

the

curious Weaver

November 1994 Issue 1

THE CURIOUS WEAVER is an info-letter to be published twice a year. It will contain projects, ideas, history and resource information for anyone interested in weaving, braiding, dyeing and related craft skills.

I hope to include an ideas exchange for anyone who has new ideas to share or would like more information on these crafts. Perhaps you have a weaving problem that could be solved.

Weaving is a fascinating craft. It is one of the oldest crafts of the human race, dating back at least 10,000 years. Textiles are not often found in archaeological excavations, because of deterioration, but the tools of our trade are. There are many different ways of weaving a cloth or braiding a braid. For centuries, humans have used their creative minds to produce a myriad of practical techniques. Some of the world's finest textiles have been woven on little more than several sticks. These fabrics are technically brilliant.

Sadly, many of these techniques are seen as too slow or not commercially viable today. It is with great pleasure that the weavers of today promote and encourage the knowledge and skills that they develop.

In weaving, there is always more to learn! Your approach to the craft can be light and practical or dedicated and mathematical, it has something for everyone.

I am establishing this info-letter to promote the craft of handweaving in all its many forms. Initially it will be a complimentary service posted to you.

I hope you will enjoy what it offers, and I look forward to any suggestions you have.

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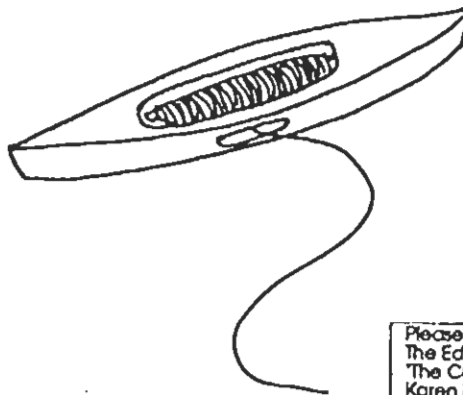
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Woven Paper Stationery

Paper weaving is a fun way of learning the basics of plain weave without a loom. You will need some sheets of plain coloured stationery paper with matching envelopes, a blade and some glue.

METHOD

With a pencil, lightly mark a 30mm square at the centre top of a page of stationery (diagram 1). Using a blade, cut along the top and bottom lines of the square (diagram 2)

Between these cut lines, cut about five or six zigzag or curved horizontal lines. These are the *warp* slits.

Carefully erase the pencil markings (diagram 3). Cut a rectangle, 30mm x 45mm, of stationery paper in a different colour. Cut this rectangle, along the longer sides, into strips of various widths. Keep the strips in the order they were cut. These strips are the *west*. Diagram 4.

Gently weave the strips, in the order they were cut, under, over, under, and so on, through the *warp* slits on the stationery in a plain weave (diagram 5). All the ends of the paper *west* should be taken to the back of the weaving. Make sure the *west* strips fit together as snugly as

possible. A little patience is needed when weaving in the last *west* strip; it may need to be trimmed slightly or sometimes omitted. Neatly and lightly glue all the paper *west* ends to the back of the stationery or leave them unglued and use the reverse side as the right side of the stationery (diagram 6).

Envelopes can be decorated in the same way by opening the seams of the envelope to weave the pattern. Finish by resealing the envelope with glue.

Adapted from 'The Australian Weaving Book' by Karen Madigan, Little Hills Press, Sydney, 1990.

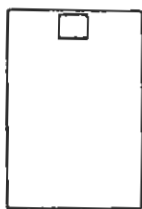


Diagram 1

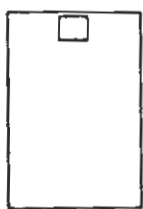


Diagram 2

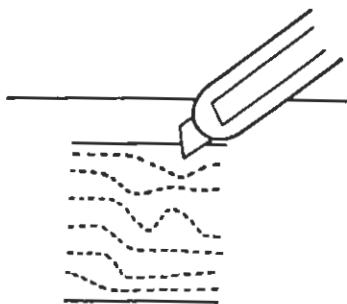


Diagram 3



Diagram 4

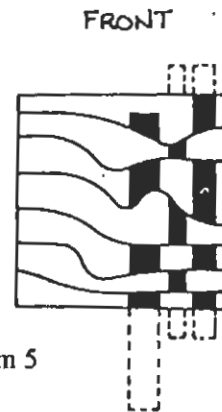


Diagram 5



Diagram 6

WEFT KASURI

Kasuri is the technique of tying the weft and/or warp yarn before weaving. It produces the distinctive blurred patterning that these textiles are famous for. Kasuri comes from the Japanese word *Kasureru*, which means 'to blur'. *Ikat* is another word, from Indonesia, to describe the same technique.

