Wood Thrush Wilderness LLC

Pine Needle Basket

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TOOLS AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- ❑ Wooden base, walnut, shell (optional)
- ❑ Needle (sharp and with a big eye)
- ❑ Masking Tape
- ❑ Scissors (small and sharp – embroidery)
- ❑ Pliers (To pull needle through thick pine coils)
- ❑ Drinking Straw (Gauge)
- ❑ Sinew, raffia, thread, polyester threads
- ❑ Paper towel or towel (moist)
- ❑ Pot for boiling water
- ❑ Container for pine needles to soak
- ❑ Tongs to remove pine needles
- ❑ 16–24-gauge wire for handles or other
- ❑ Electric drill (Add holes to shell or another center object)
- ❑ Shellac or bees wax to cover needles to protect



HISTORY

Pine needle baskets are a form of traditional Native Indigenous craft that dates back thousands of years. These baskets are made by coiling long pine needles, along with other materials such as sweetgrass, raffia, or sinew, to create intricate and functional works of art. The history of pine needle baskets is rich and diverse, and it varies among different Indigenous cultures in North America and around the world.

AROUND THE WORLD

While pine needle basketry is most commonly associated with Native American and Indigenous cultures in the United States, similar basketry traditions using pine needles or other plant materials can be found in various parts of the world. These traditions often reflect the use of locally available natural resources and may have different names and techniques

associated with them. Here are a few examples from outside the United States:

- ▶ Australia
- ▶ South America
- ▶ Africa
- ▶ Southeast Asia
- ▶ Japan
- ▶ Europe

BEFORE COLLECTION

- Landowners' permission. There is permission for gathering on Maine Public Land. Please know the regulations prior to gathering.

GATHERING NEEDLES

- ❑ Dried brown needles can be gathered any time of the year. But it is best in the early Fall. Gathering on a warm sunny day when the ground has been dried.
- ❑ Avoid any that are buried as they may be mildewed or infested with insects
- ❑ Gather them with the sheath (cap) of the needles facing the same direction.
- ❑ You can pick green needles and drying them for a few weeks flipping them over.
- ❑ Do not use fresh green needles as they will shrink over time and make the basket loose.

STORING NEEDLES

- ❑ Make sure they are dried
- ❑ Place in containers
- ❑ Place in freezer to kill anything on them 1-2 days
- ❑ If using them right away they will be placed in boiling water after that will sterilize them
- ❑ Needles can store indefinitely in a storage tote.

SOAK NEEDLES

- ❑ If needles are dirty wash with soap and water
- ❑ Boil water
- ❑ Add Pine Needles to water. They should soak 30-60 minutes
- ❑ Once soaked place on wet towel to keep needles moist, soft and pliable while making a basket
- ❑ If stopping in the middle of project. Wrap needles in moist towel and place in large plastic bag. Place in fridge. This will keep for 2-4 days.
- ❑ Unused needles from current project should lay out to dry before storing them.

REMOVE SHEATHS

- ❑ Remove by scraping them off with fingers or a dull blade
- ❑ Once removed place in the moist towel to keep pliable

TYPES OF STICHES

A. Plain Stich
B. V Stich
C. Wheat Stich
D. Split Stich



A



B

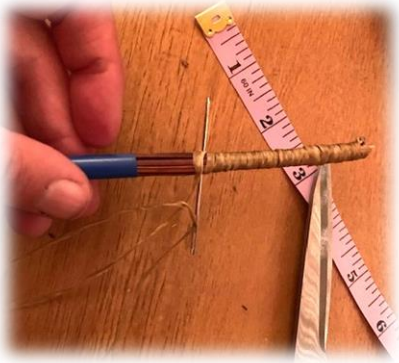


C



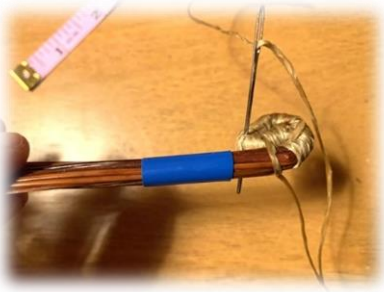
D

How to start the basket

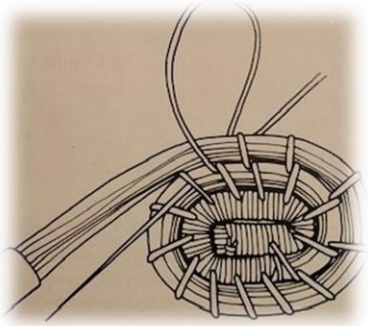


- ❑ Cut 1 -2 yards of sinew
- ❑ Add Pine Needles to your gauge (Straw)
- ❑ Tie sinew to end of pine needle coil
- ❑ Snip end with scissors
- ❑ Wrap sinew around pine needles for about 2-2.5”

Coil and make the center

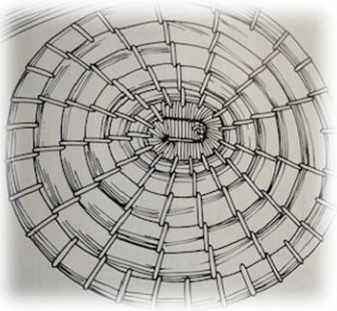


- ❑ Coil and then stich together each stich about 1/8”-1/4” apart
- ❑ Continue around until reaching the first stich.



- ❑ Continue to use a plain stich
- ❑ Looking at front and back of basket
- ❑ Needle will need to go in at an angle to catch the last stich.

Diameter



- ❑ This connects the stiches which will form a spiral pattern
- ❑ Continue stitching the coils together until you have reached your desired dimeter.
- ❑ When the stiches become spread out further than ½" add new stiches in between. (See photo)

Walls



- ❑ 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
- ❑ When doing the walls this is an opportunity to add different stiches
- ❑ Plain stich
- ❑ V Stich
- ❑ Wheat Stich

To finish

- ❑ Once the pine needles have reached the desired height trim needles at an angle.
- ❑ Sew begin the first set of pine needles
- ❑ Tie it off sinew using the beginning end

Shellac or bees wax

- ❑ Let your basket dry

- ❑ Add your shellac or bees wax this will protect your basket.
- ❑ Melt bees wax and use a brush very light coat

Note this is just a brief overview of the material and direction that was in class.

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

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