

FRANKLIN COUNTY 4-H



BASKETRY PROJECT



Revised 2014

THE STORY OF BASKET WEAVING

Basket weaving, or basketry, is one of our very oldest crafts. Perhaps a primitive woman who lived in the dawn of humanity gathered a few stems or vines and twisted them together, starting the first basket.

Later this elementary knowledge of weaving was applied to other fibers and led to the development of cloth weaving. The field of ceramics may well have developed from basket weaving, too, as we know that people of many cultures wove baskets, then pressed a layer of wet clay inside them and baked them in a fire until the basket material burned away, leaving a clay pot.

Among the ancient specimens of basketry is a piece of coiled basketry lining from a grain storage pit in Egypt which dates back to 12,000 B.C. North American Indians wove seines of reed-like material and used them to catch fish for food and for fertilizing their crops. Primitive South Americans made such tightly woven baskets that they served as water containers and the water was heated by dropping in hot stones.

Long years ago the inhabitants of the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys made basket-like boats which were light and easy to handle. Some of these were covered with tightly stretched animal hides.

Ancient Greeks made baskets to use in their religious services, for harvesting grain and for babies' cradles. To be cradled thus was considered an omen of future wealth and prosperity. The Gauls made basketry carts large enough to be

pulled by two horses for traveling, and also wove shields to serve as armor when they went into battle.

The Bible tells us that the Israelites were commanded to offer the first fruits of their land in baskets as sacrifices. The wealthy people had containers made from silver and gold in the form of baskets, while the poorer classes made baskets of willows. The baby Moses was found in a basket made of bulrushes, daubed with pitch.

Baskets have played their part in the love affairs of people of many lands. One story tells how the Lord Mayor of London during the reign of Queen Elizabeth had his daughter imprisoned because she wished to marry a man not approved by her father. Her lover arranged to have her smuggled out in a large bread basket and they were married.

In Germany it was a custom for girls to lower a basket by a cord from their windows to receive gifts from their lovers. When an unwelcome suitor appeared, the maiden let down a basket with a loose bottom which would fall out when the present was put inside. Later girls expressed their distaste for unwelcome lovers by sending them a basket without a bottom and the phrase "to give a basket" was used to mean giving a refusal. Today we sometimes hear the phrase "fell through" used to refer to a plan that failed.

BASKET WEAVING TODAY

A growing interest in crafts, plus the widespread use of basketry in fashion accessories and interior decorating, has led to the popularity of basket making

today. People are weaving articles of all types and sizes – from tiny little baskets (to be filled with artificial flowers and worn as earrings) to place mats, bread baskets, planters, purses – and even big items like fireside baskets, magazine racks and folding screens! Basket weaving is enjoyable for many reasons .

It's SIMPLE – anyone can do it!

It's INEXPENSIVE – requires no costly, hard-to-get-tools!

It's PERSONALIZED – every craftsman achieves slightly different results!

It's QUICK – holds the interest of even the most impatient craftsman!

It's CHALLENGING – intricate designs make it fun for the person who likes to spend more time on each craft article!

BASKET WEAVING MATERIALS

People of many countries have long used their own native materials for making baskets. Perhaps you have seen baskets made of pine needles, bamboo, sweet grasses, raffia and straw. Our rural grandparents split thin layers of hickory and soaked these strips well to weave sturdy baskets for carrying feed and for other farm uses. They also braided clean, smooth corn husks together to form mats and small baskets.

Small sassafras trees can be used to make baskets by cutting the tree, stripping away the bark, and then pounding the trunk to loosen thin layers of wood. These are peeled from the trunk and woven while they are still damp.

Willow shoots or native vines, such as the wild honeysuckle, can also be made into baskets. Gather long pieces and allow them to dry if you want your basket to have the rustic look the bark gives. If you want a smoother-looking basket with a rich color, boil the pieces to transfer the color from the bark to the pith, then peel the bark away. Soak before weaving.

