



BASKETRY NOTES

By ANKARET DEAN

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Ankaret Dean

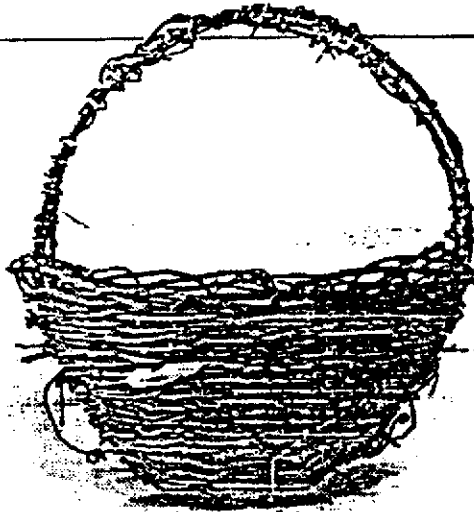
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ANKARET DEAN on

Basketry



"Basket" weeping willow and wild grape, 10" dia., 12" high, Ankaret Dean; 1980

Everyone has, at one time or another, imagined himself being cast upon a deserted island and wondered if he could survive. Provided the island had a few bushes or some grasses, or a tree or two, the basket weaver would soon be busy exploring the endless possibilities: from shelter to furniture, utensils to birdcages, sunhats to sandals, or even a boat. Recently, textile artists have taken a second look at man's most ancient craft and realized the beauty of fibres in articles which are both functional and decorative.

Basketmaking enjoys a long and fascinating history, which is thought to pre-date the art of pottery. Clay and sand were evidently used to protect the inside of a basket when food and coals were placed in it for cooking. After constant use, the clay lining would harden and separate from the basket, forming a piece of pottery. The earliest basket work that has come down to us is the coiled basket, found on Indian sites dated about 5,000 B.C. Baskets were used throughout the ancient world and records from Roman times show people reclining on wicker chairs and basket boats floating down the Euphrates. In addition, the North American Indians have given us a rich heritage in basketwork, much of which can be seen in museums. They would weave the legends and traditional patterns of their culture into their beautifully woven functional objects, using colour to add to the symbolism.

Although basketmaking was a woman's job in most societies, it was a man — Ed Rossbach from the University of California — who was partly responsible for the revival in basketmaking. Since the late 1960's, fibre artists have been enjoying the sculptural qualities of the basket form. The free-form weaving of baskets frees the weaver from the discipline of the loom.

The study of basketmaking techniques from primitive cultures offers an interesting source of fibre construction, which falls into three basic categories. The 'coiling technique' is directly related to the coiled clay pot and offers the weaver the opportunity for pattern in the wrapping or within the coil itself. This technique is subject to various forms which can be delightfully abstract or strictly conventional. The second type, the 'plaited basket', conforms more than other techniques to the woven textile because the diagonal elements intersect at right angles similar to the warp and weft. The 'fabric' of these baskets is softer and more malleable in contrast to the rigidity of the other two types. Pattern can be introduced in colour, texture, and in the weaving, by varying or twisting the fibres. Essentially, these forms are more symmetrical in shape and have a square base. The third technique, 'wickerwork', has been predominantly used for large, strong basketry. The name 'wicker' comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'wican' meaning 'to bend',

which is exactly what the weft does as it moves over and under the stakes to weave the structure. All kinds of variations of the weave are possible, producing different visual and tactile effects. Wooden bases may be used or wickerwork may be combined with wooden frames to support the structure. Different materials can be introduced to create colour or texture, and form can be controlled by shaping the stakes. In wickerwork, the hands are essentially the tools and 'feel' the shape into being. It is easy to understand why the blind find basketry so satisfying.

On that deserted island, the techniques of basketry would depend very much on the geographic area and the available fibres. A tropical island would probably provide long strands of palm and plaiting would be useful to know. A more temperate island with grasses and vines would be more suitable for coiling and hardwoods would provide splints for wickerwork (providing you had a knife to split the bark). An island in the east, where bamboo, cane, and rattan grow, would be excellent. On an arctic island, the Inuit make beautiful coiled baskets from grasses. Almost all of the natural fibres used in the past are still available in their home location. The gathering, preparation, and dyeing of the fibres add to the satisfaction of the finished piece. Basketry offers the weaver the challenge of abstract sculptural effects, or the pleasure of making everyday functional objects to use and enjoy. ■

This essay originally appeared in the O.C.C. magazine, The Craftsman Vol 5 No.1 1980

GATHERING MATERIALS FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE

Gathering materials to use for basketry provides a link with mother earth, requiring 'a time to gather', 'a time to store' and of course 'a time to prepare and use' The following list is a seasonal guide.

One of the pleasures of using natural materials is that they are mostly a renewable resource, and often cutting them back each year improves the plant.

FALL TO EARLY SPRING

GRAPEVINE...grows over fences, up trees and is easily pulled out and cut. Keep in coils. Use when fresh or store outside. Soak if really dry. Cultivated grapevine is very good, pruning takes place in March.

WILLOW, DOGWOOD, SHRUB SHOOTS...cut first year shoots from 'when the leaves fall' to early spring. Willow etc. can be used fresh but it will shrink as it dries, ideally keep for 3-4 weeks in a dry cold then use. Alternatively dry completely, and soak from 5 - 10 days before using. If you want to peel off the bark for white willow, soak the willow shoots in water until the leaflets appear, then it can be easily peeled.

ALSO...Engelmann's ivy, Virginia creeper, brambles (remove the prickles with a cloth)

SPRING

BARK...the bark of most trees can be peeled off quite easily during the spring while the sap is rising. Cedar posts are peeled in the spring and can provide a good source. Remember, to remove bark from living trees may kill the tree. Look for new highway and housing developments or trees felled by storms. Bark can be cut into strips and stored in coils, soak for about 30 minutes before use.

ROOTS...this is also a good time to dig for roots. Spruce, cedar and some pine have shallow roots, dig down with a small trowel, then pull back the roots as far as possible. These can be peeled by heating or used 'as is'. Roots are stored in coils and soaked before use.

SUMMER

CATTAILS, RUSHES AND GRASSES...are all gathered during mid-summer when they are in their best condition and maximum height. Cut and dry them, store in a dry place. To prepare them for use, wet them thoroughly then wrap them in a damp towel. ALSO... daylilly, iris, gladiola, cornhusk leaves are also used.

ANYTIME

PINENEEDLES...As long as they are not under the snow, these can be gathered at any time, dried and stored. The longer the better! Dampen before use.

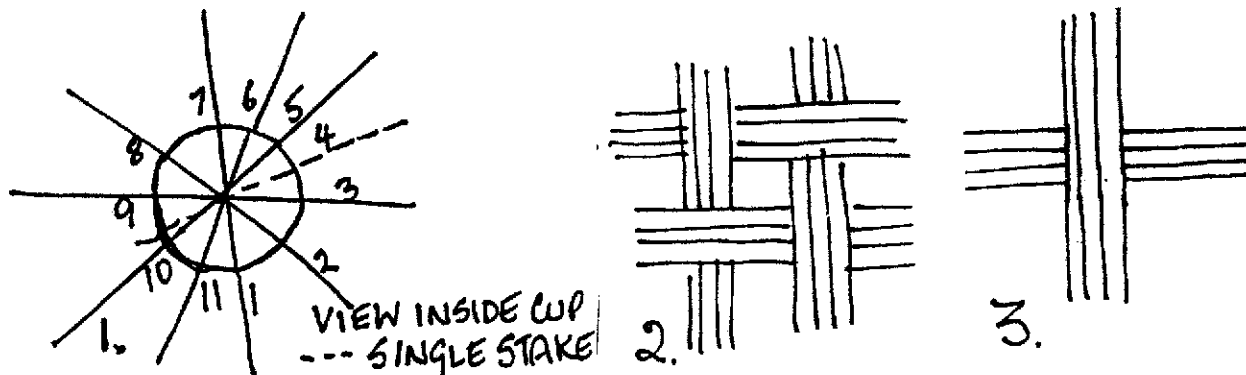


INSTRUCTIONS FOR THREE DIFFERENT STARTS FOR STAKE AND STRAND BASKETRY

1. Styrofoam cup method for a a small simple basket.
Cut 5 pieces of #3 reed 36" long, 1 pc. 20". Make 11 holes in the base of a cup and poke through. Put the short one on one side only. Start weaving with a long damp #2 weaver in randing. (over and under weave) Base should not exceed 5".

2. Square woven base for a decorative mat or basket.
Cut 16 pieces of #3 reed 36" long, and 2 pieces 20" long. Position in 4 groups of 4. Start weaving with one long damp #2 weaver. Over and under each group of 4 stakes three times, reverse and weave 3 more rows. For an odd # of stakes add the extra pair of stakes and start randing, dividing the groups of four into pairs.

3. Paired base for any size basket, good for natural materials.
Cut 8 pieces of #3 reed and place 4 over 4. Take a long #2 weaver and start to pair over 4 groups of four. After 2 rounds divide in pairs and weave for 3 - 4 rounds, now divide into single stakes. When the basket base is complete add bye-stakes and upstake.



General instructions.

Spaces between the stakes should never exceed 1", add bye-stakes and divide. If spaces get too small (less than 1/2" cut out every second stake.)

RANDING. (Also known as single weave or over and under weave), 1 weaver and must have an odd # of stakes.

