


# PINE NEEDLE BASKETRY

## LEARNING THE BASICS

presented by George Newell  
Central Coast Carvers



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ▶ By the end of this course students will be able to build or have knowledge of;
    - ▶ Basketry tools
    - ▶ Basketry materials & their preparation
    - ▶ Basketry design and construction
      - ▶ Bases
      - ▶ String
      - ▶ Techniques; knot tying, controlling the angle of side walls, lids, accents, wrapping
- 

The art and craft of creating an art piece or a useful container. “No Dennis, they will not hold water.”

References;

-Pine Needle Basketry; by Judy Mofield Mallow,  
ISBN 978-1-60059-603-2

-Basic Pine Needle Basketry by Judy Mulford,

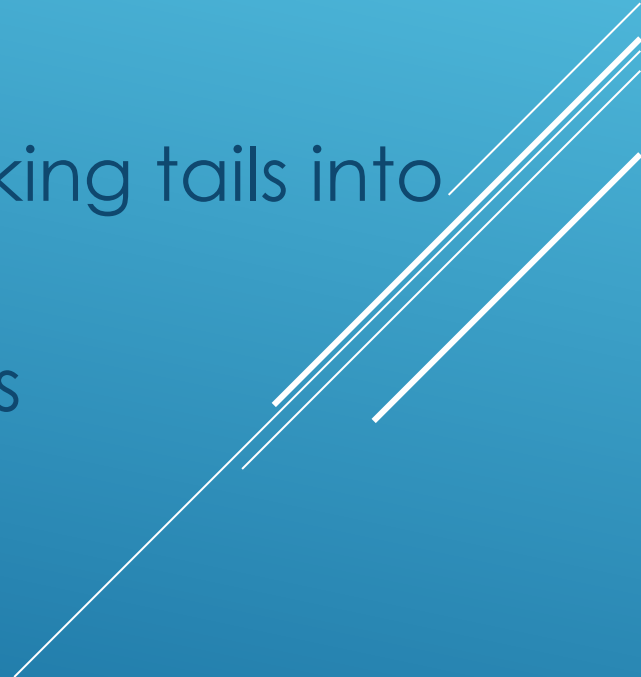
2098 Mandeville Canyon Rd.

Los Angeles, CA 90049

self published\*

\*Looks to be a good reference if one can find it.

# TOOLS;

- ▶ -Needle nose hand pruners or florist shears
  - ▶ -Scissors
  - ▶ -Sharp knife w board for cutting
  - ▶ -Needle nose pliers
  - ▶ -Corn dog stick- 1/4 " w flat taper on end (for tucking tails into coil after tying knot)
  - ▶ -Embroidery needles- sold in variety pack of sizes
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- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying thicknesses, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right of the slide.



TOOLS AS LISTED ABOVE

# TOOLS CONTINUED

- ▶ -Keeper -1 ½-2" section of straw or a ¼ ±" dia. copper tubing w flared end



## A DOWN SIDE TO BASKETRY

An honest basket maker should point out to a beginner some side pocket issues, so one knows what to expect of this hobby.

While this is a low cost hobby (however, it can be made somewhat expensive if you really want to), this crafter has found a few liabilities;

Additional equipment you will eventually come to use; magnifying glass, a sharper needle and a pair of tweezers.

This hobby will require long hours and a dose of patients.

To this writer, it has been a very rewarding experience that one can take and work on easily almost any where, even watching football or other time wasters.

# MATERIALS: CONTINUED

## ► Types of string;

RAFFIA –a natural strong fiber from the African raffia palm frequently used in floral trade. Requires considerable prep. work.

Shorter lengths of usable fiber thread.

Nylon –upholstery thread, strong, lacks paraffin coating

Cotton/linen –strong durable, colors available.

Polyester thread and monofilament fish line work well, don't stretch or have paraffin coating.

