

## INTRODUCTION

By Pam Hodam

Welcome, to My Basic Pine Needle weaving class.

Each year, pine trees shed their needles which can be used to make pine needle baskets. Pine needle basket weaving is a centuries-old craft. It is inexpensive and uses natural materials and can be used to make unique gifts, like ornaments, coasters, baskets and more.

### Gathering Pine Needles

If they are available, gather needles from Ponderosa Pine trees, we are fortunate to live in a state with such trees. Needles are anywhere from 6"-15", depending on the kind you use. The length is perfect for basket making.

If you don't have access to longer pine needles, you can use shorter needles, depending on what is available in your local area. Some trees offer pine needles 4-6" in length which can also be used.

Gather your needles in the fall before the rains or in the early spring. Try to gather needles in a undisturbed area so that they aren't broken from being walked on.

### Preparing Your Pine Needles

Soak your needles in a pail of hot, soapy water. You may add some bleach to kill black spots and mold. Bleach will lighten your needles. Let your needles sit 10 to 15 min. Rinse well and drain. Add more water and stir gently to dislodge any remaining dirt. Spread needles out to dry on a tea towel or paper towels. Store your needles in a rectangular storage container until you are ready to start on a project.

. Some basket makers sort their needles ahead of time, discarding thin or broken needles.

. You can tie them in bundles or store them in a flat box.

### Softening Your Pine Needles

When you are ready to start on a basket, gather 2-3 handfuls of pine needles and place them in a pail, pour HOT Water over them. Let them sit for a least 30 minutes. This is so that the needles soften and will bend instead of breaking when you sew with them. Your needles won't get moldy if you leave them in the water for a couple of days

The needles have a knob (fascicle or boot) on the end and you can remove it or leave it on, depending on your preference. For our project we will be removing the boot. I do leave it on when I am doing a decorative design on a bowl,(see sample on table).

Making a Small project as the Coaster that we are starting today, will give you a feel for Basket Weaving. So go home, experiment with the different stitches and different widths of gathered needles , trying raffia ,or cotton threads to stitch your baskets together. Gather some small pine cones or acorns, feather or beads for you lids and sides of your project.

I hope you enjoy the small journey into pine needle basket weaving, and this will inspire you to make your own pine needle baskets.

## PINE NEEDLE BASKETRY --- THE COASTER OR START OF SMALL BASKET

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### TERMS:

1. Pine Needles, 4" to 6" long can be found free , harvest in Sept before it rains.

lay out to dry before storing. Soak in warm water for 30 min. before using. Keep wrapped in a damp paper towel when using, to keeps the needles soft.

2. Raffia : a natural fiber, it comes in various colors and can be found in most craft stores, a small bag goes a long way. Split a strand of Raffia into 1/8 " or 1/4" strips, 18" to 20" , long. no KNOTS weave in and out to hide tails.

3 . Needle: Chenille # 22, for sewing

4. Guage: a piece of a straw cut at 5/8" long. This will hold 7-10 needles. This guide will allow you to add pine needles into your project as needed. Always cut needles at a angle at the boot end, before inserting. Don't cut off all the Boot ends , I will show you how to use in another project.

5.Sissors: used to cut raffia and cut the boots off the pine needles

6. Terms for the Pine Needle. Tip, pointed end of the pine needle, Shaft, center part of the pine needle, Boot, end that is attached to tree .

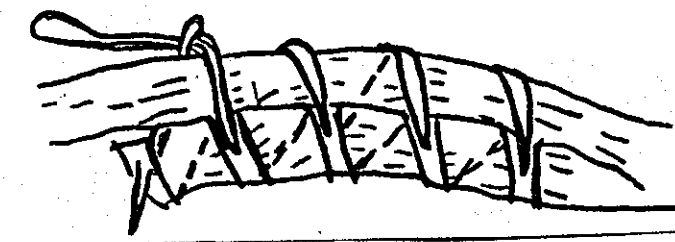


7. Guaging your stitches for a project. After initial wrap for a small project you will need about 15 to 20 stitches around your circle. Space evenly for best look.. Larger projects 20 to 30 stitches is preferable.

## The STITCHES

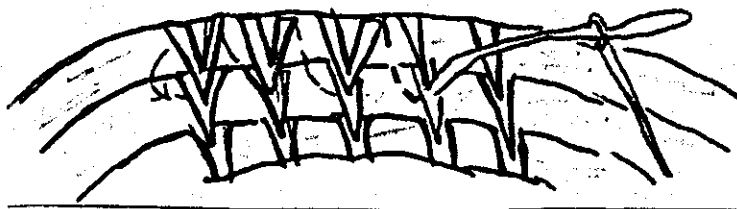
ON STRAIGHT WORK, STITCHES ARE MADE OR SPACED  $\frac{5}{8}$ " apart. for a circle or half circle the stitches should be spaced  $\frac{1}{2}$ " apart. Spacing the stitches closer together at the beginning of the work insures a beautiful design.