CHASING. As above, but with 2 sets of weavers 'chasing each other' Chasing creates a block pattern when using 2 different colours.

PAIRING. (Also known as twining). 2 weavers, one in one space. The behind weaver passes over the 2nd weaver, behind the next stake and out to the front.

For even # of stakes, pairing creates blocks with 2 colours.
For odd # of stakes, pairing creates a swirl.

SMALL ROUND REED BASKET

An ideal introduction for adults or children into the making of a simple basket.
It takes about two hours.

MATERIALS

#2 dyed and soaked round reed for weavers
5 pcs #3 reed x 28" (do not soak)
#6 reed or 2 pcs #3 reed for handle (optional)
1 styrofoam cup

TO MAKE

Mark 11 dots around the base of the cup, then pierce with a knitting needle/awl. Poke the stake through each hole across the base, and centre the cup. Insert the short stake into the 11th hole so that it emerges for 1/2" beside another stake. (fig 1) Now wet the stakes.

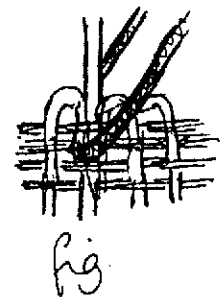
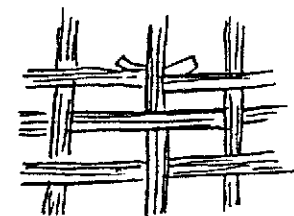
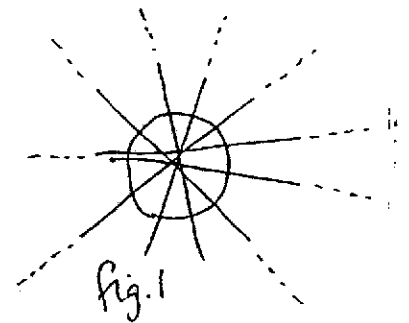
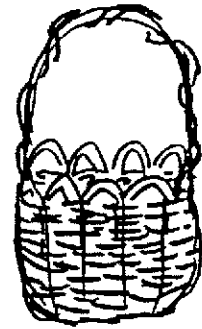
TO START WEAVING

Take a long weaver and insert the tip into a hole beside a stake. Hold the weaver close to the cup and start weaving over and under spiralling around the cup. Keep the rows of weaving close together. To join the weavers, leave the old end behind a stake, and start the new weaver behind the same stake. (fig. 2) These will be held in place by the following rows. The base should be woven flat for about 4", the cup is pulled off, the stakes re-wet and turned up and tied with a piece of yarn. Weave for a few more rows with the yarn in place, then remove it and continue to the desired height.

Keep weaving well packed together.

THE BORDER AND HANDLE

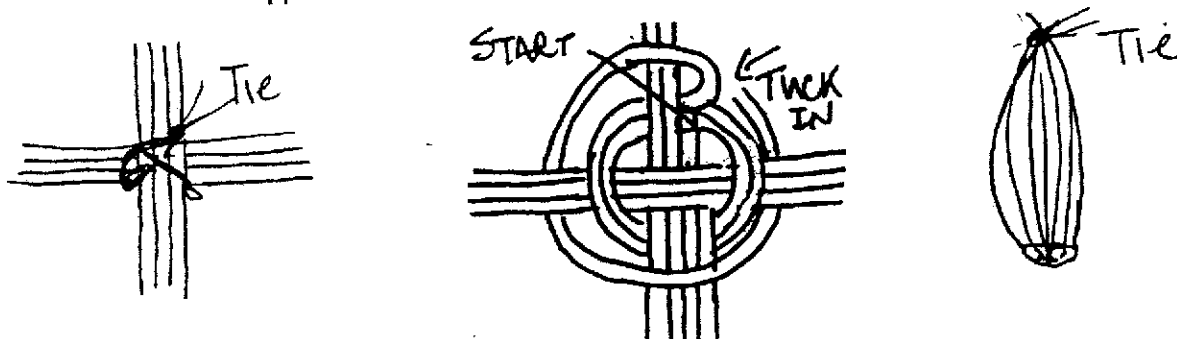
Soak the stakes then choose a scallop border. See P.4 To estimate the height of the handle, hold up a piece of reed over the basket, then add 3" for each side. Cut the reed, point the ends, and insert on opposite sides of the basket beside a stake. Take a long weaver, and insert half the length under 2 or 3 rows of weaving beside the handle (fig 3) Now wrap the 2 ends together across the handle and finish off by weaving in the ends on the opposite side. The purpose is to hold the handle in place as well as be decorative.



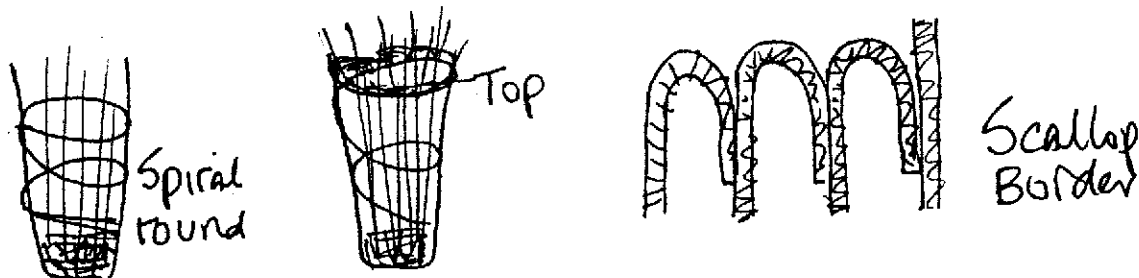
JAPANESE HANGING BASKET

Materials: STAKES – 6 pcs. #3 reed x 20" long
WEAVERS – several pcs. #2 reed. Soak all material.

Cross 3 stakes over 3 stakes in the centre and tie them together with a piece of yarn. Bend down one stake and weave 2 times around the 4 groups of stakes, now reverse the weaver and weave one round in the opposite direction. Tuck in the end under the previous row. See diagram.



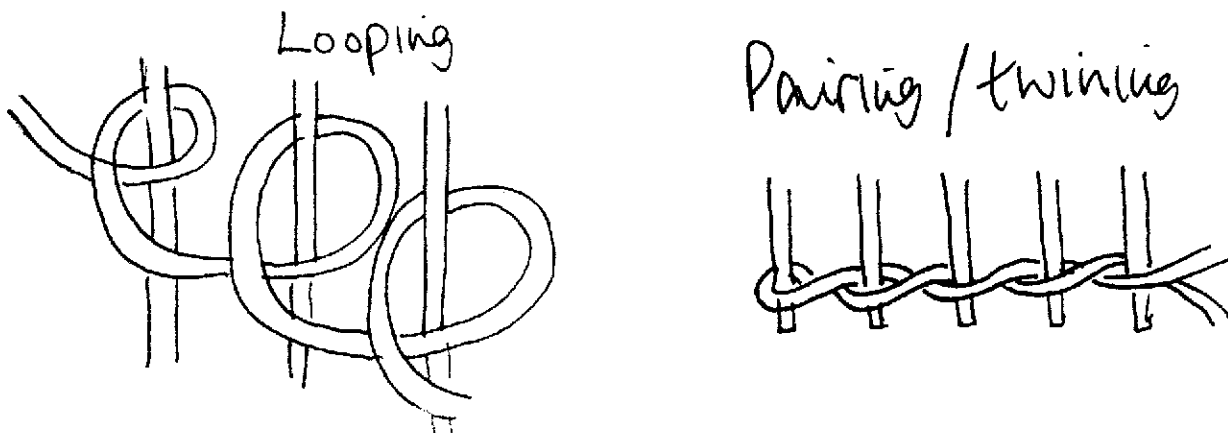
Tie up the stakes. Take a long weaver, bend it in half and fold around one stake. Start to twine (pair) with the two weaver sup the sides for about an inch. Untie the the stakes. Gradually spiral around and around the basket for about 3". (See diagram) Now work a few rows close together to form the top. End the weavers, or if they are long enough leave them to make the hanger.



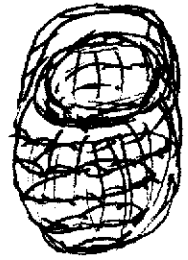
SCALLOP BORDER

Dampen the stakes and bend each one down beside the next stake. Trim the stakes if necessary. An alternative border is to bend each stake down behind the second stake, thus making a slightly more decorative border. Make a loop for the hanger.

TO DECORATE THE SIDES Take long pieces of coloured reed and loop the weaver around the stakes.



GARLIC BASKET



Use #1 round reed for both stakes and weavers

Cut 9 stakes 30" long

Place 4 over 5 and start weaving over and under for 4 rounds
Now add and second weaver and start pairing

First row: divide the groups of four stakes into pairs and
the groups of five stakes into pairs and triples

Second row: Divide pairs into singles and triples into
singles and pairs

Third row: Divide remaining pairs into singles

You are making a round ball shape
Continue for about 7 rows and then end weavers

BORDER

Wet stakes

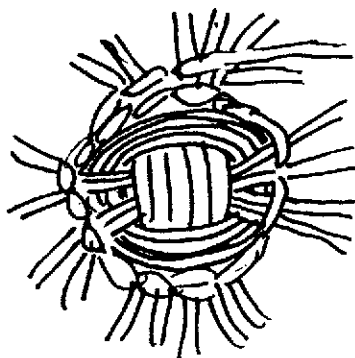
First row: Behind 2 and out to the front

Second row: Over 2 and down

Third row: As 2nd row

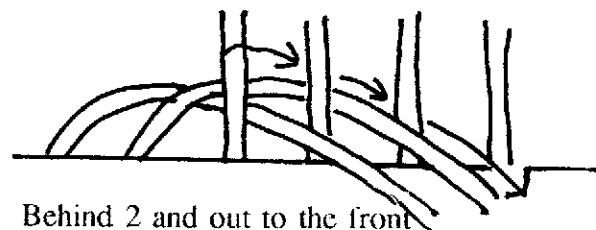
Cut stakes close to border, now flatten the ball shape.

