Basket Weaving Tote Basket

Facilitator – Karen Saker

ksaker@neo.rr.com - 330-394-1662

Note – these are basic basket weaving instructions. The tote basket we are making in class is a copyrighted design so it cannot be printed in this forum.

Basket Weaving Terms and Techniques

Tools

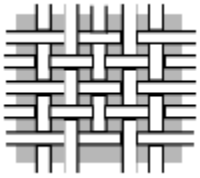
You will need a pan or pail for water, pinch clothespins, a yardstick, pencil, clippers or heavy scissors, an awl or small flat screwdriver.

Soaking

Commercial reed needs to be soaked in warm water for about ten minutes. Ash, cherry and walnut need less soaking time. (Note – do not let your pets drink water from your soaking tub as the reed is treated with insecticides during production.) Don't over-soak the reed or it will become soft and spongy!

Laying Out the Base

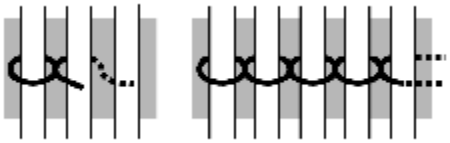
Bases are laid out in a basic over 1/under 1 weave, each row being opposite its neighbor. Start with 3 x 3 spokes, centered, and grow to the required number of spokes for each basket's directions. The bass for the tote basket is solid, so rows 2, 4, 6 & 8 will get a weaver that only needs to be as long as the base, with enough extra to tuck in on each end.



Measure the base for width and length, making sure spacing is even. Halve the measurements and measure from the center for more accuracy. Unless specified, bases are generally laid out rough side up with the center of the spokes marked on the rough side.

Twining

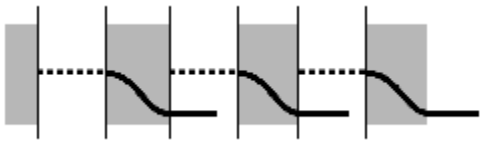
Twining is a weave normally using round reed. Use a long piece of the size specified (or use 2 pieces) and find the center. Give it a twist between your fingers (or crimp it with a needle nose pliers) and fold it in half. Hook it over a spoke and bring both ends out to the front.



Have the long ends going towards the right if you are right-handed, reverse for left. Take the top (or front) piece and put it behind the next spoke and back out to the front. Repeat until the correct number of rows is completed. Cut off ends on the inside.

Triple Twining

Triple twining is twining with three pieces of round reed instead of two pieces. Use three pieces of reed starting: one behind one spoke, one behind the next (second) spoke to the right, and one behind the next (third) spoke to the right, with ends coming out to the front.



Take the piece farthest to the left and put it behind (and out to the front again) the fourth spoke. Take the piece now farthest to the left and put it behind the fifth spoke. Continue taking the weaver farthest to the left and weaving it behind the "next available spoke" - the one with nothing behind it yet. This twining is actually "over two, behind one."

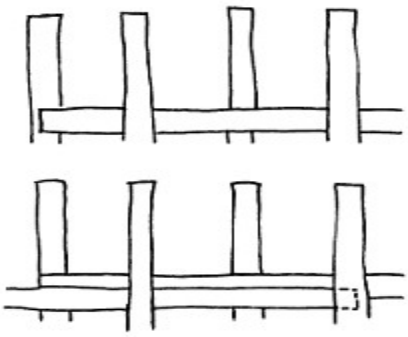
Upsett

To "upsett" means to gently bend up the spokes at the base perimeters. This just makes the upward weaving easier.

To Weave a Row

Unless specified, normal weaving is weaving one row at a time, over one/under one. Weave with the good side of the reed (smooth, less splintery side) towards the outside of the basket. Place the end of the reed on the outside of a spoke.
Weave all the way around - over one/under one - using lots of clothespins to hold it in place. The more clothespins you use, the better shaped basket you will get.

To finish a row, overlap your piece of reed by four spokes and cut it off. If woven correctly, both ends will be hidden. The end of the weaver will slip into weaving at the beginning of that same row.



If weaving with flat/oval reed, it is best to shave off the "oval" on the bottom piece, so that the area of overlap is not so bulky.

Consecutive rows are opposite the row before it (if over/under, then under/over). Be sure to rotate your basket so that all your stop/starts will not be on the same side. Try to start far enough to the left on each side, so that you don't have to "overlap by four" around a corner. Also be sure to pack down the rows as you weave so that there are no spaces showing between the rows of weaving.

Fold and Tuck

Unless specified, you will fold and tuck the outside spokes. Fold from the outside, the end of a spoke and tuck it into a row (or rows) of weaving on the inside of the basket. It is best to fold it over, cut off any excess, and then tuck it in to get a clean finish. The inside spokes can be cut off with the top of the last row of weaving.

1.Laying out the base

This is the perfect base. The space between the spokes is square, and approximately 3/8ths of an inch. The spaces should never be wider than the basket spokes

This base needs adustments.
The spokes need to be straightened out so that the rows are parallel.

