

Basic Basket Making



Buckeye Leadership Workshop

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Introduction to Basketweaving

Basketry is one of the oldest of crafts. It even proceeded and influenced the development of cloth weaving and pot shaping. The first baskets were probably temporary, created on-the-spot to transport food. The next obvious step was to use materials that resisted decomposition to weave containers of some permanence.

Baskets are among the few items that man has had little success producing mechanically. There are some exceptions, such as factory-produced, stapled bushel and peck baskets and some assembly weaving in other countries. However, these are far removed from the individual craftsmanship found in homemade baskets. Basketry is one of the few crafts that span the spectrum from holding trash to being exhibited as fine art.

MATERIALS LIST

Round reed in a variety of sizes	Sea Grass
Wood bases with pre-drilled holes (optional)	
Bucket or dish pan or other container for soaking reed	
Towel	Tape measure or ruler
Cutters	Awl
Needle nose pliers	Pencil

TIPS

Rub the pencil marks off your reed with your fingertip while the reed is wet.

Vinegar in the soaking pan with colored reed will help keep it from bleeding.

To fold round reed without breaking it, twist it between your fingers or pinch it with needle nose pliers.

Wipe soaked, dyed reed with a paper towel or old towel before weaving to help prevent bleeding.

Don't put reed in your mouth or let pets drink from your soaking water. Reed is treated with insecticides.

Basket Weaving Terms and Techniques

Tools

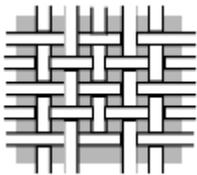
You will need a pan or pail for water, pinch clothespins, a yardstick, pencil, clippers or heavy scissors, an awl or small flat screwdriver, and a surform shaver.

Soaking

Commercial reed needs to be soaked in warm water for about ten minutes. Ash, cherry and walnut need less soaking time.

Laying Out the Base

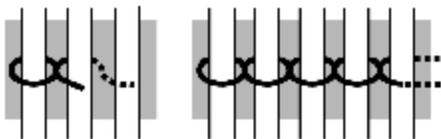
Bases are laid out in a basic over 1/under 1 weave, each row being opposite its neighbor. Start with 3 x 3 spokes, centered, and grow to the required number of spokes for each basket's directions.



Measure the base for width and length, making sure spacing is even. Halve the measurements and measure from the center for more accuracy. Unless specified, bases are generally laid out rough side up with the center of the spokes marked on the rough side.

Twining

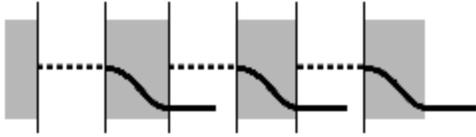
Twining is a weave normally using round reed. Use a long piece of the size specified (or use 2 pieces) and find the center. Give it a twist between your fingers (or crimp it with a needlenose pliers) and fold it in half. Hook it over a spoke and bring both ends out to the front.



Have the long ends going towards the right if you are right-handed, reverse for left. Take the top (or front) piece and put it behind the next spoke and back out to the front. Repeat until the correct number of rows is completed. Cut off ends on the inside.

Triple Twining

Triple twining is twining with three pieces of round reed instead of two pieces. Use three pieces of reed starting: one behind one spoke, one behind the next (second) spoke to the right, and one behind the next (third) spoke to the right, with ends coming out to the front.



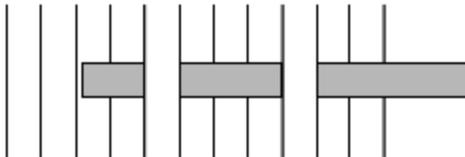
Take the piece farthest to the left and put it behind (and out to the front again) the fourth spoke. Take the piece now farthest to the left and put it behind the fifth spoke. Continue taking the weaver farthest to the left and weaving it behind the "next available spoke" - the one with nothing behind it yet. This twining is actually "over two, behind one."

Upsett

To "upsett" means to gently bend up the spokes at the base perimeters. This just makes the upward weaving easier.

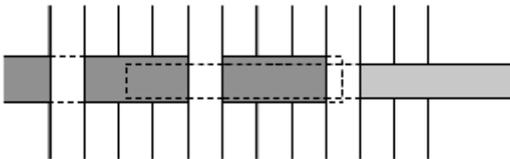
To Weave a Row

Unless specified, normal weaving is weaving one row at a time, over one/under one. Weave with the good side of the reed (smooth, less splintery side) towards the outside of the basket. Place the end of the reed on the outside of a spoke.



Weave all the way around - over one/under one - using lots of clothespins to hold it in place. The more clothespins you use, the better shaped basket you will get.

To finish a row, overlap your piece of reed by four spokes and cut it off. If woven correctly, both ends will be hidden. The end of the weaver will slip into weaving at the beginning of that same



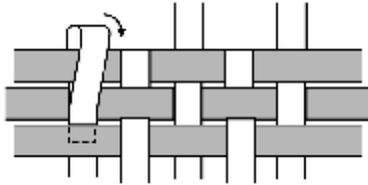
row.