HANDLE Take a long weaver and loop from one side to the
other, now wind the weaver back from side to side, leaving
an end at either side.



Start

GRETCHEN BORDER

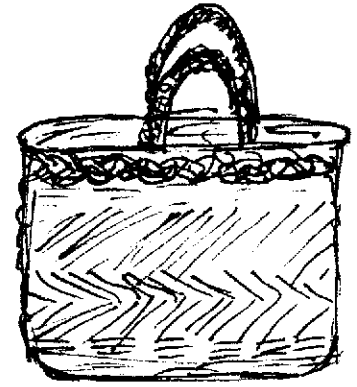


Behind 2 and out to the front



Over 2 and down

SHOPPING BASKET



Materials needed: #8 for base sticks and handles
#2 reed for weaving
#3 for stakes and base weaving
Flat reed for randing

TO MAKE THE RECTANGULAR BASE

Cut 10 base sticks 11 1/2" long in #8 reed and arrange in a screw block with double sticks both ends across a 6 1/2" width.

Weave with #3 reed, and centre a 48" stake (for both sides) across the base every inch. You should end up with about 12 stakes either side. Make sure that the stakes are close to both ends.

Trim the ends of the base and now insert about 6 stakes 20" in beside the ends of the base sticks. You need an EVEN number of stakes. If necessary wedge them in with a piece of reed. Soak the stakes, bend up and tie together.

TO WEAVE THE SIDES

Using #2 or #3 reed, weave 6 rows of triple weave (in front of two, behind one). Now cut 24" bye-stakes and insert one beside each stake. Weave one more row of triple weave.

CHASING

You need 2 weavers, possibly 2 different colours, or one round and one flat reed. Start with one weaver and weave around until you reach the beginning. Now insert the second weaver and weave with that weaver until you are back to the first, and then continue with the first. With 2 different coloured weavers you will make blocks of colour, to alter the blocks, change the position of the weavers.

FRENCH RANDING

Weave in one 20" piece of flat reed in each space going to the LEFT and mark the first and second pieces with a piece of yarn. At the end lift the two marked pieces up and insert the last two weavers. Weave around using each weaver in turn, and again lift the first and second weavers and weave in the last ones. To change directions make sure the weavers are damp, turn them backwards and weave in the opposite direction. WATCH THE SHAPE OF YOUR BASKET.

Continue to weave until the basket measures 12" or desired height. Insert 4 small handle pegs to keep a space for the handles. Soak the stakes and proceed with

THE BORDER

Take each of the long stakes in turn and pass them behind the next stake and out to the front. Then...take each of the upright stakes and do the three rod plain border. See P.

Turn the basket on the side and make a plaited border with the stakes. See P.

Cut 2 handles in #8 reed, point the ends and insert them where the pegs were. Rope the handles using well soaked #2 reed.

WEAVE YOUR OWN LAMPSHADES

Weaving a lampshade is exactly like making an upside down basket; the main consideration is how to attach the light fixture. These can be found in hardware or craft stores, and sometimes lighting stores sell them. Another idea is to find a second-hand lampshade and remove the fixture inside.

For table lamps, the easiest fixture is the one that squeezes onto the bulb with two wire circles. For hanging lamps, the best fixture is the ring with the spider centre. Both these types come in different sizes.

Usually 2.75 mm reed is sufficiently sturdy for the stakes, and 2.25mm round reed for the weaving, flat reed can also be used for a contrast texture. Coloured reed looks good in the daytime, but once the light is turned on the colour will disappear!

TO START A LAMPSHADE

First decide on the type, size and shape of your lampshade. To establish the length of the stakes, first decide on the length of the shade and ADD another 4" for the foot border (at the top) and ADD extra for your choice of border for the lower edge.

I suggest a single or double scallop, or a simple trac border. Probably 6" or 7" would be plenty. Take the fixture and draw around the outside of the ring on a piece of strong cardboard. Now mark with a pencil, and then using an awl/knitting needle push through a hole every 7/8" on the outer edger of the marked circle. Cut a stake for each hole.

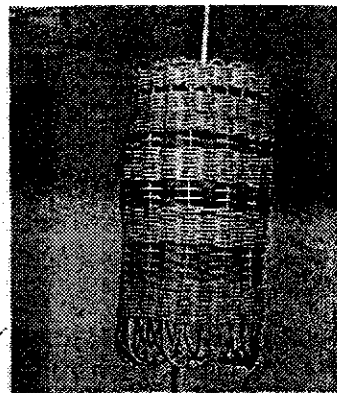
TO START THE WEAVING

Dampen the stakes, push sufficient reed through the holes to make a foot border (behind, in front, behind). Complete the round. Commence weaving (pairing is best) the top of the lamp shade for about an inch, then insert the fixture on the inside. Hold it in place by pairing around the cross pieces on both (or three) sides. It should hardly show on the outside. Now the basket is well established, the footborder can be dampened and undone, remove the cardboard and re-weave the trac border, or you may prefer to make a small scallop border which will hardly show. Weave on down to the lower edge, you may want to add fitching. Before completing the border, dampen the stakes and see above paragraph for chice of border.

For a wide flaring lampshade, add bye-stakes as the space between the stakes gets more the 1 1/2" apart. For a very narrow neck lampshade a chianti bottle can be used as a form.

We have used reed lampshades for years in our house with no problems, but I think that it is worth being cautious about preventing the light bulb from being too close to the reed.

The photos show a variety of lampshade, all made quite simply using the above method. Note that the fixture really does not show on the finished product.



BORDERS

TRAC BORDERS

Trac borders are generally used on stake and strand basketry and twined basketry. It is essential that the stakes to be turned down are well soaked and pliable. All trac borders can be made with a single or double stake.

SIMPLE TRAC BORDER (With three stakes.)

This border can also be used as a foot border on a wooden base or temporary base on cardboard.

Take the first stake BEHIND the next, in FRONT of the next and BEHIND the third stake. Leave about 1/2" tucked behind the third stake. Repeat all around the top and for the last stake, push up the first one so you can complete the round with no beginning or end.

VARIATIONS This border can be woven with a differing amount of behinds and in fronts. I.e. With two, it would be in front, behind. With 5 it would be behind, in front, behind, in front, behind.



START



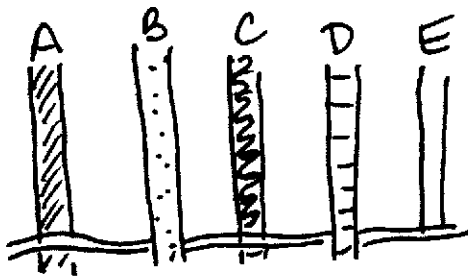
FINISH

JAPANESE BORDER

This border is really nice because it is done in separate stages, and each round is completed before the next is started. The first stage is to take every stake BEHIND the next one and left pointing out to the FRONT. The second stage is to take each stake over the next stake, over the next and then poked through to the inside of the basket. This can be the finish of the border, or the stakes can be woven over the next one and be poked out to the front hidden under the border above. This border is open to many variations.

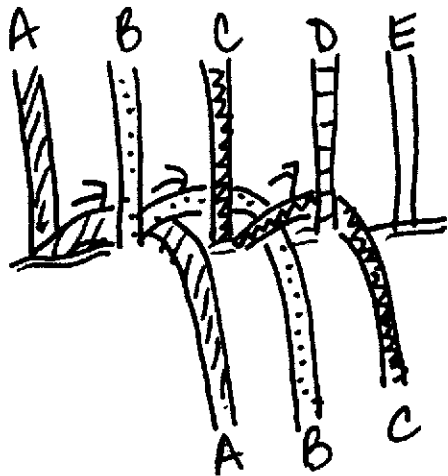


OTHER BORDERS See P.6 for the Gretchen border. P.10 for the 3-rod border, P.11 for the Braided border and P.12 for the Cedar bark border



THREE-ROD PLAIN BORDER

1. Bend one stake, A, down behind the next and out to the front. Bend down B, then C.



2. Take A in front to D and out behind E

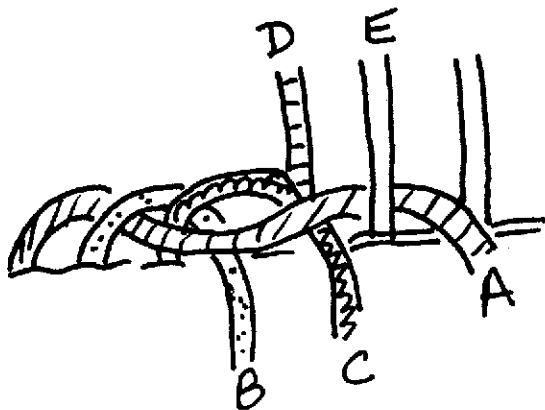
3. Bend down D and lie it down behind A

4. Continue round the border, leaving the "outside" stake behind each time (A in diagram 4)

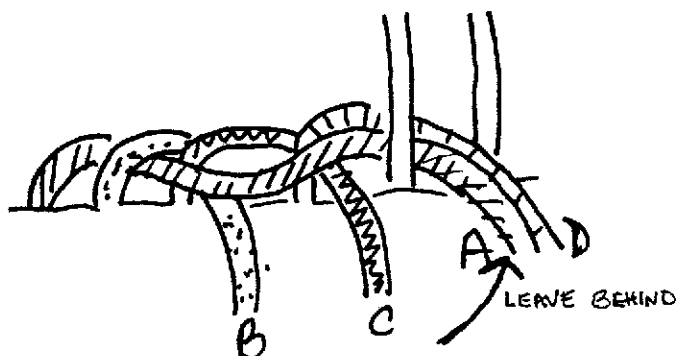
5. the last pair are taken under the first pair from the back.