Position your basket base in the center of your spokes. Curved spokes should be positioned on the outside edges of your base, as with the horizontal spokes above.

spokes. Turn your base so that the split is at the top of the base in front of you.

corners in place as you weave to keep the weaver close to the base edge.

close to the base edge as possible. Use and remove clothes pins as necessary.

3. Footing the base

This step is done after weaving the 3rd or 4th row. Start in the left corner and tug gently on the corner spoke. Tug a bit harder on the 2nd spoke.

Tug firmly on the middle spoke. This will form a definite arch in the bottom of the basket. The basket will sit nicely on the "feet" created in the corners.

Finish the bottom by tugging on the 4th spoke and gently on the right corner. Straighten the spokes and repeat on all four sides. Repeat.

4. Shaping corners

Weave basket with your left hand, using your right index finger to hold your reed in place as you weave around each side.

Be careful not to pull the weaver too tight on your corners. That will cause your spokes to bend inward, making weaving difficult.

Do not allow your corners to become too lose. This can happen if you are not careful to keep your spokes upright and parallel as you weave.

5. Packing

This base needs to be packed. Basket rows should be "pulled or packed" firmly down on top of the rows closest to the bottom. Do not allow gaps between the rows of weavers.

Use your thumbs and index fingers to hold the basket as you make adjustments. Start at the bottom of the basket and work your way up, packing one row at a time.

This is what a nicely shaped basket will look like. Notice the arched bottom, the straight parallel spokes, the spacing in the corners, and the tight rows.

6. The top

Cut the weaver 4 spokes beyond the split. Taper the end of the weaver gradually from the end to the split. Finish weaving.

Trim the top of your basket. Leave about 1 1/2"-2" above the top row. Carefully re-wet the top and spokes if they have dried out during weaving.

Bend the outside spokes firmly over the top row of weavers. There are an odd number of spokes, resulting in either bending 2 or cutting 2 at the end.

7. Tucking

Round the end gradually (often ends crease), and tuck it into the 3rd row down from the top rows until it lies flat against the middle of the basket.

A small flat screwdriver or a popsicle stick may be helpful in lifting the rows that the end must be forced under. Work with the top of the basket laying on the table facing you.

I prefer to use the thumbnail on my left hand to poke the 3rd row into the basket center while using my left index finger and thumb to guide the spokes into place.

Double Braided Rim

1. Weave your basket and then at the top, twine for two rows. Tuck in EVERY stake. Cut your round reed according to the length on the pattern. Mine are 22". Insert the round reed as in the photo under the twining. There is one piece of round reed for every stake and they are looped to the next stake. Make sure all your ends are even at the top. This gives each stake 2 pieces of round reed. These 2 pieces are held together and are now counted together as one spoke.

2. Start with any spoke and take it behind one spoke to the right and to the outside of the basket. Move to the next spoke to the right and take it behind the next spoke to the right and to the outside. Each spoke to the right does the same in its turn.

The last spoke standing goes behind and through the one that is already in place.

3. Again, start anywhere and take any spoke over and through the spoke to the right and to the inside of the basket as show above. Move to the next spoke to the right and do the same. Continue around the basket with each spoke in its turn.

Now, even though the spokes are not standing straight up as they were when we started, you still need to repeat steps 2 and 3 completely again. So, once again, start with any spoke and take it behind the next one to the right and to the outside of the basket and complete steps two and three. After repeating steps 2 and 3 a second time, make sure the spokes lie against the wall of the basket.

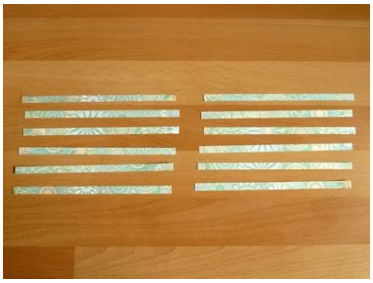
Let the spokes dry overnight, then cut the ends at an angle that doesn't show from the top.

.

WOVEN STAR (Can also be made from ash splint)

Step 1 Cut 12 strips of paper or card, each about 6" by ¼" (15 cm by 0.7 cm).Using strips this size will make a star about 5½" wide. Of course you can scale the size up or down if you like!

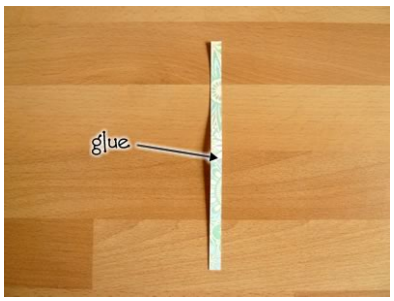
Step 2 Take two of the strips and fold them in half. This is so that you'll be able to see where the center of each strip is for the next step.



