Wood Thrush Wilderness Fiddlehead Basket

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MATERIALS AND TOOLS
3 34" SPOKES – 1" FLAT REED
7 28" SPOKES – 1" FLAT REED
4 16" BASE FILLERS – ¼" FLAT REED
1/4 LB WEAVERS – ¼" FLAT REED
1 25" TOP BAND – 1" FLAT REED
1 12" TOP BAND – 1" FLAT REED
1 30" RIM ½" FLAT REED
1 30" BRAIDED GRASS
2 34" RIM – ¾" FLAT OR FLAT OVAL REED
7'-14' LASHING – ¼" FLAT REED
1 1" SHAKER TAPE FOR HARNESS

COTHES PINS OR CLAMPS, PENCIL, LOCK BLADE POCKET KNIFE, TAPE MEASURE, BUTTER KNIFE OR FLAT HEAD SCREWDRIVER, CONTAINER FOR SOAKING REED



DIMENSIONS OF YOUR BASKET Base – 4"x10.5" Height 9"

PREPARING THE REED

1. Soak the reed in water.
    a. Spokes and Rim 15 minutes
    b. Weavers 10 minutes
    c. Lashing 5 minutes
2. Remove spokes from water and bend them the opposite way that they are coiled. This is to straighten the spokes.
3. All reeds have a "good" side and a "bad" side. This can be determined by bending the reed over your finger after soaking to see if small fibers break away. If the fibers break away, that is the "bad side''. The "good side'' is always on the outside of the basket.
4. Find the "bad" side of the spokes. Then find the middle of the spokes. Bending the bad sides together then mark the middle with a pencil. MARK THE BAD SIDE
5. Place all spokes on a table face "bad" side up.

STARTING THE BASKET

1. Begin by laying spokes out in groups of 3X7 spokes
2. All straight spokes should be in the center. All curved spokes should be placed on the outside with the curve end pointing out
3. Use a piece of cardboard as your base pattern. The base should be 4”x10.5”
4. Lay the 7 28” spokes about ½” apart.
5. Weave straightest 1” 34” flat reed – MUST GO UNDER OVER (This is your center piece should line up with your pencil marks
6. Weave 2 of the 16” ¼” flat reed – MSUT WEAVE OVER UNDER TOGETHER (Repeat on either side of the center spoke.
7. Add a Spoke of 1” 34” flat reed on the other side of the ¼” Fillers – MUST GO UNDER OVER
8. Tighten your reeds so they are side by side with no gaps. The base should be 4”x10.5”
9. Flip over the basket cut and tuck the ¼” fillers under the second spoke.







10. Upturning - Fold the spokes over at the basket bottom. The fiber will crack without any danger of breaking the reed.



UPRIGHT SPOKES



CUT MIDDLE OF GROUP OF 7

WEAVING

1. Soak the weavers in water (1/4" reed)
2. Take the first weaver and taper the end down to half of its width and for about 3"



3. Start weaving where you split the center back spoke. The weave is under and over every other spoke. Weave the first course opposite from the weaving at the edge of the bottom where you begin. The taper end of the first weaver in place with a clothespin. Treat the spoke that has been split as individual spokes. Right-handed – weave counterclockwise and Left-handed – weave clockwise
4. Go under over each spoke with the weaver. Use lots of clothes pins on the first course. Keep the course tight to the bottom. Fold each corner and pin.
5. Make sure to go over and under all spokes including the one that was cut. Treat this as two separate spokes.
6. When a weaver ends, overlap the next one by four spokes to continue the weaving. This will help hide the end of the weavers end. Do not overlap at the split spokes.
7. Keep the back straight and the belly loose. This will create a belly in your basket. Don't fight the process.
8. As you continue to weave, frequently work the course of weavers down next to each other. Use your knife to help push them down. Keep the course snug.
9. Continue weaving until you reach 4.5" in height at that time cut the spokes on the front and sides of the basket ¼ - ½" off the original 1". This will allow you to tighten the weave and move more easily.
10. Tighten the weave by placing your basket on its side.
11. Stop weaving ¼" weavers when you reach a height of 7"
12. Before you finish, tighten, and tap down your weavers.
13. When you finish, taper the last weaver as you did in the beginning and finish it on the back.
14. Fold in the 2nd and 6th Spoke on the back to create a hole for your harness. Cut the spokes at an angle and tuck into the weavers in the inside of the basket.
15. Place in the 1" flat reed on top of the ¼". Around the split weaver and the two weavers on either side. (See below)
16. Weave in the 1" around the rest of the basket. This should not be weaved differently than the last course. Fold ends inside of basket and tucked in. (See Below photo)
17. Add ½" flat reed around the entire top. This needs to be weaved opposite the 1" flat reed below it.



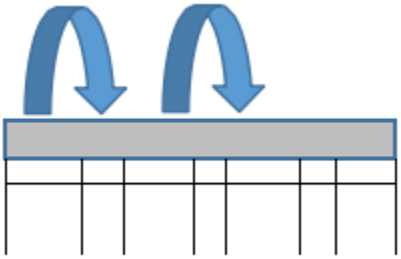


FINISHING THE TOP

1. Leave 2-3" of spokes for the top. You should have enough to fold over
2. Make sure to soak your spokes
3. Cut your spokes to a point or an angle
4. Fold them over the last ½" weaver and into the basket. They will be just long enough to tuck into one or two weavers.
5. If it is tight to tuck into the weaver use a knife to gently pry it into place.

MAKING THE RIM

1. Soak ¼" reed for lashing the rim. Once soaked place in basket and wrap the end around the top ½" course. To do this from the inside of the basket take ¼" reed and go through the space under the ½" reed and between the spokes. Fold over the ½" reed. Once the rim is plac it will pinch the ¼" reed and hold it in place for lashing.
2. You'll need two rims that will be 2'' longer than the top circumference
3. Use 1'' flat reed or ¾'' oval reed or oval flat reed for your rim. This goes right over the ½" flat reed. Leaving a "ditch" for the braided grass.
4. Cut braided grass to fit the top of your basket.
5. Clothespin the rim to the top of the basket.
6. Hold the rim in place with clothespins and lash it using ¼ '' flat reed.
7. Use a "whip stitch." Bring the lashing over the rim and back inside the basket beneath the rim between each two adjacent spokes.
8. Finish the lashing in the same manner as you began it. Go the opposite way using the same holes in order to "x" the lashing.



FINISHING

1. You can use wood or basket stain to complete your basket or leave it natural. Here is a mixture that has worked for us:
    a. ½ - 1 cup stain (Minwax)
    b. ½ cup boiled linseed oil
    c. ½ cup mineral spirits (add to thin)
2. We use gloves and rags to stain our baskets
3. Start staining in the inside and the work on the outside of the basket
4. Pat dry with another rag
5. Let it dry in open space for a couple of days
6. Re-coat every 2-3 years

We hope you have fun making your basket. Let me know if you have any questions.
We are your resource for making baskets. - Jes