### CHAIN STITCH



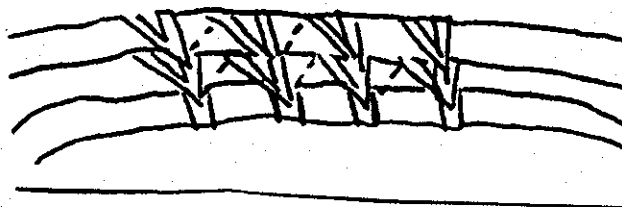
Working to the left space first row of stitches **EVENLY**, **THIS** is important. For the second row, split each stitch in the first row by coming through the center of it from the back. As you add rows, the stitches form a vertical chain.

### BACK STITCH



Work a row of chain stitches. Then, working back across that row (working to the right). come through each chain stitch hole from the back and bring the thread over the needles and back through next right chain. Continue all around to your start point

### WHEAT STITCH



Chain stitch the entire row. Then starting again at beginning of row, come through each chain stitch hole from the back and bring thread over to the left, over the top and down to bottom of chain stitch again.

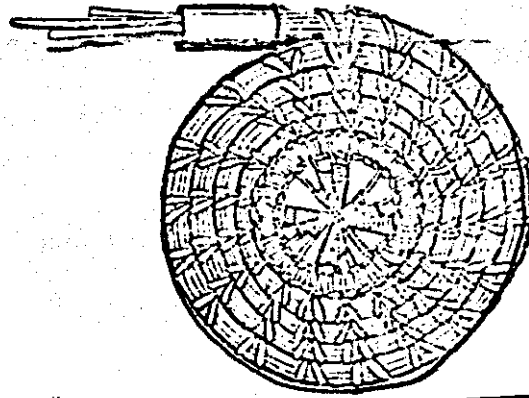
## FERN STITCH



## BACK STITCH EACH ROW OF A WHEAT STITCH

## OVERCASTING OR FEATHER STITCH

## *Overcasting or Feather Stitch*



Attaching pine needles to a worked ring is accomplished with the Overcasting Stitch. Work counterclockwise with seven pine needles to the worked ring, space the stitches evenly. Complete the first row with seven needles. Additional needles are added blunt end first (Cut blunt ends on a slant). Second row: Split each stitch in the first row by coming thru back to front and over to the next stitch, repeat this to end of row. Third row: Do not split any stitch, place stitch in center of V. stitch in second row. Continue until article is completed. This is an Overcasting or Feather Stitch.

## STARTING YOUR COASTER OR BASKET

1. Collect your supplies, Raffia; peel raffia down to a strip 1/8" to 1/4". A piece of raffia should be about 18" long. Thread your needle with the darker end.
2. Select three shafts (bunches of three) pine needles, Cut off the Boot end at an angle. Put the ends together. Lay raffia along this group of needles with end of raffia toward the boot end. Holding the raffia and needles together, begin wrapping the raffia around the needles. 1 1/2" from the boots and wrap toward the boot ends.
3. Sew through end of the needles and raffia twice, to hold together.
4. Shape needle ends into a tight circle. Where the end touches, sew through the bundle to form a circle. Sew twice more to hold tight. THIS IS ROW 1
5. To form the second row, wrap the raffia around the bundle 5 times and then stitch through the circle. Wrap 5 more times, adding 3 more needles, ( This is called a wrap stitch.)
6. To form third row, continue wrapping and stitching, but this time go 1/3rd of the way through row 2 only (always adding bunches of 3 needles as needed.)
7. Row 4, omit the wrapping. Gauge your stitches so that you will have 15-20 stitches in the fourth row. (They will be caught into the 3rd row about 1/3 of the way up the bundle
8. Now slip your straw gauge onto the bundle of needles, you will be adding new bunches of 3 needles through the straw. Stagger the cut heads so your needle length will vary. Remember you should only have 6-7 needles in the gauge. You will add new ones every 3-4 stitches. This row is important. KEEP AN EQUAL SPACE AROUND THE ROW.
9. To do Row 5-10 you will be doing a Chain Stitch: working to the left, space the stitches evenly. For this row split each stitch by coming through the center of it from the back, angle slightly to the left. continue same stitch on all rows. row 5 no split, 6-10 split.
11. Row 10 as you near the end of the row, quit adding needles to your gauge and taper off and wrap the end, weaving in and out of your raffia [NEVER KNOTTING]. If you want to continue to form a basket continue adding needles to gauge and start Row 11 stacking onto top of 10- continue the same stitch . continue rows tilting slightly out till cereal bowl size.