One of the easiest materials for the beginner to use is basket reed. It is made from rattan, a tropical vine growing in wet, hot areas. The vines range from 1/8 inch to one inch in diameter and may be up to five hundred feet in length. They become attached to trees by sharp thorns on the under-side of their leaves. The vine is harvested and allowed to stand until the bark can be peeled away. Next, the inner bark is cut off in long, thin strips. These strips are shiny and smooth on the outside and are used to weave seats in chairs and to make rattan furniture.

Basket reed is made from the center, or pith, of the vine. It may be round, oval or flat. The round reed is most popular. Reed is made in standard sizes ranging from No. 00 to No. 15, with the smaller size having the smaller diameter. Extra large sizes are available for handles and heavy spokes. Spokes are usually about two sizes larger than the weavers.

SELECTING REED

Reeds vary in quality. It is best to choose firm reed that has a smooth surface.

Reeds vary in color also. Some people like to use various shades in a basket to give an interesting effect. However, if you want your basket to be of one color

you will need to select your reed carefully. Dark reeds are best suited for baskets which will be enameled or stained. Many handicraft companies now carry a good line of basket reed.

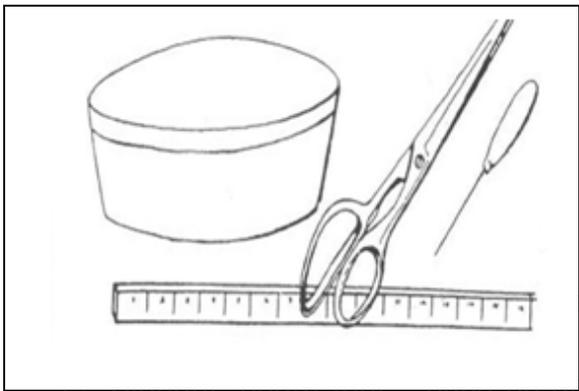
CARE AND PREPARATION OF REED

Reed is sold mostly in one-pound hanks. The cost per pound is greatest for the small diameter reed. It is best to buy reed in quantities which you can use up soon, since it becomes brittle with age. Hang the reed in a cool dark place until you are ready to use it.

Put the reed in luke-warm water about 15 minutes before it is needed. Weavers should be wound into circles about 8 to 10 inches in diameter for soaking, to prevent tangling. Avoid using hot water or prolonged soaking, because either of these will cause the reed to become rough-textured and brittle. If the reed becomes dry while it is being used, moisten it with a sponge or dip it in the warm water.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Equipment for making beginners' baskets can be very simple. You will need . . .



ice pick, nut pick or nail.

3. Cutting tool – heavy shears, sharp knife, pliers with cutting edge or pruning shears.
4. Ruler.

COLORING REED

Reed may be colored before it is woven into baskets. The true craftsman may wish to develop his own dyes, using poke berries for shades of purple, walnut hulls for tawny browns, etc. Ordinary fabric dyes will also work well. If you wish to have different shades of the same color to give your basket a tweedy effect, put the reed into the dye in several different lots and let each stand until it has absorbed the color. Each successive lot will be a lighter shade.

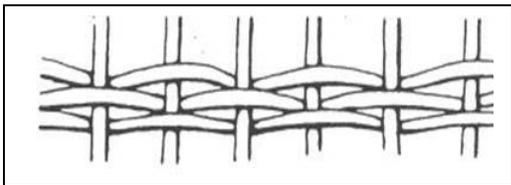
Hang the reed to dry after dyeing and moisten it again when you are ready to weave. This will keep excess dye from staining your hands.

FINISHING

When you have completed the weaving of your basket, you will want to remove the small fuzzy fibers which have been worked loose from the reed by trimming them with scissors.

BEGINNING WEAVES

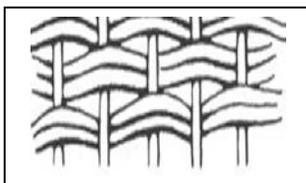
Under and Over Weave



This is sometimes called a “simple” weave, or “randing.” A weaver goes under one spoke and over the next. It is usually used with an uneven number of spokes.

With an even number of spokes it is necessary to weave one row, then start a new weaver behind the first spoke to the left of the one used as a starting point for the first row. The two weavers may be used alternately, with each row beginning one spoke to the left of the previous row.

