

Upcycled Saucer Basket

Make an open weave basket using reed and recycled materials

Basket weaving is as old as the history of man. Remnants of baskets have been found in the Egyptian pyramids, and traces of basket liners have been found inside the fragments of ancient pottery. Over history, baskets were needed as containers for everything imaginable, long before the invention of Tupperware[®]!

When baskets traveled from one part of the world to another with explorers, the knowledge of techniques and materials used were shared from land to land. This explains how so many Asian techniques are found in European baskets, and how European techniques then carried over to America. Because of this, the basic types of basket weave patterns can be applied to grasses, trees, and other natural fibers found around the world.

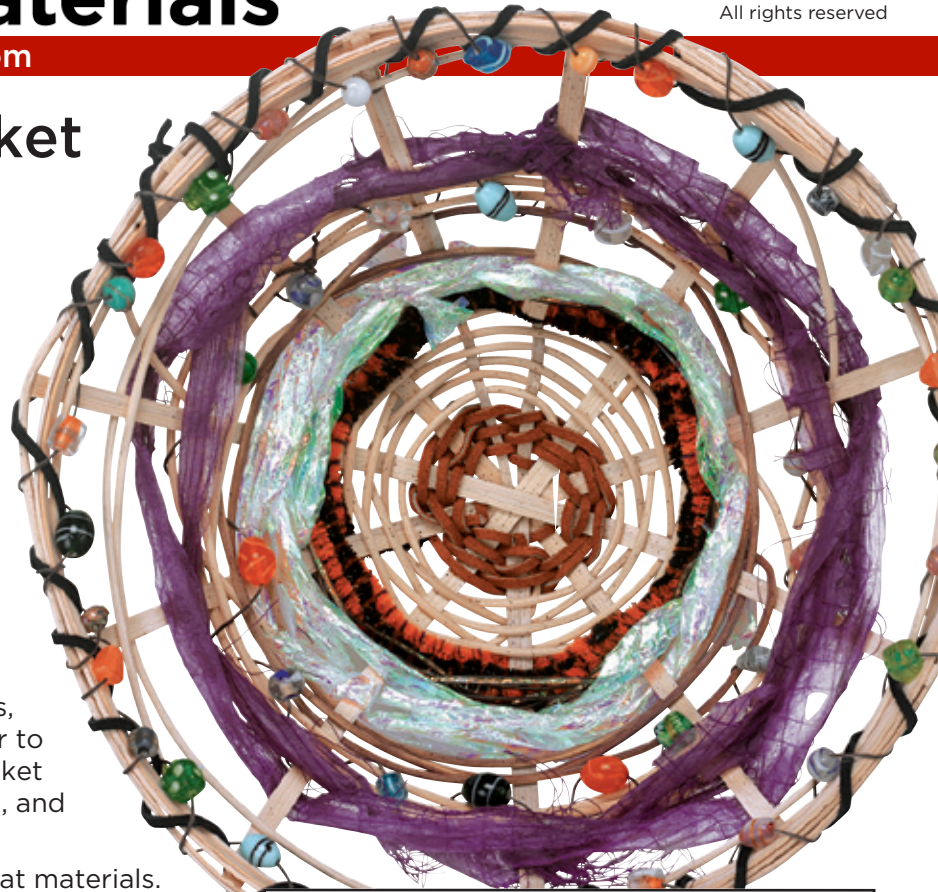
Splint weaving is a technique of weaving with flat materials. In Asia, these materials include reed and cane, the products of the vine that grows in the Indonesian rainforest. Splint weaving in Europe and the Americas is also done using reed and cane, but includes traditional fibers such as Oak, Ash, and Hickory. Round fibered weaving is done with a tremendous variety of fibers. Willow, honeysuckle, and grapevine, along with many other sturdy vines, have been used for centuries to weave baskets. The requirements for basketry fibers are the same around the world. They must be flexible enough to bend yet tough enough to make a durable basket.

A variety of new “fibers” are being used today by basket-makers. Using traditional basket weaving methods, contemporary basket artists are always experimenting with fibers of the new age. Newspapers, plastics, steel, paper — you name it — if it’s flexible, someone has probably woven it into a basket.

GRADES 5-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Watch a video about basket-weaving techniques.
2. Soak flat and round reeds in large buckets.
3. Gather recycled items to weave, such as strips of old jeans or t-shirts, grocery bags, wrapping paper or maps, food packaging, and other materials.
4. Supply a 24” long piece of hemp cord for “twining,” or beginning the basket.



Materials (required)

Natural Reed for Basketmaking, 3/8” flat reed, 175 ft (60961-1038) and 3/32” round reed, 750 ft coil (60961-1332); share one each across class

Fiskars[®] Recycled Scissors, 8” bent (57097-1108); share eight pairs across class

Midwest Products Grip Pins, box of 50 (34956-1001); need one per student

Needles, blunt tapestry, #13, 12-pack (65104-1009); share two packages across class

Darice[®] Hemp Twine, 20-lb, 400 ft roll (62985-1020); share one across class

Lineco[®] Books By Hand Waxed Linen Thread, package of three 20 yd spools (64209-1020); share across class

Acco[®] Binder Clips, medium size 1-1/4” box of 12, (57330-4114); share six boxes across class

Various recycled/upcycled materials for weaving, such as:

- Strips of denim or cotton fabric
- Grocery bags
- Twisted newspapers or wrapping paper
- Discarded food packaging materials
- Wire
- Cording
- Old towels