If weaving with flat/oval reed, it is best to shave off the "oval" on the bottom piece, so that the area of overlap is not so bulky.

Consecutive rows are opposite the row before it (if over/under, then under/over). Be sure to rotate your basket so that all your stop/starts will not be on the same side. Try to start far enough to the left on each side, so that you don't have to "overlap by four" around a corner. Also be sure to pack down the rows as you weave so that there are no spaces showing between the rows of weaving.

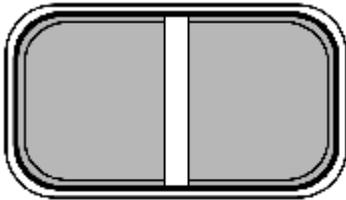
Fold and Tuck

Unless specified, you will fold and tuck the outside spokes. Fold from the outside, the end of a spoke and tuck it into a row (or rows) of weaving on the inside of the basket. It is best to fold it over, cut off any excess, and then tuck it in to get a clean finish. The inside spokes can be cut off with the top of the last row of weaving.



Wrap the Rim

To wrap the rim means to take two pieces of reed and wrap one around the inside and one around the outside of the rim, with a two to three inch overlap. Have the inside rim overlap on the opposite side that the outside ends do - and try to avoid overlapping rims at the handle. The rim covers the top row of weaving.

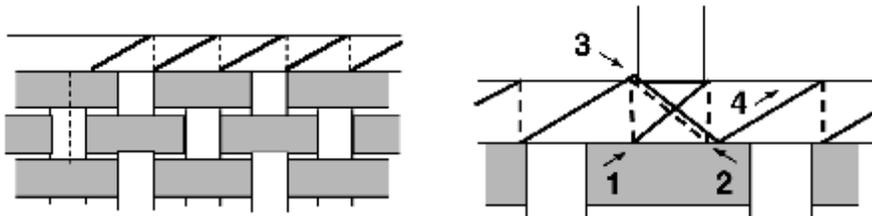


If flat/oval is being used, then both ends should be shaved down where they overlap (one on the top side/the other on the bottom side) so that they will lay down smoothly.

Rim filler is usually seagrass or round reed and lays between the two rim pieces to make a nice, clean finish to the rim.

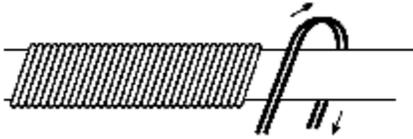
Lashing the Rim

Using 1/4" flat or cane, lash the rim to the basket (this is a lot like sewing). Bury the ends by going under the inside rim and down the inside of your basket, under the weavers. Lash a "stitch" over the rim, coming out in between the rim and your second row of weaving. Remember - your rim is covering the top row of weaving. Make a "stitch" between every set of spokes. You will want to make an "X" at the handle.



Wrapping the Handle

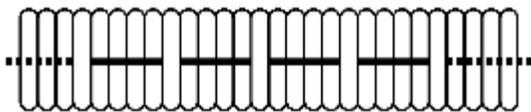
If you are using reed for the handle, you will want to wrap the handle with reed for a finished look. Start with a new piece of 1/4" flat, burying the end on the inside of the basket. Tightly wrap the handle with the 1/4" flat, each row snug to the row before it.



An "X" lashing can also be used: go across the handle one way, leaving space between each wrap around. Then turn around and come back across the handle, making an "X" each time.



Accent pieces of dyed 1/4" flat can be used to match the basket. Lay the end of the dyed piece under a few rows to secure it, then go over and under it to create a pattern as you wrap the handle.



SIMPLE ROUND REED BASKET

Cut 8 spokes 24" long from # 3 round reed. You can weave with #3

Reed or you can use #2 reed. These directions show a simple over/under

(randing) weave, but your basket will be a lot more sturdy if you

twine using 2 weavers at a time.

Separate your 8 spokes into two groups of four and lay the spokes within each group flat next to each other and then lay one group on the other group and center them to create a cross.



Now it's time to start lashing which is the weaving that holds the spokes together in place. Take one long piece of reed and placed the end of it under the group of spokes that is underneath



Then go over the group of spokes that are on the top, under the group that is on the bottom, over the group that is on the top, and under the group you started from.



Do this three times and hold in place.



Separate each group of spokes into two groups of two, that gives you eight groups of spokes. When weaving this



type of round basket it is important that you have an odd number of spokes so cut off one group of spokes very close to the lashing.

(If you are twining, you can use an even number of spokes.)

Separate all the spokes and started weaving. As you weave make sure that the spokes are spaced evenly around the circle.



Simply go under one spoke and over the next, under a spoke and under the next and so on around the circle. After you go around one time check to be sure you are maintaining the over/under pattern..



As you weave, I gently push the spokes away from you to form the basket shape.



Continue weaving until you have about 8" of spokes left. To finish the basket,

the first step is to bend each spoke before the one next to it and then tuck it under it.



The next step is to take the end of each spoke and tack it back into the basket and cut off any excess reed.



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