Double Under and Over Weave

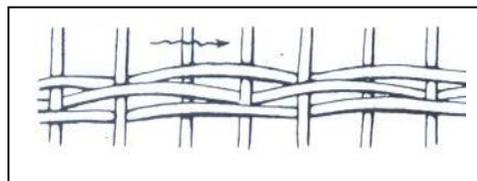


This is also called “slewing.” Using two weavers, work in the same manner as in Under and Over Weave. Keep the two weavers lying flat and smooth, and keep an even tension on both weavers so they lie parallel. Three or more weavers can also be used.

If there are an even number of spokes, two sets of two weavers must be used alternately as described for Under and Over Weave.

For an interesting variation, use this weave with double spokes held parallel.

Japanese Weave

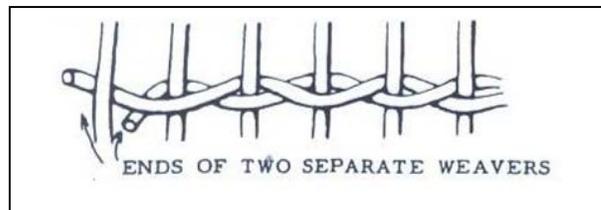


Weave with one weaver going over two spokes, then under the third. Repeat. This gives a diagonal effect.

You may use two or more weavers held parallel for this weave, to achieve a different texture.

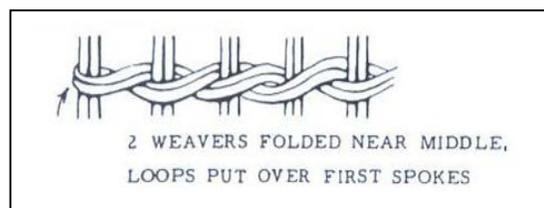
Japanese weave is not used when the number of spokes is a multiple of three.

Single pairing Weave



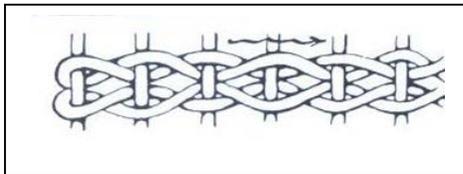
Insert two weavers behind two adjacent spokes, or fold one weaver and slip the loop over the first spoke. Weave with both weaver ends, crossing the two between each two spokes. Be sure the weavers cross in the same direction each time.

Double Pairing Weave



Using two weavers held parallel, proceed as in Single Pairing Weave. If desired, pairs of parallel spokes may be used as in illustration.

Pairing Arrow Weave



After making one row of Single Pairing Weave, make a second row – but twist weavers in opposite direction. This is sometimes used as a border or trimming weave.

BORDERS

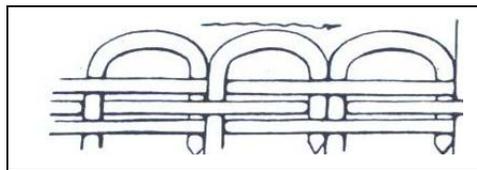
Basket borders are formed from the ends of spokes. There are three kinds – open, closed and braided. You will want to choose a style that is rigid and strong enough for the kind of basket you are making.

If some spokes are too short to form the border, clip them off even with the last row of weaving and, using the ice pick to open a space, force the end of a new spoke down along each old, cut spoke. Insert the new spoke at least 1” downward.

When borders are too deep, they look awkward and out of proportion. If necessary, cut off ends of spokes to make your border an appropriate width. Always dampen spokes before forming borders.

Open Borders

Open borders are formed by bending the spokes over one another to form loops. This results in a decorative, lacy finish suitable for mats, small flower baskets, etc. This border adds little strength to the basket.



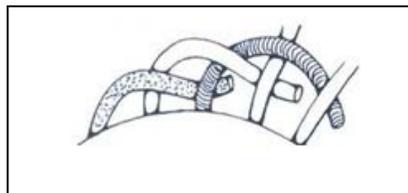
To form a simple open border, bend each spoke over in turn and press the end of it down along the side of the next spoke. This will be easy to do if you open a space for each spoke with your ice pick first.