\*Artificial sinew –preferred string, looks like raffia, is strong, colors, can be divided for basket use, is paraffin coated, sold in 8 oz. spools.

Works very well for our needs and lasts for long periods of time.

\*Use a zip lock bag to store your string in.



# MATERIALS: CONTINUED

- ▶ Pine Needles- the longer the better for basket construction
  - ▶ -Common Pines on the Central Coast
    - ▶ Canary Island Pine, *Pinus canariensis*
      - ▶ -fascicles or clusters of 3, fine textured 8-10" long
    - ▶ Digger Pine, *Pinus sabiniana*-
      - ▶ -fascicles of 3, 7-10" long, med. Coarse
    - ▶ -Torrey Pine, *Pinus torreyana*, 5/fascicle, 7-13, coarse/stiff
    - ▶ Jeffery Pine, *Pinus jefferyi* , 2 or 3, mostly 3, 4-9", med. Stiff. Found in Sierra mtns.
    - ▶ Ponderosa Pine, *P. ponderosa*, 3/grp., 4-11" mostly < 7", stiff med. coarse
  - ▶ Others; ie. Florida & S.E. US
    - ▶ Longleaf Pine, *P. palustris*, 3/group, 8-18", upper 1/3 of needle bends backward to base
    - ▶ Slash Pine *P. elliotii*, 3/group, 8-12"
    - ▶ Loblolly Pine, *P. taeda*, 3/ 6-9"

# NEEDLE COLLECTION/ PREPARATION

- Green needles; leave terminal growth –usually shorter, harvest 2 -3 year old needles by pulling a handful toward trunk.
- Keep fascicles all going same direction in shallow box, 3+ in. deep- place box in open air, rotate needles frequently for better drying.
- Dip needles in a 5% bleach solution for 5-10 min. kills fungus/bugs.
- Colors lighten, as drying continues, sun bleaches, if brown needles are desirable, pick up off ground or harvest from tree after turning but before they fall to ground. For dying, dry needles out of sun, needles seem to take dye better.
- Needles to be bent will have to be soaked in water for 30-60 min. ie. When building an all needle basket, bottom and all.

# KEY AND IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO;

Quality Baskets come from general “rules” of construction;

- ▶ -Use workable lengths of string; too long & you get tangles, more string will have to be added with a knot that doesn't slip.
- ▶ *Key/important note.* -Knots will need to be hidden within the coil or covered by the next coil.
- ▶ Coil direction (clock wise/counter clockwise) depends upon left or right handed. I work to the left-needles feed in to keeper from l. to r.
- ▶ *Key/important note.* Add needles frequently-keeper should be somewhat tight to slip ahead as you stitch, pinch coil just behind keeper as it is slipped-holds needles in place where they should be.
- ▶ *Key/important note.* Stitches should be drawn tight and held-no slip-paraffin coated string will “lock” as you work. Tight is better, loose stitches allow mushy coils next time around.
- ▶ *Key/important note.* Add new needles to “inside” of keeper, try to hide ends of needles so as they will not be visible to outside of coil past keeper.
- ▶ *Key/important note.* Cut or pull needle fascicle bundle sheath off needle cluster.
- ▶ Green, fresh needles, will shrink as they dry so most work should be w dried needles.

# IN THE BEGINNING

Pine Needle basket shape starts with Base;

- Wood-needs preparation, shape and holes, etc
- Ceramic-likewise needs processes applied w holes, etc.
- Natural centers ie. Walnut slices, Eucalyptus slices, etc.
- Made spokes or centers
- Leather disc decorated w designs, etc.
- All Pine Needles.

# PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

- ▶ -Give some thought to an out come or shape,
  - ▶ *-Some times I like to let the project shape itself-maybe this is the artistry coming out.*
  - ▶ *-the base shape or material may dictate what you can do.*
- ▶ Angle of Sewing Needle placement impacts the shape of the side of the basket;
  - ▶ *Horizontal = vertical wall coils*
  - ▶ *Tip Sewing Needle toward base=coils come in at top*
  - ▶ *Tip Sewing Needle up=coil side walls open up*
  - ▶ *As one builds successive coils push coil to shape desired as well.*
  - ▶ *When stitching, place needle from outside in*

# Type of stitches used in basket construction.

- ▶ -Plain, straight or whip stitch;
  - ▶ New stitch is placed to the left of the last stitch on last coil-to the side of the stitch in the direction your working toward.
  - ▶ Produces a single line up the side of the project. Works well when holes are fairly close on base or base is of needles.
  - ▶ Advanced stitching.
    - ▶ As basket grows in diameter w each successive coil an additional row of stitches may be necessary to create tight and good construction; place these new stitch rows at mid point between last and next stitch at each space around the coil.
      - ▶ Doubles the # of stitch locations around the coil. This is true no matter what kind of stitch style being used.

# TYPE OF STITCHES; & ADD MORE ROWS OF STITCHES



# TYPES OF STITCHES CONTINUED

## Split stitch;

A variation of the straight stitch which calls for next stitch to split the last stitch-

## Straight Wheat stitch;

-involves two stitches, at each spot, starts with a vertical stitch first and a second stitch advancing ahead to next (hole in case of a predrilled wood base, etc.) or stitch spot.

- This stitch slants to the left of the vertical first stitch.

- Beginning w the 2ed coil, each vertical element of the two part Wheat stitch should pierce the vertical element of the stitch below





EXAMPLE OF SPLIT STITCH (L) AND WHEAT STITCH(R)



FERN STITCH (BOTTOM) SPLIT STITCH (LID);

-STARTS AS A WHEAT STITCH;  
EXCEPT WHEN ONE GETS TO THE STARTING SPOT OF THE COIL,

-FOR EACH COIL, YOU WRAP THE COIL BY PLACING A LOOP  
BACKWARD FROM HOLE TO HOLE AROUND THE COIL UNTIL YOU GET  
BACK AT THE STARTING POINT

IF “WRAPPING” A COIL IS DESIRED (SEE L. BELOW), FINISH THE END OFF BY PULLING THE “TAIL” INSIDE THE WRAPPED COIL W A LOOP LAID DOWN FIRST (SEE R. BELOW), THEN PULL THE END TAIL INTO THE COIL- “LOCKING” THE TAIL AND THE WRAP.



# ARTIFICIAL SINEW

Imitation Sinew can be found on line,  
my research turned up the best price  
of \$6.50 / 400 yd spool of 50# test  
string at;

**Fire Mountain Gems and Beads**

**One Fire Mountain Way**

**Grants Pass, Oregon 97526-2373**

**1-800-355-2137**

[www.firemountaingems.com](http://www.firemountaingems.com)

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a blue background.

# GALLERY

## DECORATE WOOD BASE



# GALLERY

## WALNUT SLICE BASE



# GALLERY

(FERN STITCH BOTTOM) WOOD BASE W (STRAIGHT STITCH) PINE CONE LID



# GALLERY

## DECORATE CERAMIC BASE





# GALLERY

## NEEDLE BASE WITH LID



# GALLERY

NEEDLE W LID



GOURD W BURNING



# GALLERY

LARGE CERAMIC BASE W NEEDLE ACCENT



# GALLERY

## CERAMIC BASE



# GALLERY

DECORATE WOOD BASE W BEADS



*AS WITH MOST ANY ART/CRAFT, WE IMPROVE OUR  
PRODUCT THROUGH PRACTICE, PRACTICE,  
PRACTICE*

*ENJOY THE PROCESS FROM GATHERING YOUR  
NEEDLES TO DOING A QUALITY PROJECT, ALL IT  
REQUIRES IS TIME AND LOVE.*

*THANKS FOR YOUR INTEREST AND ATTENTION.*

*LET 'S GO TO WORK!*