skin		Can be lovely but will vary, can add length and sheen to BFL
Southdown	28-35	no	fine	soft		●	●	●	●			✓		near skin		Soft but short, so can feel less soft, better for thicker yarns
Soay	28-32	no	fine	soft	●	●	●	●	●			✓		next to skin		Fine and soft, but short and rare: use sparingly, as with Boreray
Gotland	26-35	yes	medium	soft	●	●	●	●				✓		near skin	detail/cable	True grey, lustre, long, can shed or pill if worsted spun, dyes well
Teeswater	26-32	yes	fine	soft	●	●	●	●			✓			next to skin		Beautiful, soft, lustre yarns, take dye well
Wensleydale	26-32	yes	fine	soft	●	●	●	●			✓			next to skin		Beautiful, soft, lustre yarns, take dye well
Blue-faced Leicester	24-26.5	semi	fine	soft	●	●	●	●			✓	✓		next to skin	outer wear	Lovely creamy, soft semi lustre, can feel spongy when worsted spun
Shetland	18-30	no	fine	soft	●	●	●	●				✓		next to skin	accessories	Every natural colour, soft, fine, blends well with fine wools and hairs
Corriedale/Merino/Falkland	18-25	no	fine	soft	●	●	●	●				✓	✓	next to skin	hard wear	Very white, soft, bulky, dyes well, good to improve other fibre

**NOTES**  
The long lustre wools do not make very good chunky yarns as they are dense, so the yarns become very heavy if made thick - this is also the case with alpaca  
North Ronaldsay would make a soft 4-ply if de-haired of its coarse hairs but would lose the North Ronaldsay character - better to use Shetland  
Corriedale and Blue-faced Leicester are both soft and fine but the first is bulky and the second is lean so use Corriedale for warmth and Blue-faced Leicester for drape  
Near skin means people able to wear wool should be able to wear this next to skin but others will need something between them and the wool!  
Shorter fibre is better used for thicker yarns, longer can be used for either but long/fine makes better finer yarns, while rare, fine fibre is best not spoiled by chunky!

**GENERAL OVERVIEW GUIDELINES**  
**Bulk and warmth:** Black Welsh Mountain, Falkland, North Ronaldsay, Manx Loaghtan, Ryeland, Falkland, Shetland  
**Drape and sheen:** Cotswold, Gotland, Blue-faced Leicester, Teeswater, Wensleydale  
**Intermediate:** Galway, Hebridean, Jacob, Norfolk Horn, White-faced Woodland, Lleyn, Mule, Romney, Zwartbles  
**Individual:** Boreray, North Ronaldsay, Castlemilk Moorit, Devon and Cornwall Longwool, Herdwick, Soay, Gotland