To give a more lacy effect, try carrying each spoke end past the spoke next to it and pressing it down beside the second spoke. Or skip two spokes and insert it behind the third.

Be sure all spoke ends pass their adjacent spokes on the same side, either all on the inside of the basket or all on the outside.

Closed Borders

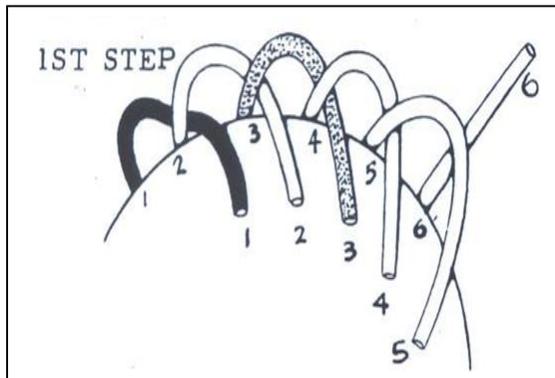
Closed borders are more tightly woven and give a stronger, more substantial looking finish. They are formed by twisting or rolling the ends of the spokes so that they interlock.



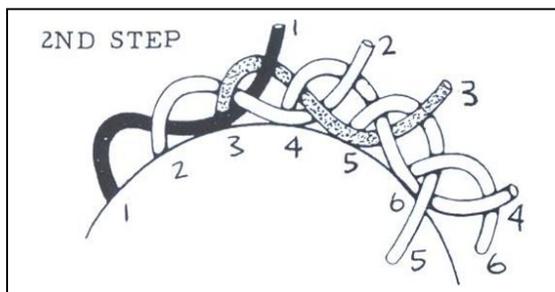
The simplest closed border is made by carrying each spoke end in front of the spoke to its right and then behind the second spoke to its right. Draw the border down as tightly as desired and clip off spoke ends, leaving enough to hold each end in place, after the reed has dried.

Braided Borders

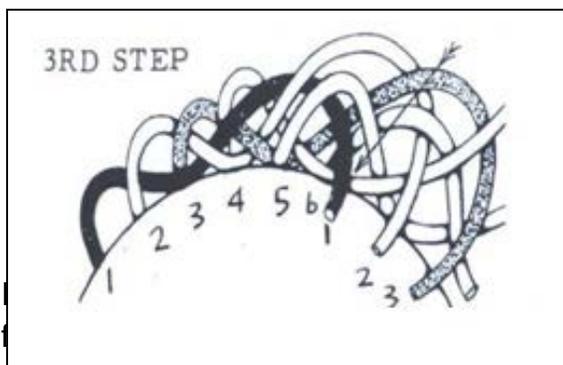
Braided borders are more difficult to make, but most people think they are well worth the effort. They are quite strong, since the spoke ends twine and re-twine.



The first step in making a 4-strand braided border is to carry each spoke behind the spoke to its right, turning the end of the spoke in toward the center of the basket. Go completely around the basket with each step before starting the next step.



Second, carry each spoke end in front of the next spoke to its right, turning end out away from center of basket.



right (the third from where the spoke started) lying on the outside of this spoke. The end will again point toward the center of the basket.

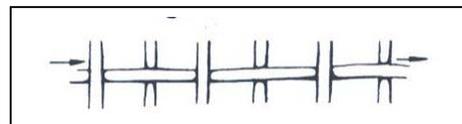


In the final step, turn the end of the spoke outward and down through the braid. This would mean that the end of spoke number 1 would go through the space marked with an arrow in the sketch of Step 3.

Pull all ends even and tight, let dry, and clip away excess at ends of spokes.

STARTING TO WEAWE

Insert the left end of a weaver behind a spoke, as shown in illustration. Weave from left to right.



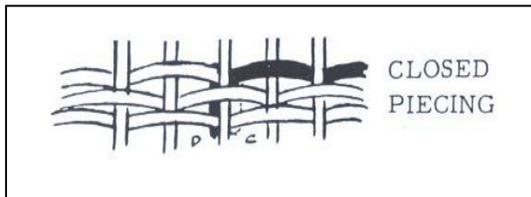
Carry the weaver lightly in your right hand, avoiding too much tension on it. Use your left hand to press the rows of weaving together so that there will be no open spaces between the rows. (If you are left-handed, you may want to reverse these directions.) When you have finished your basket, trim the starting end of the weaver smoothly on the inside of the basket.

PIECING WEAVERS

There are two common methods of piecing. The open piecing is very simple and may be used where it will not show. The finishing end of the first weaver (A) and the starting end of the second weaver (B) are overlapped behind a spoke.



When the basket is finished, all rough ends are trimmed smoothly, on a slant.



Closed piecing gives a smoother and stronger finish. Trim the finishing end of the first weaver (C) so that it extends $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " past a spoke. Bend the weaver sharply where it passes the spoke, and insert an ice pick or other sharp tool down beside the spoke, moving it back and forth to open a space for the end of the weaver. Push end of weaver down into this space.

Use ice pick in similar fashion on the other side of the same spoke to open a space. Insert $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " of the beginning end of the second weaver (D) bend it sharply and continue weaving as before.

Piece weavers so that they overlap on the back or "wrong" side of the basket.

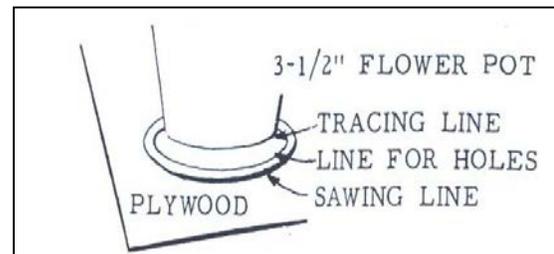
FINISHING WEAVING

The finishing end of the last weaver may be handled in either of the methods described for piecing.

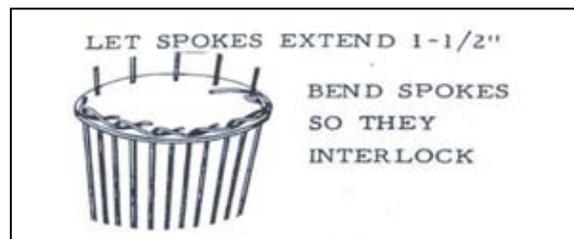
IVY BASKET

Here's a good basketry project for your first attempt. It is quickly made, inexpensive, practical – and a pre-school child can do it with a little supervision!

You will need the equipment listed previously, plus a waterproof coating material (such as shellac or varnish), a small piece of plywood, 11 spokes of number 4 reed cut 10 inches long, 3 or 4 weavers of number 2 reed, a 3 – $\frac{1}{2}$ " flower pot, a pencil and some sandpaper.



Trace around the bottom of the pot, then draw one line $\frac{1}{4}$ " outside the tracing and a second line $\frac{1}{2}$ " outside the tracing. Saw on the outer line, and drill 11 holes to fit the spokes on the $\frac{1}{4}$ " line. Sand the plywood until it is smooth and give it several coats of the water-proofing solution.



Now you are ready to start making your basket.

Step 1: Insert the spokes so they extend about 1½" through the plywood disc. Keep them from falling out by holding them together at the long ends.

Step 2: Starting with any spoke, bend the short end of the spoke out and to the right so that it is flat against the plywood and passes in front of the spoke to its right. Now bend the end of the first spoke so it locks behind the second spoke to its right. Continue until all spokes are fastened down. When you have finished you will not be able to tell which was the first spoke turned down; they will all look the same.

Turn the base and spokes over so you can put the flower pot inside the long ends of the spokes. Spread the spokes evenly around the pot.

Start weaving by inserting a weaver behind one spoke as described under "Beginning Weaves" on page 4 and then follow the steps below:

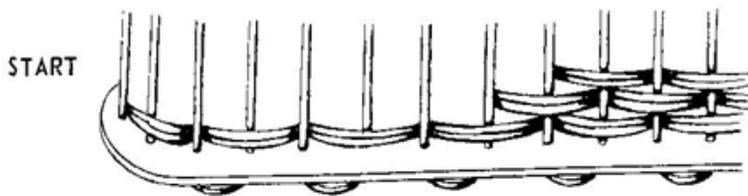


Figure C

Step 3: For the double over and under weave, use 2 parallel wavers, carried as one, in front of one spoke (Fig. C), back of next, and so on to the right.