TO COMPLETE THE BORDER

For Willow...take the next (in order) stake up to the space where it should go behind, crimp it with your nail, trim, leaving about 1", then cram it down beside the stake,



For Round Reed...place a piece of coloured reed in the three remaining empty spaces on the border. Take the next stake and pass it through to the inside of the basket and out beside the first coloured marker. Repeat for the last two remaining stakes. Trim all the ends close to the border.



Follow On... this is when the stakes which are all pointing out to the front, are woven over the next stake and back into the inside of the basket.

BRAIDED BORDER

Before starting the border really soak the stakes well, and prepare 2 markers 2" long, and 3 supplementary stakes 9" long.



Bend down first stake over marker. Add 9" supplementary stake above, leaving 2" at the top. Repeat for second stake.



Take first pair to inside and bend down third pair and supplementary.



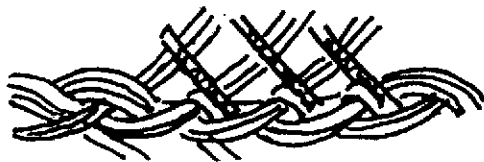
Start braiding two to the inside, bend down, two to the front.



Leave inside 3rd stake behind in the front. Continue around border.



At the end leave the last pair on the inside.



Insert last 2 prs. of stakes into the two spaces kept by the markers.



Take the short end of the supplementary stake and push it to the front beside the original stake.



Lastly! take the 2nd stake and bring it forwards to complete the 3 - strand braid. Trim and enjoy.

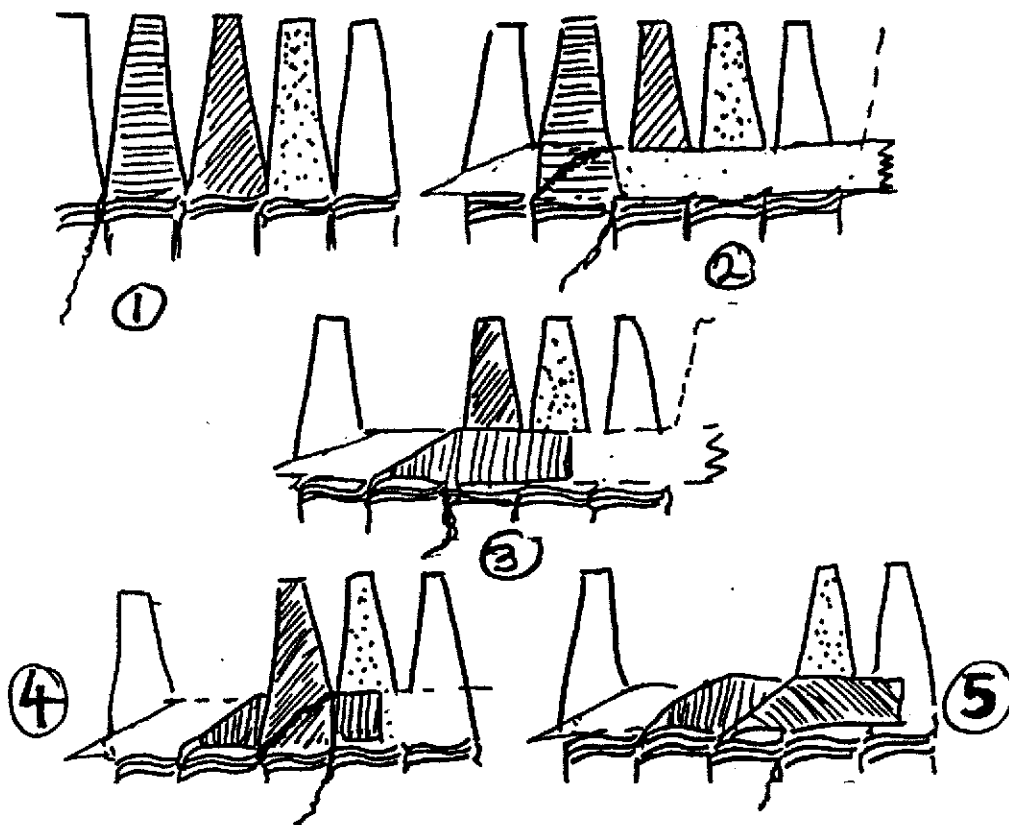
CEDAR BARK BORDER

This delightful border was taught to me by Katherine Armstrong who told me it was taught to her by Vi Phillips, a well known basketmaker and instructor from the West coast.

The joy of this border is that it completely hides the ends of the stakes, and gives a nice folded textural look to the outside of the basket, while maintaining a clean stitched look on the inside.

TO MAKE THE BORDER

Complete the last row of weaving and leave or attach a long end of raffia.* Trim the ends of the cedar stakes so that they will reach across two stakes when folded down. For a perfect border they should all be the same width. Cut a piece of bark, to line the inside of the border, a little longer than the circumference of the basket top and about the width of the stakes and taper one end.



Place the tapered end of the long piece of lining cedar bark in front of the stakes to the left of the raffia thread. Take the stake to the right of the thread and bring it in front of the lining cedar bark. ① + ②

1. Pass the raffia across diagonally to the opposite corner, behind the lining cedar and back to the front at the lower right corner.* ②

2. Fold the stake on a 45 degree angle to lie parallel with the lining bark. Now bring the second stake to the front and repeat 1. and 2. ③ ④ + ⑤

Continue around the basket. When the 2nd last stake is bent down, use a needle to thread through the raffia. The ends are carefully tucked behind the others in the correct order. Use a flat nail file to make an opening and push the last stake through.

* It is easier to complete the round if the first 2 stakes are not stitched too tightly.

Hats!

by Ankaret Dean

This is a fun guild project for the summer, or fall - with thoughts of Halloween. The materials are dyed #2 and #3 round reed with all kinds of additional materials added for interest or decoration.

Each guild member should bring a pair old clippers or small wire cutters, an awl or knitting needle and a tape measure.

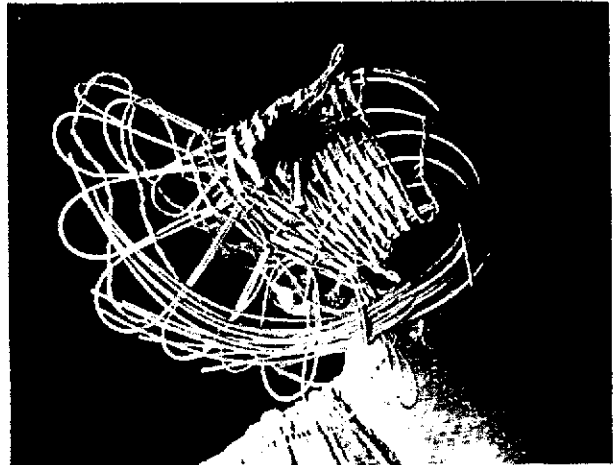
The idea for making hats came to me quite early in my basketry life when I realized that I had made a perfect cloche hat quite by accident!

VARIOUS DESIGNS FOR THE HAT

You may like to plan the style of your hat or just let it happen! However, it is important that it more or less fits. Take the tape measure and measure around your head where a hat usually sits. Either use the old geometry formula $\text{diameter} = \text{circumference} \div 3.14$, which means, if your head size is 22" then the diameter is 7". The finished measurement should be about a half inch more than the calculation. **THIS IS IMPORTANT** because it is very sad if you cannot get your hat on.



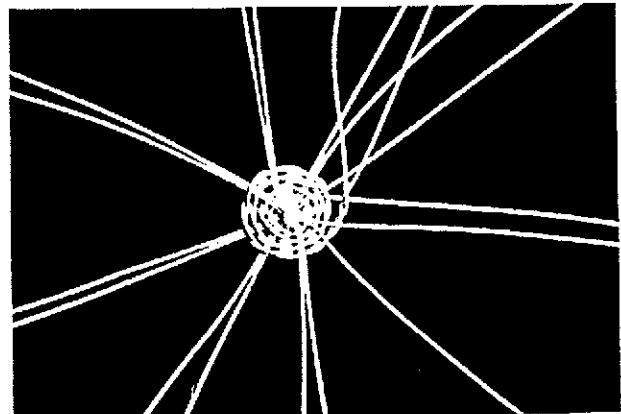
Cloche style design.



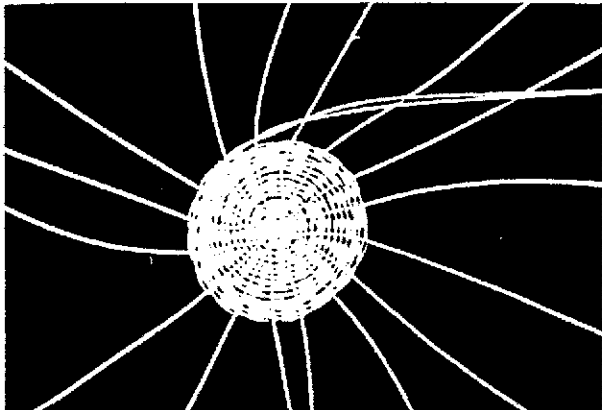
A free form design.

Now decide if you would like one of the shapes shown. Notice that in some models the crown is flat or curved, the sides are sloping out or straight, the brim is out at right angles or a downward slope. Notice too if you would like a brim with a large double scallop border or a small single scallop border. Now it is time to start.

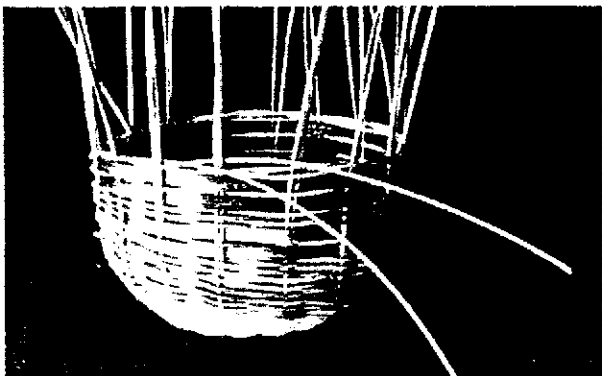
I generally start by cutting eight pieces of #3 round reed thirty inches long. Start the center of the hat just as you would a basket with pairing (#2 reed) a couple of rounds. Now divide the stakes into pairs, work a few more rows and divide the stakes into singles.



Continue out until the base is about 2" less than the desired diameter and start turning up the stakes, keep a very careful check with tape measure.

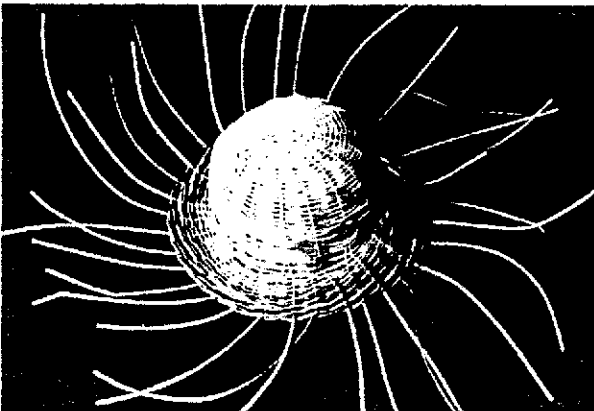


If your base is flat and turned up a right angles, then the base needs to be almost the correct head size. By the time the hat is ready to flare out for the brim, the hat can be tried on for size.

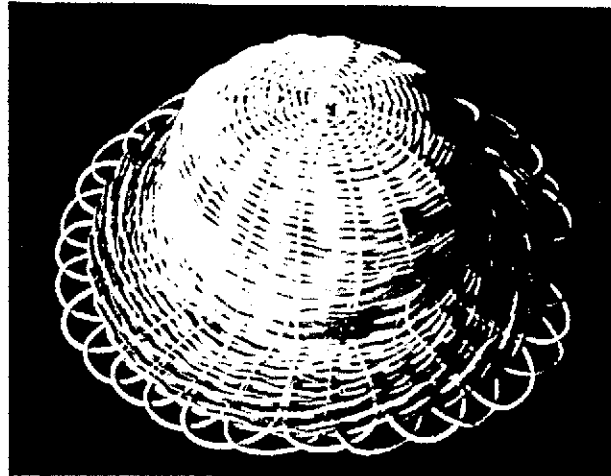


TO START THE BRIM

Cut by-stakes and insert each beside a stake.



Soak the stakes. Decide on the flare of the brim and bend the stakes over, pair each stake singly.



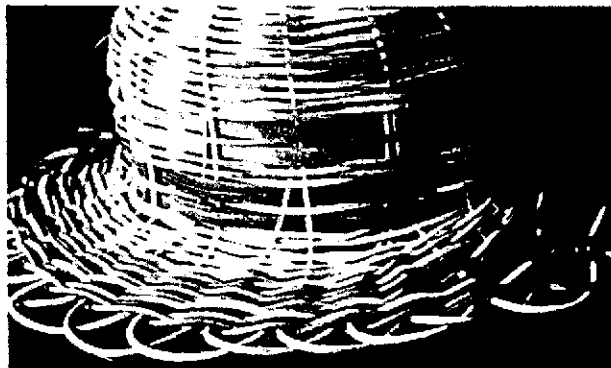
Continue weaving the brim out until it is what you like, then soak the stakes again.

THE BORDER

Choose which border you prefer and trim the stakes if necessary. Use an awl to insert the stakes, and be careful not to let them crack.

IDEAS FOR PATTERN

Either use a selection of colors or perhaps a variety of different textures. If the number of stakes is even and two colors are used a block pattern will develop. Use chasing for working with two different textures. (One weaver doing single weave behind a similar weaver.)



Wear and enjoy your hat!

This article originally appeared in The News Basket. Vol 5 No.4 1988.

TWO CEDAR BASKETS

By Ankaret Dean

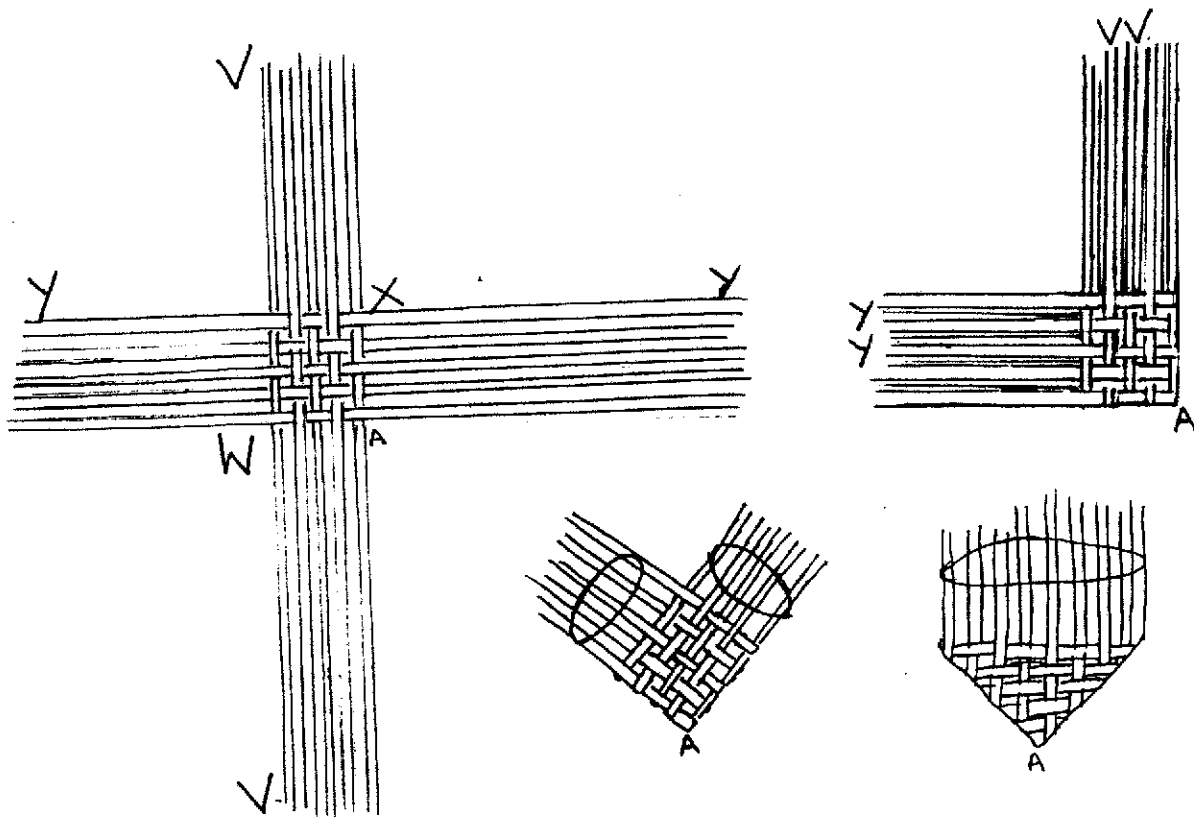
These two cedar baskets both originate from the same start, and both designs come from the Choctaw Indians who used river cane for their material. Cedar bark is an ideal substitute as it is readily available in our area and is a nice, nice material to use. Other materials such as flat reed, palm leaves or strips of cardboard could also be used. These baskets may be varied by weaving the base in a 2/2 twill, twisted grass and/or bark can be introduced for colour and texture.

To make the base.

Prepare 10 strips of cedar 1/2" wide x 18" long.

Arrange the strips on a board so that 5 pcs. weave across the other 5 pcs. as shown in the diagram. In order to fold across the 2nd set of weavers they must be set up so that YX equals XY and VW equals WV. See diagram.

Clip the corners with clothes pegs, and start folding the long pieces back over each other starting in corner A and keeping the weave correct. You should now have a little triangular pouch.



FOR THE ELBOW BASKET Twine around both 'baskets' to secure the base, then weave up with cedar bark/raffia. See P.12 for border.

FOR POUCH BASKET Open out the base so that the sides become the centre and vice

GRAPEVINE RIB BASKET

Materials: About 7 x 6 ft. pcs of grapevine, 4-6 oz flat 1/4" reed.

TO PREPARE

Make 2 hoops about 10" in diameter. Choose which half will be the handle and mark. Cut 4 ribs a few inches longer than half the circumference. Soak a few pieces of flat reed.

TO MAKE THE GODS EYE

Start by poking an end of the reed into a twist in the grapevine, and wrap around. Take the weaver across the centre to wrap around the next grapevine, across to the next and wrap around. See diagram. ALWAYS in the same direction and ALWAYS round the one you reach out to. Build the flat reed out slowly, and keep the tension tight. Before making the second god's eye, make sure the handle is centered and in the right position.

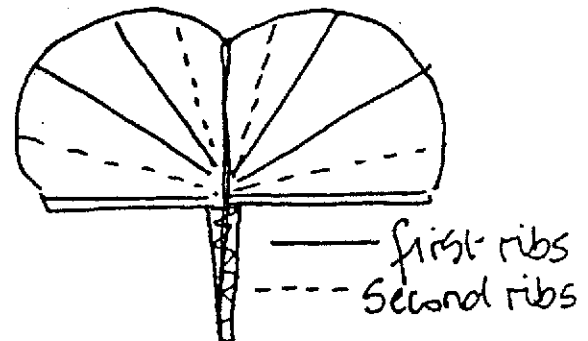
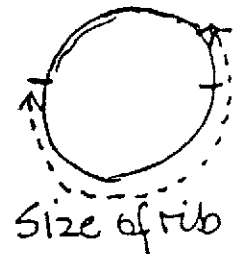
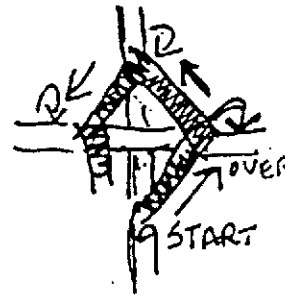
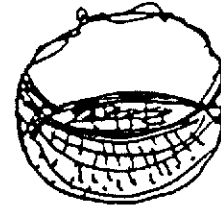
TO START WEAVING

Place the basket upside down on your knee. Insert 2 ribs on each side of the base hoop to give the shape to the basket. See diagram. Weave about 5 rows at one end, then reverse the basket on your knee and very carefully check the length of the ribs, then weave another 5 rows.

Now add 2 more ribs on either side. These do not have to go into the god's eye, they slip down beside the base and rim hoop. Continue weaving until you notice a large space, then add more. You cannot have too many ribs. To join the flat reed, poke the flat reed up beside a rib and add a new one beside it.

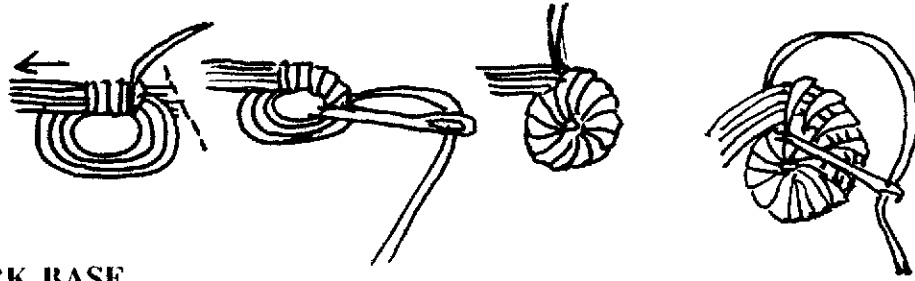
TO FILL IN WEAVING

Where the bulge is large it is necessary to fill in the weaving by doing a turn-about. Weave over the bulge, then turn back for 3 or 4 ribs, now turn back to the original direction and continue as usual. Do both sides on the same row. The number of turn-backs depends on the size of the bulge. Weave from both ends at once and the basket should be completed at the centre.

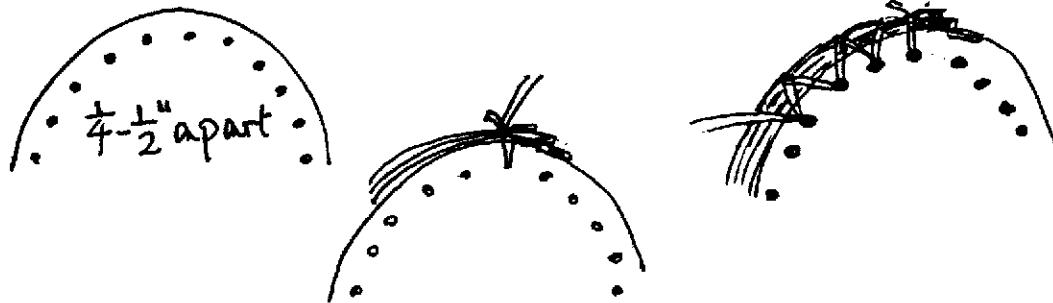


PINNEEDLE BASKETRY

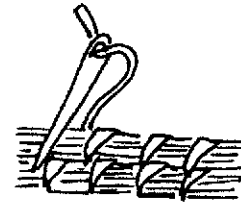
A ROUND BASE



A BIRCHBARK BASE



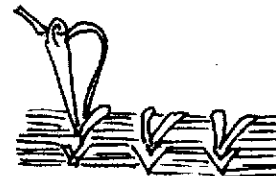
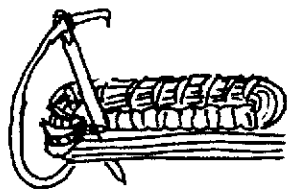
AN OVAL BASE



STRAIGHT STITCH



SPLIT STITCH



WHEAT STITCH

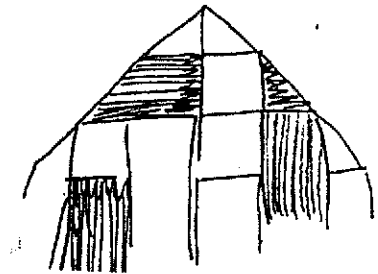
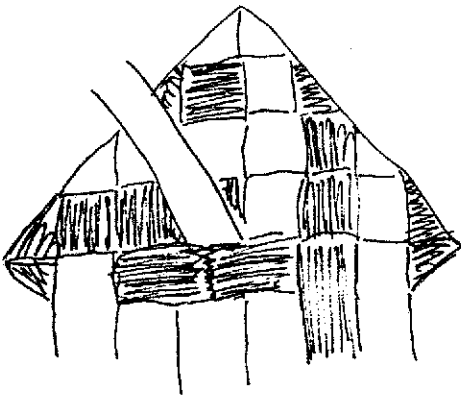
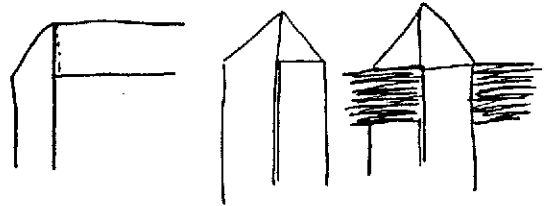
DIAGONAL PLAITING

FLAT SINGLE LAYER MAT

1. Make newspaper strips 1" wide (4 layers thick)
OR select equal sized cattails. You need:
4 for a small mat and 8 for a small basket

2. Fold in half.

3. Fold the right hand side back under itself for a 45° angle. See diagram

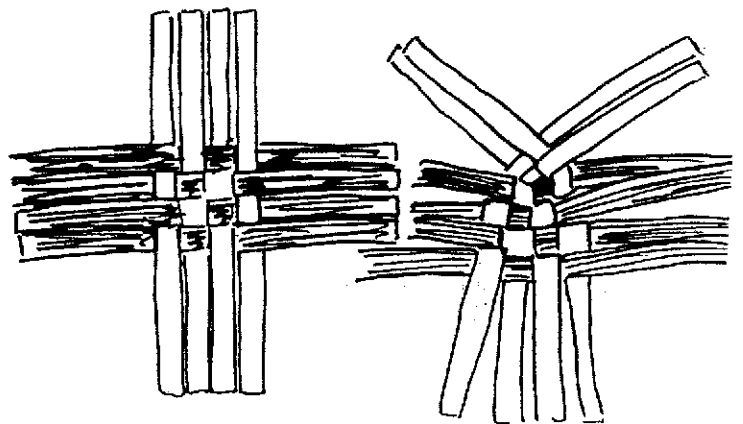


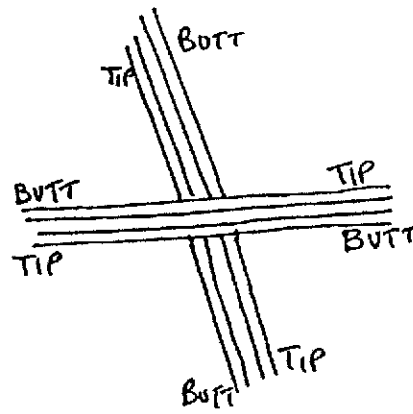
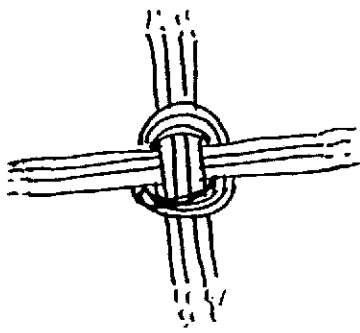
4. Add a new strip by weaving across, centre the strip, now turn down the sides, repeating the fold exactly above on each side.