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■ best

● possible

# Fleece Characteristics and yarn types

BREED (sorted alphabetically)	rarity*	staple length	fleece weight	micron	lustre	fibre type	handle									good blended*	purpose of blend*	Blend suggestions	
Black Welsh Mountain	native	6-10cm(3-4")	1.25-2kg(3-4lbs)	32-35	no	medium	soft		●	■	■	■			✓				
Blue-faced Leicester	no	8-15cm(3-6")	1-2kg(2-4lbs)	24-26.5	semi	fine	soft		■	■	●	●		✓	✓	possible	variety	silk, flax, Black BFL (rare)	
Boreray	Critical	5-10cm(2-4")	1-2kg(2-4lbs)	25-40	no	double	medium	●			■	■			✓	possible	extend	Soay	
Castlemilk Moorit	Vulnerable	5-8cm(2-3")	1kg (2.2lbs)	30-31.5	no	fine	medium				■	■	●		✓	yes	improve	silk, alpaca	
Corriedale/Merino/Falkland	no	7.5-12.5cm(3-5")	4.5-6kg(10-13lbs)	18-25	no	fine	soft		■	■	■	■		✓	✓	possible	variety	silk, flax, Manx, Hebridean, BWM	
Cotswold	At Risk	17.5-30cm(7-12")	4-7kg(9-15lbs)	34-40	yes	medium	medium		●	■	■	●		✓					
Devon & Cornwall Longwool	Vulnerable	17.5-30cm(7-12")	6-9kg(12-20lbs)	40+	yes	coarse	strong					■	■	●	✓	✓	possible	improve	Mule
Galway	rare	11.5-19cm(4.5-7.5")	2.5-3.5kg(5.5-7.7lbs)	30+	semi	medium	medium				●	■	■	■	✓	✓			
Gotland	rare in UK	8-12cm(3-5")	1-4kg(2-8lbs)	26-35	yes	medium	soft	●	■	■	■	■	●		✓	possible	variety	silk, Merino, Corriedale	
Hebridean	native	5-15cm(2-6")	1-2kg(2-4lbs)	35+	some	strong	strong		●	■	■	■	■	■	✓	yes	improve	Manx Loagthan, mohair	
Herdwick	Vulnerable	10-20cm(2-4")	1.5-2kg(2-4lbs)	35+	no	strong	strong			●	■	■			✓	yes	improve	mohair	
Jacob	native	8-15cm(3-6")	1.75-2.75kg(3-5lbs)	28-35	no	medium	medium		●	■	■	■	■	■	✓	✓	yes	variety	mohair, alpaca
Leicester Longwool	Endangered	17.5-30cm(7-12")	4-7kg(9-15lbs)	35+	yes	strong	strong				■	■	■	■	✓				
Lleyn	native	6-12cm(3-4.5")	2.5-3.5kg(5.5-7.7lbs)	31-34	yes	medium	medium				■	■	■	■	✓	✓	yes	improve	Blue-faced Leicester
Manx Loaghtan	At Risk	7-10cm(2.5-4")	1.5-2kg(2-4lbs)	30+	no	medium	medium				■	■	●	●	✓	yes	improve	Hebridean, mohair	
Mule (BFL cross-bred)	no	10-17cm(4-7")	2.5-3.5kg(5.5-7.7lbs)	29-32	semi	medium	medium				■	■	●	●	✓	✓	yes	improve	cross-bred varies, need to select
Norfolk Horn	At Risk	7-10cm(2.5-4")	1.5-2kg(2-4lbs)	32-35	no	medium	medium				■	■	■		✓				
North Ronaldsay	Endangered	4-8cm(1.5-3")	1.5-2kg(2-4lbs)	25-40	no	double	medium				■	■	■		✓				
Portland	At Risk	5-10cm(2-4")	1.5-2kg(2-4lbs)	31-35	no	medium	medium				■	■	■		✓				
Romney	no	10-17cm(4-7")	3-5kg(7-11lbs)	30-34	yes	medium	medium				■	■	●	■	✓	✓	possible	variety	Manx Loagthan, Hebridean
Ryeland	native	7.5-10cm(3-4")	2-2.75kg(4-5lbs)	28-32	no	medium	medium		●	■	■	■			✓	yes	variety	coloured Ryeland	
Shetland	native	5-10cm(2-4")	1kg (2.2lbs)	18-30	no	fine	soft	■	■	■	●				✓	yes	variety	coloured Shetland, alpaca	
Soay	At Risk	4-8cm(1.5-3")	1kg (2.2lbs)	28-32	no	fine	soft	■	■	■	■				✓	possible	extend	Boreray	
Southdown	no	4-8cm(1.5-3")	1.5-2kg(2-4lbs)	28-35	no	fine	soft				■	■	■		✓	possible	variety	coloured Southdown (rare)	
Suffolk	no	5-10cm(2-4")	2.5-3kg(5.5-6.5lbs)	31-34	no	medium	medium				■	■	■		✓	✓	possible	improve	mohair, alpaca
Teeswater	Vulnerable	15-30cm(6-12")	3-6kg(6.6-13.2lbs)	26-32	yes	fine	soft	■	■	■				✓					
Texel	no	7-14cm(2.5-5.5")	2.75-3.5kg(5-7.7lbs)	30-35	no	fine	soft				■	■	■		✓	✓	possible	variety	Blue/coloured Texel
Wensleydale	At Risk	15-30cm(6-12")	3-7kg(6.6-15lbs)	26-32	yes	fine	soft	■	■	■				✓		possible	variety	Black Wensleydale	
White-faced Woodland	Vulnerable	10-15cm(4-6")	2-3kg(4-6.5lbs)	32-36	no	medium	medium				■	■	■		✓				
Zwartbles	rare	10-12.5cm(4-5")	2-3kg(4-6.5lbs)	31-34	no	medium	medium		●	■	■	■			✓	yes	improve	mohair, alpaca	

\*rarity denotes rare status recognised by national rare breed protection society

\*blend/purpose = suggestions! Use your imagination!

## GENERAL NOTE:

General Note: staple length, fleece weight, micron and fibre type are as selected for Blacker Yarns, and flocks may vary considerably