Optional Materials

Picard Classic Glass Trade Bead Assortment, 4 oz (61538-1004)

Preparation, continued

5. Gather old towels to place on laps and under buckets.

Process

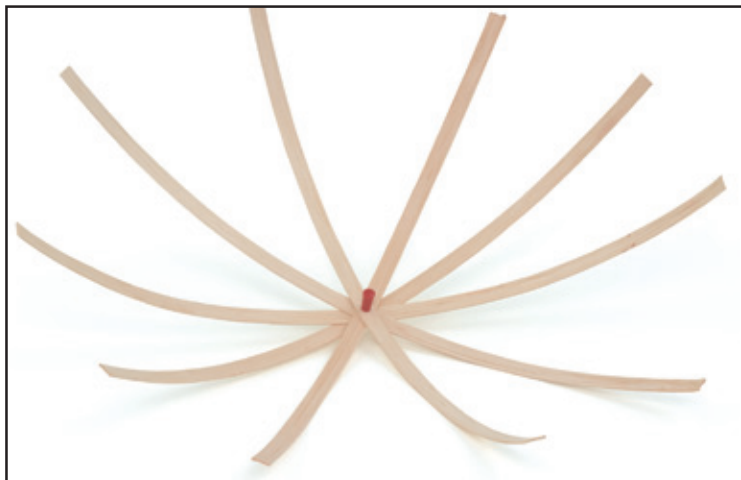
1. Cut five 12" long spokes out of the soaked, flat reed. Mark the center of each reed with a pencil, stack the reeds, and push a grip pin through the center mark. Split one spoke in half with scissors from one end to the middle point to result in an odd number of spokes. Spread the reed apart so that it looks like the spokes of a bicycle wheel.

NOTE: Soak the basket for a minute between steps or whenever the reed starts to look lighter in color, or is drying out.

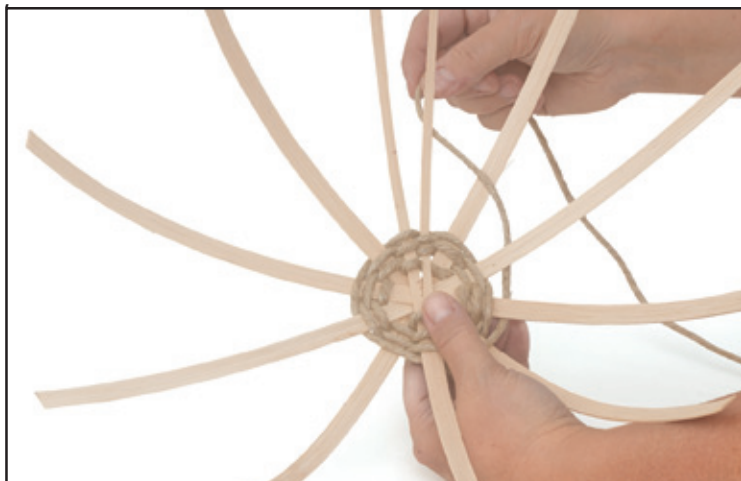
2. Start weaving by "twining," or using a piece of hemp twine to fill the small openings at the center of the basket base. Tie the twine onto one spoke, then alternate over and under each spoke, going around the basket base until there are three or four rows. Keep the weaving tight, while holding the spokes with the thumb on the bottom and fingers on top of the non-dominant hand. Remove the grip pin.
3. Now switch to the soaked round reed for the weaving. To start a reed, secure it below by first pushing a thick needle under a row of twining on the underside of the basket to make a space for the reed. Then slide the reed in alongside the needle and withdraw the needle. Begin by weaving the opposite of the previous row. In other words, go over a reed that has a twine under it, and under a reed that has twine over it. Weave under and over the spokes for at least three rows. To finish a reed, push the end down under two rows of reed at a spoke, using the needle to make a space, and trim the reed. Soak the basket.
4. At this point, a recycled material can take the place of the round reed, using the same technique. Recycled materials and reed can be alternated to create the body of the basket. Keep the spokes relatively flat while weaving, to create a saucer-shaped basket.
5. Finish the basket by creating a rim. Use a piece of flat reed that is long enough that it will just overlap the circumference of the basket. Soak it in water. While it is soaking, trim all the basket spokes to about 1/2" above the last row at the top of the basket. Position the flat reed in place, slightly overlapped, and secure it with clothespins or binder clips. The rim will be sewn using the blunt tapestry needle threaded with hemp twine, yarn, or waxed linen thread. Start from the inside and push the needle under the rim and one or two rows of the basket, then cross back over to the inside, repeating all the way around the rim, removing the clothespins or clips as necessary. Note: Leave some twine loose when beginning the stitches so the last stitch can be knotted to it.

Options

- Make a whole basket using the twining method without switching to round reed. Just choose materials that are flexible enough for this process.
- Turn the spokes up as the basket is being made to make a bowl-shaped basket.
- Use a bundle of round reed for the rim, or sew recycled materials onto the rim, adding beads to the stitches.



Step 1: Create spokes from flat reed and secure them in the center with a grip pin.



Step 2: Begin by "twining" or weaving through the spokes with hemp cord or yarn.



Step 3: Alternate round reed and recycled materials to create the body of the basket. Add embellishments and finish the basket with a rim.

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.

5-8 • Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.

9-12 • Students apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks.

Content Standard #4 — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

5-8 • Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures.

9-12 • Students differentiate among a variety of historical and cultural contexts in terms of characteristics and purposes of works of art.