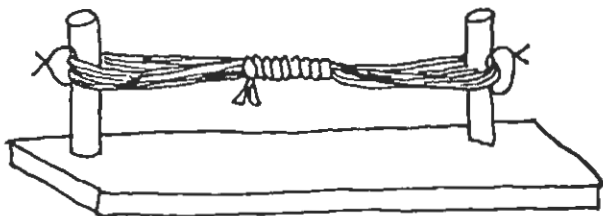


Diagram 1

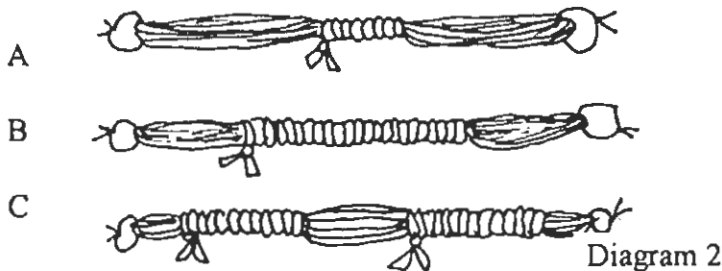


Diagram 2

In weft kasuri, only the weft is tied and dyed to produce the pattern. The weft yarn is tightly tied to resist dyeing in designated areas. When woven, this produces a pattern on the final cloth. Try using cotton yarn for your first experiments as it doesn't stretch too much, but retains a forgiving amount of elasticity for weaving. Fibre reactive dyes are easy to use in this technique.

Traditionally, kasuri weft is dyed with indigo, but the wide range of colours available to us today can create inspiring designs.

HOW TO WEAVE WEFT KASURI

Firstly, it is necessary to weave a sample cloth the same width as the final fabric to determine the number and length of weft picks per centimetre. Use the same yarn also. When the sample is woven, mark the selvedge turn of each weft with a pencil and unravel it. Measure the

Dyeing to create kasuri fabrics

by Karen Madigan

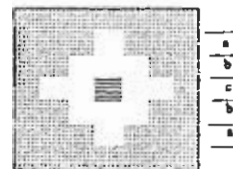


Diagram 3



Diagram 4

actual length of yarn used for 10 woven rows, and calculate an average length for one row. Wind a skein of yarn, equal to the length of one row (diagram 1). The number of threads in each skein will depend on your pattern and relate to the length of your chosen pattern on the finished cloth. Do not make the skeins too thick as they will be difficult to tie successfully. The skeins can be tied with string, raffia; natural or polypropylene. Tie the skeins very securely and dye them as desired.

Diagram 2 shows a simple tying arrangement for a pattern. One large pattern motif could be used or several could be planned across a wider warp. Diagrams 3 & 4 illustrate two ways of weaving this pattern on the cloth.

For detailed instruction: *Japanese Ikat Weaving*, by Jun and Noriko Tomita, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London 1982

Clothing

Weavers are often looking for creative clothing patterns for their unique cloth. This traditional Japanese pattern is styled for minimum cutting or waste of material. It is also perfect for narrow widths of fabric, woven on small looms.

A fabric width of 47cms (14 ½) is common in Japan for kimono textiles. This has necessitated garments made with a centre back seam. From a Japanese viewpoint, the back seam is considered an important design element in the garment and totally acceptable. Unlike Australia where the narrowest commercial fabric is 90cms wide and the centre back seam can be omitted and cut on the fold.

The vest pattern presented here can be cut from a finished fabric width of 35.5cms (14").

Alternatively, a centre back seam can be added and the fabric width need only be 18cm (7 ½").

Of course, this will double the length of the fabric required.

To cut a lining for the vest use the same pattern but omit the collar and tie pattern pieces. A padding could be included for a warmer garment.

The pattern is designed to be hip length. To shorten or lengthen this, adjust the front and back length and the sides and collar by the same amount.

It is always a good idea to trial the pattern in some calico or other waste fabric. The extra effort is really worthy to achieve a great fit.

All measurements given are standard measurements for sizes 10, 12, 14 and 16. The garment is not a close fitting style, so it may fit larger sizes easily. A seam allowance of 1.5cms is included in the design. All measurements are in centimetres.