BEND, THEN PUSH
DOWN ALONG SIDE
OF SPOKE

START OF NEW

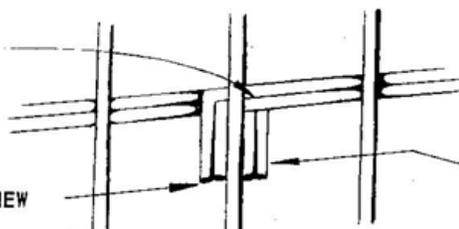


FIGURE D

END OF
OLD

Continue weaving until 2 inches high. Keep sides perpendicular to bottom.

Step 4: To finish, first soak projecting spokes to keep them pliable.

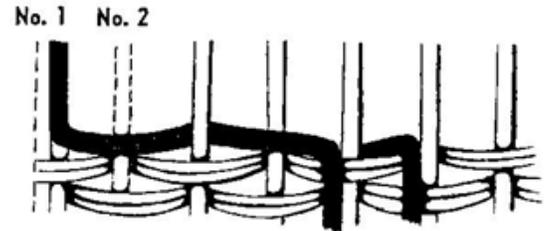


Figure E

Bend down No. 1 spoke, weave using the over and under weave, in front of next spoke, behind next, in front of next spoke (as in Fig. E). While weaving each spoke, flatten spoke to top of basket.

Step 5: After basket dries, apply shellac, varnish, or whatever finish is desired.

RY PROJECT

Exhibit Requirements

Instructions

1. Members must attach a completed "Franklin County 4-H Basketry Record Sheet" listing the baskets made each year they have taken the project.
2. Each basket must be signed and dated by the 4-H member.
3. Members are encouraged to attach a sheet briefly explaining to the judge what has been done for their project, especially if members are not able to be present for the judging.

Beginner (Grades 3-5):

Grade 3

1. Base must be of a solid material such as plywood.
2. Holes should be drilled in base to accommodate reed shape.
3. Finish weaving using the over-under weave, continuous weave, or twining weave.

Grades 4-5

1. A simple finished basket with a solid base, or a simple basket woven entirely of reed, including the base.
2. Must be an apple basket, Jeremiah, or small market.

Intermediate (Grades 6, 7 and 8):

1. A basket woven entirely of reed including a woven base.
2. Must show advancement of weave each year in intermediate division.
3. NO solid base baskets or forms.

Advanced (Grades 9 and Up):

1. Exhibit an item woven of reed or specialty materials which show advanced skills (such as Japanese or double arrow weave, braided border, or equivalent skill appropriate for the item).
2. Each year should be more advanced from previous year.
3. More advanced members may exhibit chair caning, fireplace baskets, coil baskets (with a representative sample of coil wrapped reed included), cornucopia or similar items.
4. Other materials such as a plywood base or form may be used with reed, but must primarily of reed.

AWARDS

- Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion Overall
- Champion and Reserve Champion: 2 Beginner, 1 Intermediate, 1 Advanced
- State Fair Entries: One entry



Franklin County

4-H BASKETRY RECORD



NAME: _____ GRADE: _____

4-H CLUB NAME: _____ YEAR IN 4-H: _____

Club Leader Signature: _____ Date: _____

4-H Member Signature: _____ Date: _____

List specific basket: _____ Division: _____

List the cost and the types of materials you used in making your basket.

What experiences did you have in making this project?

Where did you receive information or instruction in this project? (List persons who gave instruction, reference materials, etc.)

Note: Complete this page of the record sheet every year that you take the baskets project.



Franklin County

4-H BASKETRY RECORD



NAME: _____

Year	Basket Type	Instructions/Techniques	Materials

Note: Add to this page of the record each year you take the 4-H Baskets Project, use additional pages as needed.