

HOW TO MAKE A PINE NEEDLE BASKET

The slaves who lived at Kingsley Plantation made all the items they needed for daily life. They grew their own food, made their own fishing poles, built their own furniture, and made their own storage containers. Baskets were easy to use for storage and all the supplies needed to make the baskets could be found in the local environment. But as you are about to learn, basket making is an art.

Baskets are still made worldwide and are colorful and beautiful, as well as functional. Most baskets are made in a similar way, but with different materials. This basket can be made with pine needles, sweet grass, or raffia. Just follow these steps and diagrams and you'll be on your way to making coasters and baskets.

Step 1: Divide the raffia into bunches with ten strands in each. Thread needle with a long strand of raffia.

Step 2: Fold over an inch at the end of the first bunch. This will be your starting point to wrap your coils. The coils are what make the basket! Sew the folded end together with raffia.

When you feel comfortable with starting your baskets by this method, you might try using a button or bead for a more ornamental basket bottom!



Step 3: Coil the bunch around the oblong shape and sew across two coils. Keep your work as flat as possible so your basket will sit flat. Continue wrapping and sewing until it is about 4 inches wide.



Step 4: You can stop at this point and have a coaster or continue on to complete the basket. To continue, stack the bunch and sew along the top of the last coil you completed. Keep stacking and your basket gets taller and taller!

Step 5: When the basket is about 2 inches tall you can stop. For this activity we are going to now make a lid, but if you use your imagination and the basic skills learned from this activity you can go on to build bigger, fancier baskets! Colored raffia could add a new twist to your basket skills.

Step 6: To make the lid repeat steps 1-3. When the coils are equal in width to the bottom of your basket, stop and sew the edge tightly. Then take some raffia and sew one edge of the lid to the basket. Your basket now has a hinge top.