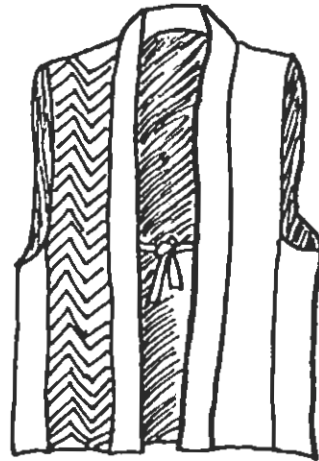
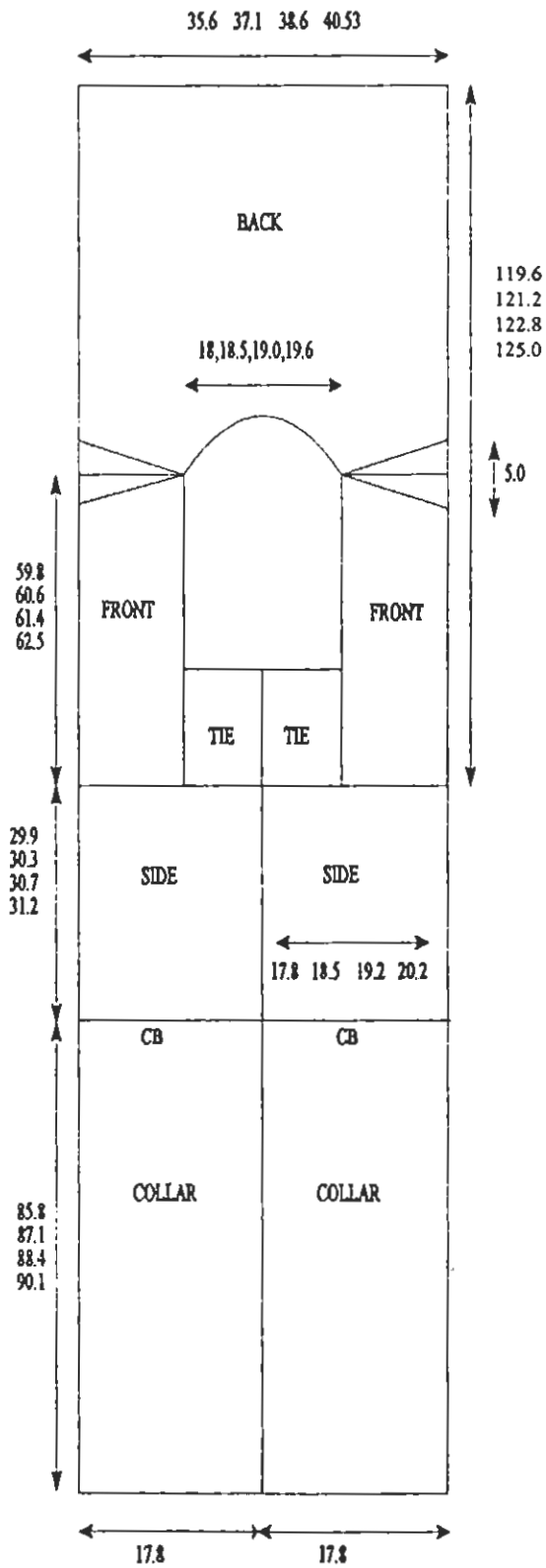
As weavers can custom weave fabric, many variations and innovative ideas could be developed in this vest. For example, the sides could be woven with a different coloured weft to the main garment, or the collar in another pattern using a different treadling or lifting sequence. Pattern adapted from 'Make your own Japanese Clothes' by John Marshall, Kodansha International, Tokyo, 1988.



a Japanese Vest

MEASUREMENTS

SIZES	10	12	14	16
BUST	84	88	92	97
WAIST	64	68	72	77
HIPS	89	93	97	102
Length, from shoulder to hip	59.8	60.6	61.4	62.5



A Traditional Japanese Vest

Pattern Layout for vest. Sizes 10, 12, 14, 16

All measurements are in centimetres. A seam allowance of 1.5 cms is included. Diagram not to scale.

The art of knotting exists in every culture in the world in some form. Although often originally intended for functional purposes, they developed into an art form of their own.

In China for example, decorative knotting developed as a form of communication where people could express sentiments of goodwill, luck or longevity.

Examples of Chinese decorative knotting as old as the Chou Dynasty (1112-256 BC) have been found. The massive industrialisation of China in this century brought the art of knotting to the edge of extinction.

Today, people are rediscovering the relaxation and artistic satisfaction of knotting. An increasing and more diverse range of materials is inspiring artists to develop this ancient art form.

Presented here is the 'good luck' knot. It is very easy to do, especially after a little practice.

You will need some cord which can be purchased or handmade. A hand twisted cord in silk embroidery yarn works well.

