Wood Thrush Wilderness
Introduction to Wild Basketry



Wild basketry is an ancient craft that involves weaving natural materials, such as grasses, leaves, wood, vines, and tree bark, into functional and decorative containers. In this document, we will review how to collect, process, and create baskets with local sourced plants.—This document was created for those who attended the Introduction to Wild Basketry.

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Tools Needed

Tools for gathering



- Gloves
- Pruning shears
- Trowel
- Shovel
- Saw or chainsaw
- Safety equipment



Tools for Basket Making

- Drill
- Sandpaper
- Needle
- Scissors
- Knife and draw knife
- Measuring tape
- Clothes pins or clamps
- Pencil
- Drinking Straw
- Sinew
- Pine resin, bees wax or linseed oil

Basket Plants and Harvest Schedule

Grass and Leaves

- Oat (Summer)
- Sweet Grass (Summer and Fall)
- Cattail – leaves (Fall)
- Iris – leaves (Summer)
- Pine needle (Fall)

Cut dry. Tie in bundles for storage. Soak in warm water to use.

Used to make cordage and coil baskets





Bark

- Black or White Ash (Spring and Summer)
- Shagbark Hickory (Spring, Summer, and Fall)
- White Oak (Spring and Summer)
- Red Maple (Spring and Summer)

Used for Splintwork, coiling, rib, handles, and hoops

Harvest Trunk using a chainsaw or saw

Stalks and Stems

- Cattail stems and leaves (Late Summer and Early Fall)
- Goldenrod stems (All Year)
- Corn husk (Summer)

Cut and dry. Separate leaves. Store in bundles.

Dampen with warm water and remove excess. Goldenrod outer layer removed by rubbing with cloth.

Cattail and Corn are good for cordage, twilling and coiling.

Goldenrod is used in coiling.



Cont. Basket Plants and Harvest Schedule

Woody Shoots



- Apple - shoots, branches (Spring and Summer
- White Ash - leaf stems (Fall)
- Black Walnut - stems and Leaves (Fall)
- Red Maple – shoots (Spring and Summer)
- Red Osier Dogwood (Fall and Winter)

Remove leaves. Use green. Use water if necessary to make pliable.

Black Walnut stems can be dried and stored

Used for wicker work and rib baskets

Vines and Runners

- Grape (Anytime)
- Honeysuckle (Spring and Summer)
- Raspberry (Fall)
- Blackberry (Anytime)
- Virginia Creeper runners (Summer)

Honeysuckle remove leaves and boil for a few hours and strip bark if desired.

Raspberry and Blackberry remove thorns with gloves. Split cane.

Virginia Creeper remove leaves only use green

Vines and runners are good for wickerwork, rib baskets and coiling





Roots

- Black Birch (Anytime)
- Cedar (Anytime)
- Eastern Hemlock (Spring, Summer and Fall)
- Eastern Spruce (Anytime)

Dig near base of tree. Smaller young trees work well. Carefully remove soil to expose root.

Roots can sometimes be split

Used in coil, twining, cordage

Store dry. Soak it before use

Basket Techniques

Coiling – Leaves and Grasses



- Soak leaves or grasses
- Wrap in damp cloth
- Separate if clumped like needles or cattail
- Cut 1 -2 yards of sinew
- Add Pine Needles to your gauge (Straw)
- Attach it to the wooden cookie
- Snip end with scissors
- Begin stitching to cookie
- Gradually add pine needles
- Do not add a bunch all at once. 2-4 needles. Add in center
- Add coils on top of base
- Mark the first stich with a piece of masking tape. This will be the marker of where you need to end your wall at the top. Remove masking tape when finished
- Once the pine needles have reached the desired height trim needles at an angle.



Splintwork

Splintwork refers to a basket technique using flat strips usually splints from inner bark or the truck of trees. Cattail could also be used in this type of basket.

In this type of basket there are spokes and weavers. With a plain weave (checkerboard) the weavers under over the spokes. A twill weave the weaver goes over two under two spokes.

The rim of the basket is finished by tucking the spokes into the basket and then lashing a rim into place.

Basket Techniques

Bark Baskets

- Form to the size you want to make and hold with clothes pins
- Mark with pencil where you want to add holes. ¼" above the bottom
- Sew bark together, then sew bottom, and finally the rim
- Use a straight stich





Twining

This is the oldest type of basketry.

Grasses, vines and splints can be used to make this basket. The spokes usually vines, branches or splints are used. The weavers are leaves, grasses, roots or inner bark. The weavers are then twisted around the spokes.

Create a checkerboard base or a spider base.

Then begin twining. Create your base then upright the spokes

When adding a new weaver splice it in at least 4 spokes back.

Finish the top by folding over the spokes

Basket Techniques

Rib Baskets



The rib basket is created by creating a structure hoop and then adding ribs. Rib baskets are named from the number of hoops that they have.

To the right top photo is a Two-Hoop basket.

The hoop is continuous and the rib s not. There s usually multiple ribs see right bottom photo.

To start create two hoops. Using vine, shoots, splits. They should be all even thickness. It may need to soak to make it pliable. Now shape it into a circle. Wrap several pieces together to create a circle intertwining them together, The circle will determine the size of your basket.

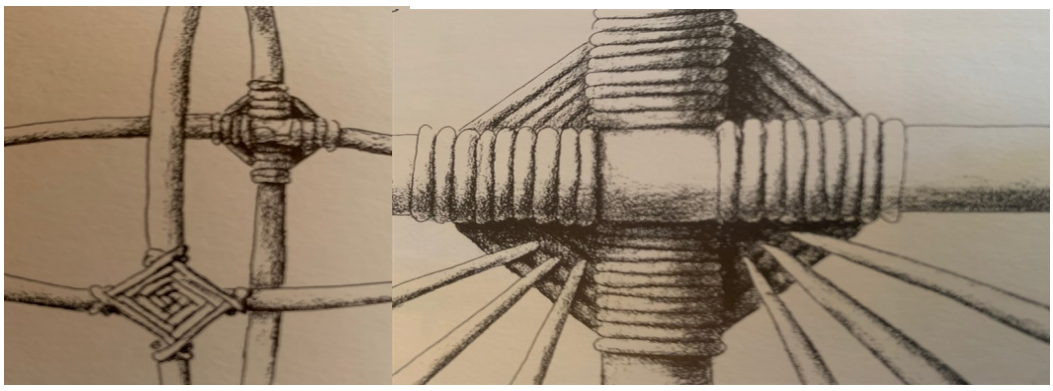


Tie the two hoops together (god's eye/eagle eye) with cordage, sinew, or other material like leaves or grasses may work too.

Add ribs into eagle eye

Weave under over and around the last spoke and repeat.

Add new weavers at least four ribs back so that it is overlapped.



For more information on basket classes, kits, and supplies visit us at

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