5. The last strip is woven in and down as above, then the sides fold back across. The right side turns UNDER and the left side turns OVER. They over lap and are trimmed off.

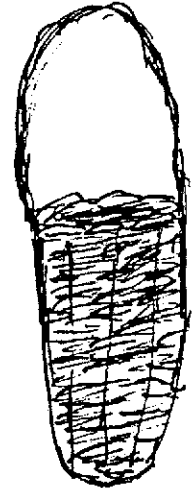
DIAGONAL PLAITED BASKET

1. Weave strips together and pin or clothes peg the corners together.
2. Take the centre pair of one side and cross over. and weave each strip together. (See diagram) This becomes the corner of the basket base. Secure with pin or peg.
3. Repeat for each side, you now have 4 corners.
4. Now weave between the corners.
5. Work up the basket to desired height.
6. At the top, cross two over each other and fold them back tucking them under the row below. OR for a double walled basket simply weave them back exactly over and under the row below on the outside.





4 stakes about 24"-30".



HOW TO MAKE A BERRY BASKET OR POTTLE

Summertime is traditionally time to pick wild berries, and what is better than making a little gathering basket right there on the spot? The only tool you will need is a knife or pair of clippers. Search around for first-year shoots, willow or any shrub is best, you will need about 12 shoots about 18" - 24" and not more than 1/4" in width at the thick (butt) end.

Select 4 shoots for stakes, and arrange them 2 over 2 in the centre. (See diagram) Now take a fine shoot and weave it around these 4 stakes so that they are locked together, poke the end back into the centre to fasten the weaving.

Select 2 weavers, divide the pairs of stakes into single stakes and starting with the fine (tip) end begin to pair. (See diagram) For a pottle, turn the stakes up immediately and continue up the sides, keeping a 'cone' shape. For a wider basket make a couple of rounds on the base before turning up the basket. Join the weavers by tip to tip or butt to butt. Do not use the very thick ends. Weave half way up the side (about 2" - 3") turn over 2 of the stakes to make the handle. Poke one down beside an opposite stake then take the opposite stake and twist it around the first one, before poking it down into the weaving.

Complete weaving the sides (5"). To make the border trim the stakes so that they can be either woven in a trac border, (behind, in front, behind) or simply bent over (carefully!) and poked down beside the next or next but one stake.

Remember that this little basket is made of fresh material, as it dries so it will shrink and appear loosely woven. As it is drying simply push it gently down to tighten it up.

SWEDISH ROOT BASKETRY

By Ankaret Dean

The Swedish tradition of using roots for coiled basketry has a long history. Birch roots are used for fine work, while the roots of the spruce are used for rib basketry and coarser mats. The nomadic Sami people from Lapland used birch root basketry to make small lidded containers for precious objects, as well as for making coverings for various articles, such as salt bottles and flasks. One of the most important uses was that of making a strainer for cheese made from reindeer milk. In the Nordic Museum in Stockholm there was a display of a reindeer loaded up for travelling, and there on its back, hung a large coiled root basket. Almost black in colour, it must have been used for straining cheese over a period of many years.

Gathering birch roots can be done at anytime when the ground is soft. When I visited Sweden last June our class took off to explore a swampy wet area, where there were many small, 5 - 6 ft. high birch trees. Because of the wet ground the roots were mostly close to the surface and also there were very few stones and rocks. We used a long hooked tool to probe the soil.

First we found a small tree and started to probe in a circular fashion around the tree, this usually ensured that the roots would be birch roots. The evergreen tree roots smelt quite different and were darker in colour when peeled. We pursued the root back to the tree and out to its furthest distance before cutting it off with a knife. The entire root was wound into a coil before putting it into a plastic bag. The roots should not be allowed to dry out before they are peeled.



Arriving back, with muddy hands and feet, and a big green plastic bag full of what we hoped were birch roots, the first job was to peel them. Sitting on a stool, we placed a square of old leather or heavy fabric on our thigh and using the back of a jack-knife, (a penknife is useless unless the blade can be locked open), we pressed down on the root as it was drawn under the back of the blade. This loosens the peel. If the root was very curly from twisting around stones it had to be scraped, but mostly the peel just slid off revealing a beautiful white root. The little hairs, periphery roots, may be removed too, as the ideal root for basketry is smooth and straight. At first, we peeled a variety of sizes, but as we became more experienced in coiling, we were able to select the best roots for our work. Once peeled, the roots were again wound into little coils and could be dried and stored for use.

TO MAKE A COILED BIRCH ROOT MAT

The roots must be soaked for a short while before using (as with round reed).

The only tools required are:

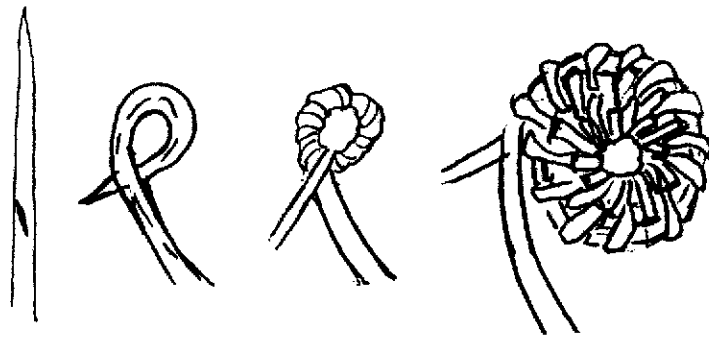
1. A sharp awl for piercing the roots. We used a lovely reindeer horn awl, but a metal awl will suffice.

2. A knife for cutting or splitting the roots.

Select a medium thick root for the core, and sharpen one end. Now EITHER choose a fine root for the wrapping root, OR a slightly larger one and split it in half. To do this, make a cut across the centre of the thicker end, then using two hands split the root into two halves. This takes a little practice!

To make the start, slice the end of the core, and pierce a little opening about an inch from the end. Take the end, poke it through the end to form a little circle. Now take the wrapping root, secure the end in the opening, wrap the join and bind around the circle. You are now ready to start coiling.

As with other coiling methods there are many different techniques. We started by making two or three wraps around the core, then going into the centre of the circle. After the first round, the awl was used to pierce the core below, and the end of the wrapping root was poked through. Our first

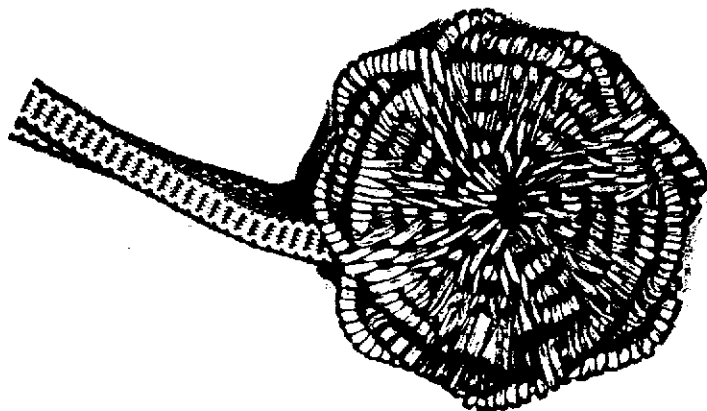


sample mat was made using this method. The last row was ended by slicing down the root core until it finally ended.

Usually in root basketry the core is completely covered. The core can easily be spliced together to join another root. To join the wrapper, simply poke the old and new ends into the core.

To create a cheese strainer, a double core would be used, and a knot stitch to hold the rows apart.

For fine work small un-split roots are used. See the picture below of a neckpiece with twisted border.



SKEP MAKING

By Ankaret Dean

Basketmaking as we know it today is very much more limited in scope than it was before the Industrial Age. Structures were easily made from strong pliable saplings, and so it is not surprising to learn that the original beekeepers in England made their beehives, which were called alevearies, from willow or hazel. They were conical in shape and then coated, both inside and out with 'cloam or cloome', the recipe for which was quoted by Rev. Charles Butler in 1609 "cow cloom tempered with gravelly dust or sand, or ashes".

The straw skep originated in Europe and was introduced to England by the Anglo-Saxons. The name 'skep' originated from the Norse word 'skeppa' meaning a measure or container equal to half a bushel.

Bees are not native to North America, and the Indians, never having seen them before, called them "English flies". The first record of bees being imported to the U.S. is in 1638, and by the end of the 17th century most kitchen gardens included several skeps to provide honey for the household.

The demise of the straw skep was due to the new wooden hive with movable frames developed in England by Langstroth. This hive offered the beekeeper the advantage of being able to inspect the inside of the beehive and detect disease which was rampant in many areas at that time. Thus the straw skep was relegated to use as a swarm catcher, and is still used in this capacity today.

The skep is identical to other coiled straw baskets, known in England as 'lipwork', derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'leap' meaning basket. In North America straw or lipwork baskets can be found in areas settled by European immigrants. A coiled straw basket is traditionally used for raising bread, presumably because of the nice warm insulation of the straw.

The straw used for coiling should be cut about two weeks before the farmer harvests the crop. Winter wheat or rye are the best, and the longer the stalk the better. The grain heads can be cut off and fed to chickens or birds. The straw stores well in a dry place, but remember the birds or mice will enjoy the grain if it is left on. For coiling, the straw simply needs to be sprinkled with water, not wet down and mellowed like rushes and cattails. Straw discolours with constant wetting. Other materials used for the core are Common Reed *phragmites communis*, but it needs to be cut during the summer before it becomes strong and brittle. Traditionally bramble was used for the binding, but today binding chair-cane or 1/4" flat reed is more easily available and much easier to use.

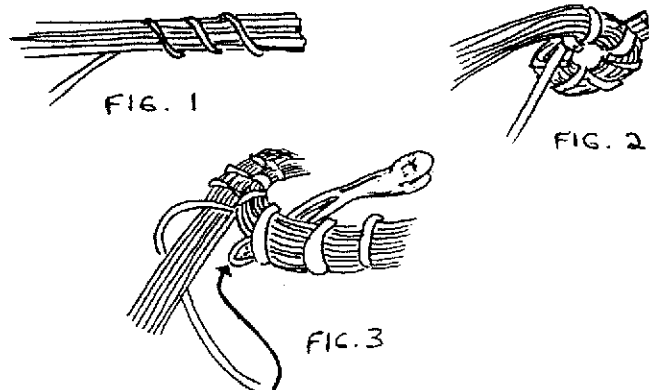
Skep-making tools are simple and can be handmade. First, a 1 1/2" gauge is needed to control the size of the core and keep it all together. A cow's horn with the end sawn off was the traditional gauge, but today it is extremely difficult to find! A wooden table napkin ring is about the right size, or it is possible to buy a piece of plumbing tube. For stitching the chair-cane or reed through the straw core a hollow awl is required, and it is quite possible to make a traditional hollow bone awl from your Christmas turkey drumstick. See instructions on p.24.

TO START THE SKEP

Soak the reed for a few minutes, and sprinkle the straw with water. The grain heads or husks should be snapped off and if you want a perfect skep the leaves should be removed as well. Select about 20 pieces of straw and with a long piece of cane/reed start the binding about 2" from the butt ends tightly wrapping over the loose end of the reed, (see fig. 1). When sufficient length has been wrapped, form a small anti-clockwise circle and using the awl stitch into the first binding, (see fig. 2).

Now continue to take the coil anti-clockwise stitching under the remaining bindings and through the centre of the straw core. This is done by placing the awl under the stitch behind the core, and pushing the end of the wrapping cane into it from the front. Then, when the awl is withdrawn the end of the cane can be grabbed and pulled through, (see fig. 3). I hold the work so that the end of the straw is pointing to the RIGHT and the awl is inserted from back to front, others insert the awl from the front and poke the binding cane in from the back.

When the first circle is complete pull tightly on the butt ends of the straw; these can be cut back once the work is firm. Also the gauge can now be slid over the core and additional straws can be gradually inserted butt ends first into the centre of the core until the gauge is filled up. As the work continues extra bindings will have to be added as the circle increases.



At a diameter of about 9" a start should be made to shape the shoulder, prior to building the side walls. This is done by placing the coil slightly on top of the previous row. A traditional skep will measure about 12" across and 10" deep. To end the skep, stop adding any more straws when the sides measure 9" and then the straw will gradually taper off.

A relatively modern method of beginning a flat topped skep is to use a circle of wood about 4" across with 3/8" holes drilled around the circumference, about 3/4" apart. The coil is started directly onto the base and the binding pulled through the holes.

Because of the current bee disease problems, keeping bees in skeps is not recommended, however a skep is a useful piece of equipment for catching swarms. The shape fits under a hanging swarm, it is light and easy to carry up a ladder or into a tree, the bees can hold onto the straw with their feet and not slip, and it is dark and warm inside.

An excellent reference book is SKEPS, Their History, Making and Use, by Frank Alston. Published by Northern Bee Books, Scout Bottam Farm, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire. U.K. 1987. ISBN 0-907908-38-1

HOW TO MAKE A BONE AWL or WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CHRISTMAS TURKEY DRUMSTICK

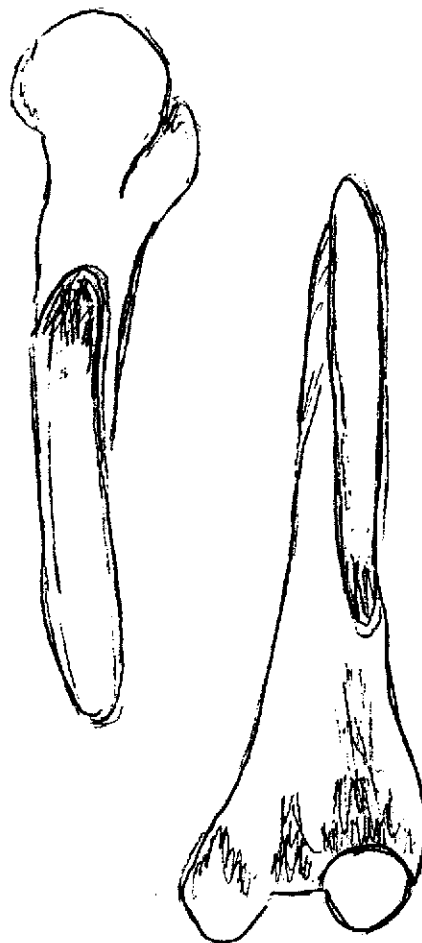
Keep the turkey thigh bone and simmer slowly until all the tendons and gristle can be removed.

Check the drawing and place the 'handle' of the awl in the vice in the correct position so that it is firmly held.

Starting about 4" from the end of the joint mark the line for the cut. Then, using a hack saw, make a diagonal cut about 2-2 1/2" long.

File or sandpaper the rough edges.

Keep it away from your dog!



COLOUR AND WEAVE IN BASKETRY^{*}

SINGLE WEAVE, using ONE weaver. Also known as RANDING or OVER AND UNDER WEAVE.

Use to make stripes of colour round the basket. Variations can be made to change size of stripe or gradate the proportions.

PAIRING, using TWO weavers. Also known as TWINING.

ODD number of stakes: 2 colours makes a swirl pattern.

EVEN number of stakes: 2 colours makes a block pattern.

The position of the block pattern can be changed by: cutting and restarting colours in alternate positions, or by cheating. The size of the blocks can be changed by dividing or doubling the stakes. i.e. Divide the bye-stakes and the blocks becomes smaller.

CHASING, using 2 separate weavers with an EVEN number of stakes, the first weaver weaves a complete round of SINGLE weave, and is followed by the second row of single weave by the second weaver. The two weavers create a block pattern. An interesting variation is to use 2 weavers of different size, i.e. 1/4" flat with round reed to create blocks of texture.

CHAIN PAIRING, using double weavers, both different colours. Reverse the second row of pairing. It is best using an ODD number of stakes. otherwise cheat.

TRIPLE WEAVE, using three weavers. Also known as three-rod upsetting and whaling.

of stakes divisible by 3: a block pattern, see above for variations of blocks.

of stakes divisible by 3 + 1: a good swirl on the inside, but a poor one on the outside.

of stakes divisible by 3 + 2: a good swirl on the outside and a poor one on the inside.

Variation is to reverse the swirl and create zig-zags. Have to cut the weavers and restart.

CHAIN TRIPLE. Effective as an overall pattern with three different colours with an even number, reverse every second row.

*These notes were prepared for, and handed out, at CONVERGENCE '86

Method of drafting colour and weave effects. Allow a block for each stake, select # of stakes. For triple weave take the first 'weaver' in front of 2, behind 1, to end of stakes and continue in a spiral from one row to the next.



21 stakes (divisible by 3)



22 stakes (" " 3 + 1)



23 stakes { " " 3 + 2 }

FRENCH RANDING, using one weaver in each space all round the basket, weave up the sides in single weave.

This technique introduces the possibility of making a coloured stripe on the diagonal.

By altering the number of coloured weavers in a row the size of the stripe can be altered.

By reversing the weavers all on the same row it will create a zig-zag.

OVERLAY, using 2 fine weavers to overlay a wide weaver.

All weavers have to be woven at once. The wide weaver goes behind one stake, and then the 2 fine weavers cross and go behind the next stake, then the wide weaver etc etc.

INLAY EFFECTS.

Using single weave INLAY pattern effects can be woven. The joins can be interlocked or left as slits. The pattern can be drafted on graph paper.

FISH TRAP TECHNIQUE

Using one strong weaver to wind around the stakes, 2 fine coloured weavers are crossed in front of a stake, behind the next stake, crossed etc. etc. There are varieties of this technique.

COLOURED STAKES.

Coloured stakes give a coloured border.

They can be used to highlight a negative area.

They can be taken down the outside of the basket and finished off as a foot border.

They can be added as bye-stakes. Two coloured stakes can be used to make a two different coloured borders. E.g, a natural three-rod- plain as a top border and a coloured braid on the side border.

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T – denotes technique D – denotes design

SUPPLIERS

W.H.Kilby, 1840 Davenport Rd. TORONTO. 656-1065 Most basket supplies

D.L.Reed, 153 Colbeck St. TORONTO 763-1079 Reed and handles

English Basketry Willows RFD.1, Box 124A South New Berlin NY13843 Willow/books/tools

Jeannie McFarland PO Box 159, Thorne Bay, Alaska 99919 Pine needles/kits/books

Joanne Page Basketry 820 Albee Rd. Nokomis, FL 34275 All basketry- wonderful raffia