Chinese Knotting

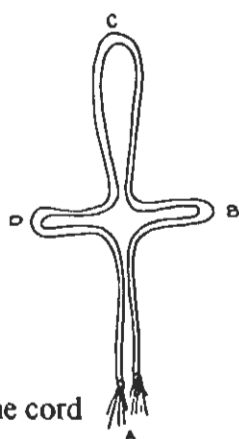


Figure 1 Lay out the cord

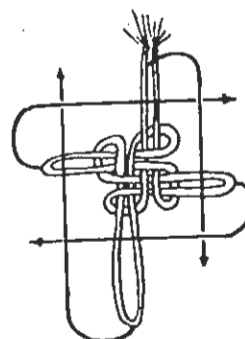


Figure 3 The final stage

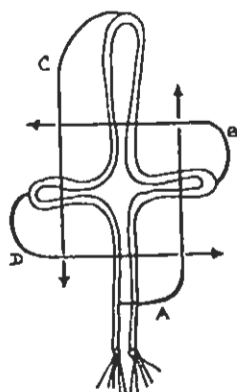


Figure 2

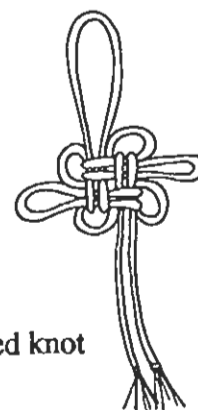
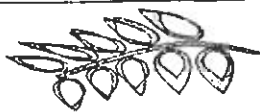


Figure 4 The completed knot

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This is a short list of an expanding database of Australian and New Zealand spinning and weaving suppliers. If you would like your business added to this list please phone (065) 537 004. Copies of the full database listing are available by sending 2 x 45c stamps to Karen Madigan, 3 Paradise Close OLD BAR 2430



DID YOU KNOW!

Last century, a chemist named Henry Smith, believed that a yellow dye extracted from a NSW eucalypt would be of great economic value to Australia. Synthetic dyes were soon developed after this and this knowledge and interest disappeared.

Australian Natural Dyes

Natural dyes from indigenous Australian plants are largely undeveloped. Our great southern land, with its mystery and wealth of human culture existed without the need for developing commercial dyes. When the Europeans invaded Australia in the late 1700's the industrial and technological age had already dawned, and little energy was used in discovering new dyes.

Since the 1960's there has been a resurgence in practical and historical craft skills. This has led to experimentation and development of natural dyes for creative and non-commercial use. A desire to live simply and naturally by many within our contemporary society has seen native Australian dyes being used more.

In 1978, "dye-making with Eucalypts" by Jean K. Carman was published. This exciting book explored the dyes obtainable from a vast selection of Eucalypts. Botanical and common names of trees in all states of Australia and New Guinea were listed. Jean's experiments obtained colours ranging from yellows and greens through to oranges, tans, rusts and reds. Fallen branches can be used for dyeing by collecting the leaves. The leaves can be stored readily by drying them thoroughly before use. Interestingly, collections made in times of drought will produce a more brilliant and clearer coloured dye than after a period of rain.

To assist fibres such as wool to accept the dye, a mordant is often used. The most common mordant is alum (Potassium aluminium sulphate). This is readily available at a chemist. I normally treat the woollen yarn with the alum before preparing a dyebath, but it could be added to the dyebath. The following is a recipe for the mordant:

120g (5 tbsps) Alum
30g (1 1/2 tbsps) cream of tartar
18 litres water
500g coarse wool

METHOD: Dissolve the alum and cream of tartar in a little hot water and add to the 18 litres of water. Place the clean, dampened woollen yarn into the water and very slowly bring to a boiling point. Simmer gently for one hour. Allow the wool to cool in the water. Rinse the wool before placing it in the dyepot.

If you are preparing less than 500g of woollen yarn just adjust the recipe to your requirements. The amount of wool being added to the dyepot can also be adjusted. For example, to achieve a stronger colour lessen the proportion of yarn to the amount of dye material suggest. Experimentation is the best guide.

TO PREPARE THE DYE POT

Place 1kg of dried crushed Eucalypt leave in 18-20 litres of water. Very slowly bring the solution to the boil and simmer for at least an hour. Strain dye material from the dyebath and place the 500g of damp mordanted wool into it. Simmer gently for 20 minutes. Remove and rinse the dyed wool.

Reference: 'Dye-making with Eucalypts' by Jean Carman, Rigby, 1978.



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THE CURIOUS WEAVER is a new publication for Australasian weavers. This 'hands on' information magazine is currently published twice a year in May and November. Topics include:

Weaving Spinning Dyeing Braiding
and other textile construction techniques

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