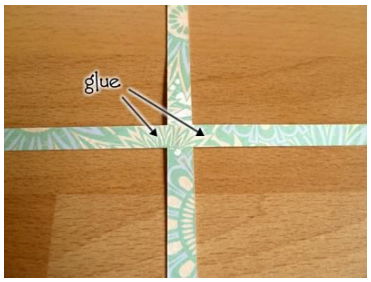
Step 3 Take one of the two strips you folded and place it vertically on the table, then glue a small patch at the center of the strip with your glue stick. If your paper has a colored side and a blank side, then make sure you put it colored-side up. Lay the other strip across the first strip at right angles so that the two get glued together.

Step 4

Glue two small patches of glue on the horizontal strip, as indicated here:



Place two more strips vertically next on either side of the first strip onto the patches you just glued.



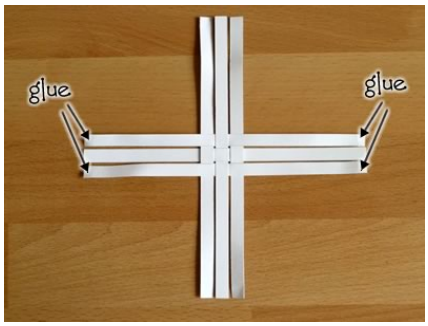
Step 5

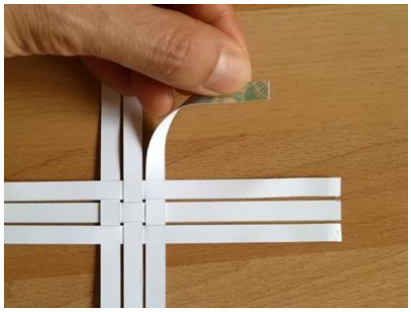
Put down small patches of glue in the positions indicated here. Place two more strips horizontally, so that they weave over and under the strips that are already there. They will get glued down with the patches of you just glued.

Step 6

Turn over the mat you've woven, so that the blank side faces up. Then put glue on the tips of the strips, as shown in the picture below.

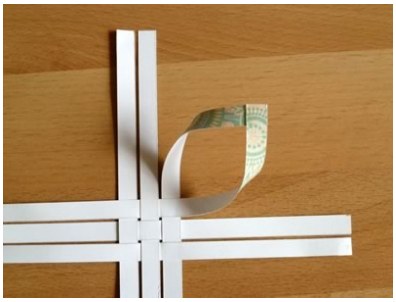
Take hold of the top-right strip, and bend it over like this:





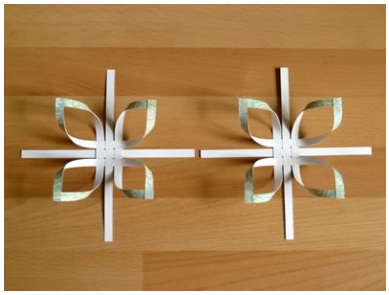
Then take of the strip next to it, bend it over, and glue it to the first strip to make a "petal" like this:

Repeat for the other four corners. Your half-finished star should now look like this:



Step 7

Repeat steps 2 to 6, so that you have two half-stars like this:

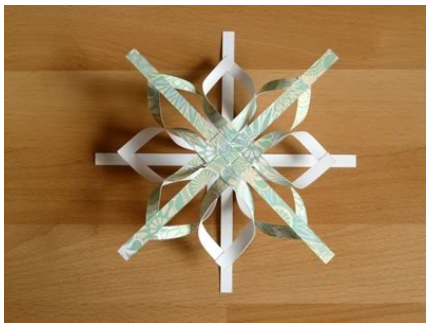


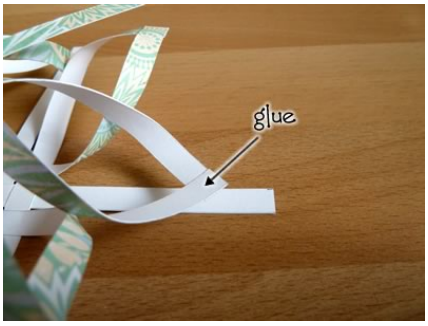
Step 8

Place one half star on top of the other, offset by 45 ° so that the "petals" of one half line up with the strips of the other half. Also, the petals of the two halves should face inward so that the two halves "hug" each other.:

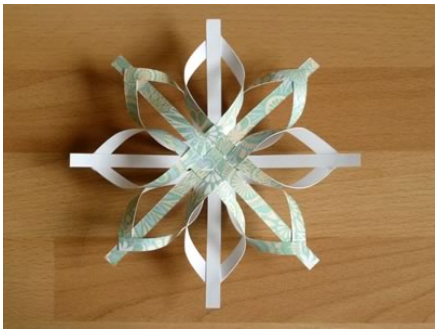
Step 9

Put glue on the tip of one petal, as indicated here:Feed the strip through the loop of the petal, and glue it to the petal, as shown below. The strip should extend roughly ¼" (between 0.5 and 1 cm) beyond the petal, depending on how long your strips are. Basically when you put the halves together you'll see that the strips naturally extend a bit beyond the petals, and you just want to glue them in the position they are naturally in.

\ 



Do the same thing for all the other pairs of petals and strips. Your star should now look like this:



Optionally, you can trim the arms of the star so that they end in points like this: