

Design Resource

Grass Basketry - Sitargang

Technique of using Natural Grass

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/grass-basketry-sitargang>



1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details

Design Resource

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Introduction

The art of Coiled basketry is one of the famous basketry in India. There is a vast change introduced in the craft by implementing new shapes, design patterns and new techniques. Different forms and shapes are evolved by using natural grass with a technique which consists sewing together the coiled strips, coiling starts from base. The shapes and techniques of basketry vary from one region to other according to the local custom, needs and techniques.

The baskets are largely used by the tribal women to carry food and store grains. In Uttarakhand, women are involved in creation of grass baskets in their leisure time, as the natural wild grass is available abundantly in the hilly areas.

The dried wild grass is wrapped and coiled for rolling. The motifs of basketry are created by adding colored grass in between during weaving process. Coil grass products used for both domestic purpose as well as ritual purposes.

Different patterns and designs are made according to their traditions practiced. Apart from Sitargang in Uttarakhand, Dehradun and Delhi are the major areas producing these grass baskets.



Geometrical motif patterns in striking color combinations.

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details

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1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details



Women engaged in making basket base stand.



Grass basketry is majorly done by women folk.



Darker colors stand out over lighter natural color of grass.

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Experienced women and their work environment.



Minimum tools used in basket making process.



Species of wild grass fibers grow abundantly near rice fields.

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details

Design Resource

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A basic plain basket weaving is being done by uncolored grass.



Skilled artisans beautifully create motif patterns by their own imagination while weaving.



Punja (thick rough grass) is inner stuff; Khaas is the outer covered grass.

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details

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1. Introduction

2. Location Map

3. Tools and Raw Materials

4. Dyeing

5. Making Process

6. Sticking

7. Products

8. Contact Details



Grass is beautifully turned into attractive storing object.



Weaving technique differs as per the product and pattern to be made.

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1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details



Group of artisans work together to create innovative design products.

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Location Map

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1. Introduction

2. Location Map

3. Tools and Raw Materials

4. Dyeing

5. Making Process

6. Sticking

7. Products

8. Contact Details

Design Resource

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<http://www.dsource.in/resource/grass-basketry-sitargang/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. **Tools and Raw Materials**
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details

Tools and Raw Materials

• Tools:

Basic tools used for grass basketry are:

Scissors: It is used to cut the grass.

Iron Awl: It is used during basket making process to stitch the coils.

• Raw Materials:

Natural Grass: Natural Grass is the main raw material used in making process.

Two types of natural grass used are –

- Khaas: It is upper part of the grass is used for weaving.

- Punja: Base part is used for interlacing the knot form one side to another.

Grasses are grown in the month of August which is abundantly available on the banks of River Kailash.

Dye Colors: The artificial raw color powder which is available in local markets is used to color the grass.



Natural dyed grass in intense color.

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Grasses grown in the grounds which is available in plenty.



Colored plastic strips to embellish designs.



Grass is dried in shade for weaving process.

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. **Tools and Raw Materials**
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details

Design Resource

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1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. **Tools and Raw Materials**
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details



Dyeing process is done in traditional method by using natural fuel.

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Different types of iron awl used in weaving.



Iron awl helps in splitting grass.



Colored powder used for dyeing.

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. **Tools and Raw Materials**
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details

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Dyeing

Natural grass is dyed in bright attractive colors to create design patterns. The most common colors used are the red, green, dark blue, pink, orange and brown which give a vibrant look to the products. These natural colors are purchased from the local markets.

Dyeing process starts by boiling water at high temperature and then adding color powder to the water. The dried grass is then immersed in the boiling solution and soaked in it for half an hour so that it absorbs color solution. The colored grass is then kept for drying for a whole day.



The even grass is split into two.

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. **Dyeing**
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details

Design Resource

Grass Basketry - Sitargang

Technique of using Natural Grass

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<http://www.dsource.in/resource/grass-basketry-sitargang/dyeing>



Roughness is removed at the edges to make grass even.



Dry grass is soaked in boiling water for few minutes to make it soft and flexible.

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. **Dyeing**
5. Making Process
6. Sticing
7. Products
8. Contact Details



Color powder is added to the boiling water.



The container is closed to avoid vapor escape.

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Technique of using Natural Grass

by

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<http://www.dsource.in/resource/grass-basketry-sitargang/dyeing>

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. **Dyeing**
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details



The grass is dipped in color water at high temperature.



Dyed color grass is then kept for drying in shade.

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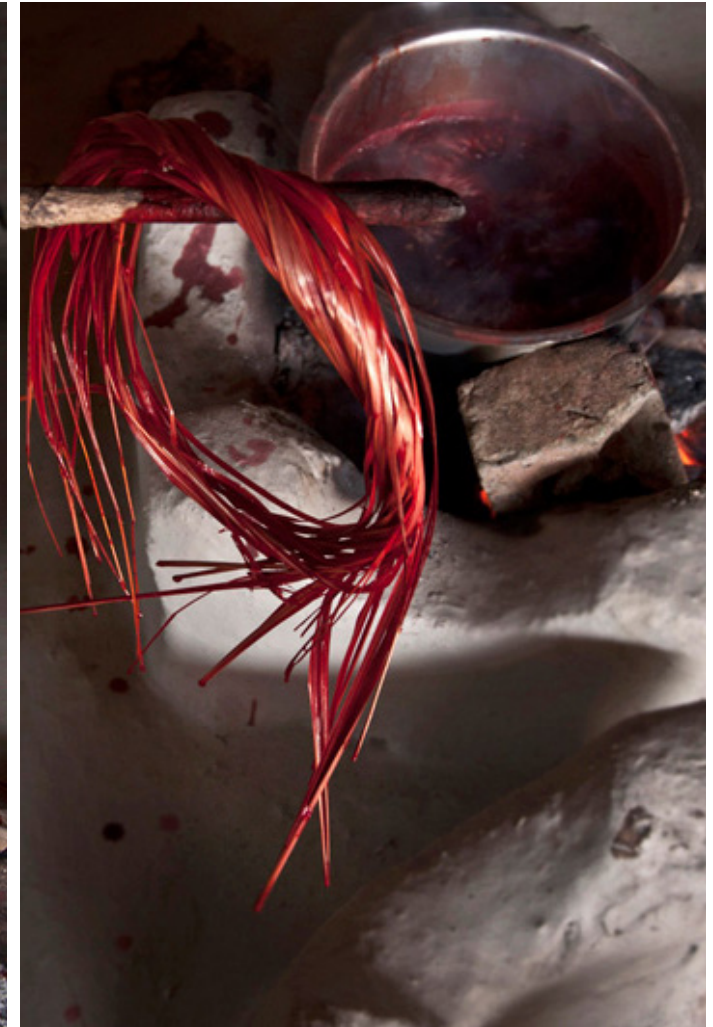
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1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. **Dyeing**
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details



This is natural fiber used in making hand bags, dyed in required colors.



The colored grass is now ready for basket weaving.

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<http://www.dsource.in/resource/grass-basketry-sitargang/making-process>

Making Process

Basketry making is mainly done by women. Basket making starts by making the base first. Two types of grass are used in making baskets.

- The harvested grass is dried in shade before starting weaving process. The weaving is done using the coiling technique.
- Wild grass which is thick and straight like poles is used as inner stuff. Light grass which has wide strips is used to roll around wild grass.

The grass is soaked in water (to make soft) and used for weaving which helps for bending and coiling. Once the base of the basket is weaved, the side wall of the basket is raised by coiling and stitching method. The motifs of basketry are created by adding colored grass in between during weaving process. The dyed grass and colour plastic strips are added in between to create the design patterns.

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. **Making Process**
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details



Dry grass is dipped in water to make it soft.



Grass is split into two parts.

Design Resource

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Grass strand is made even with the help of iron awl.



The grass is knotted to make base of the basket.



The grass strands is stretched tightly to make base strong.



Punja (local language) is a grass used for inner stuffing.

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. **Making Process**
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details

Design Resource

Grass Basketry - Sitargang

Technique of using Natural Grass

by

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/grass-basketry-sitargang/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. **Making Process**
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details



The closer view of winding and coiling.

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by

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/grass-basketry-sitargang/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. **Making Process**
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details



Khaas is lighter grass used to cover punja grass by winding.



Thickness of the coils depends on number of grass strands taken while winding.

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Technique of using Natural Grass

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1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. **Making Process**
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details



Sharp iron tool is used to pierce for creating gap in the coil.



Thick grass strands are passed through the gap created in the coil.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/grass-basketry-sitargang/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. **Making Process**
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details



Coiling process continued until the required length is obtained.

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Color grass and plastic strips are added in between to create design pattern.



The weaving is stopped and edge point is interlocked.



Adding extra coil makes the base stand.



Multi colored basket with stand.

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. **Making Process**
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details

Design Resource

Grass Basketry - Sitargang

Technique of using Natural Grass

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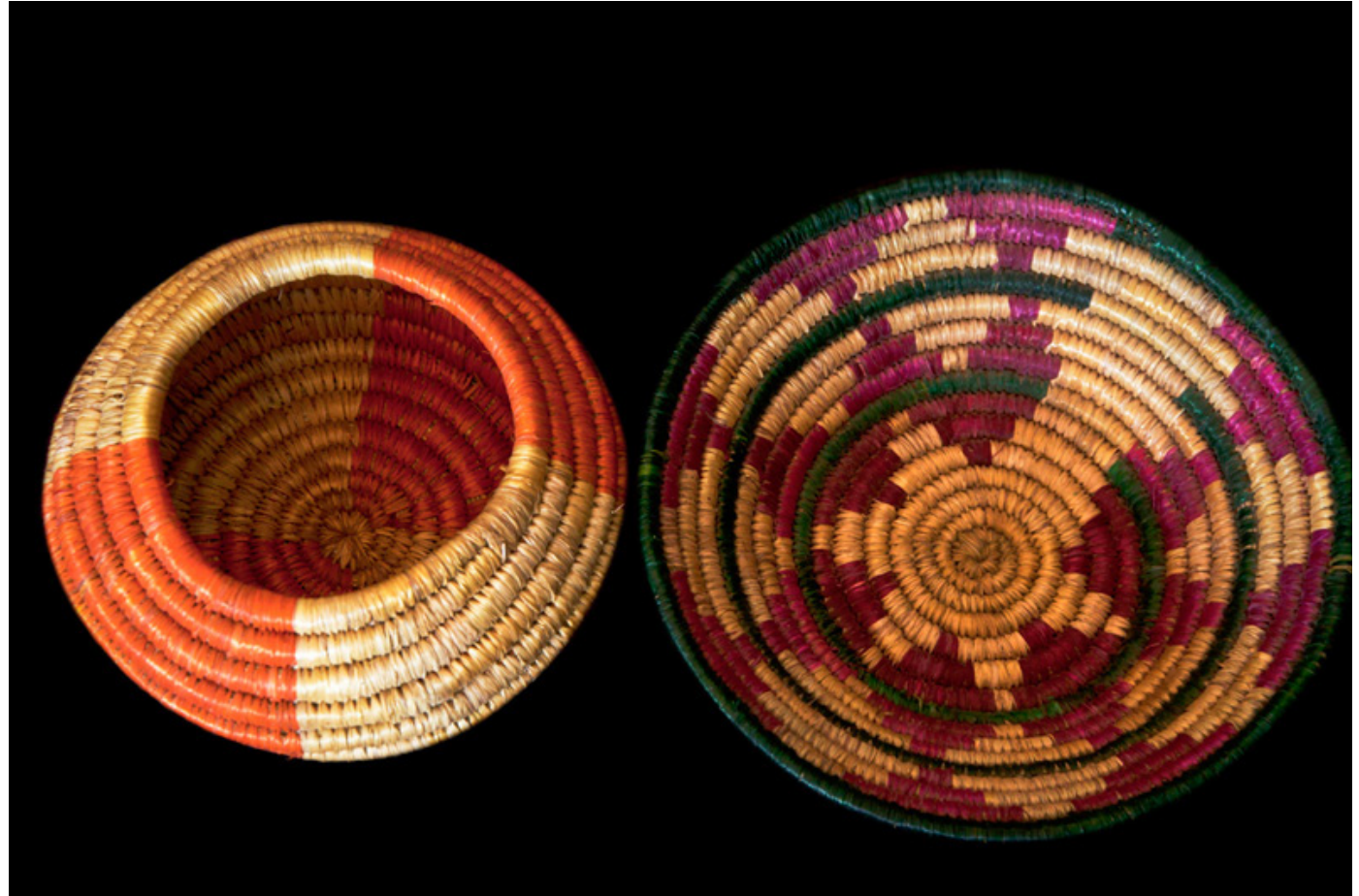
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1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. **Making Process**
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. Contact Details



The final products are ready for marketing.

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Technique of using Natural Grass

by

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1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. **Stiching**
7. Products
8. Contact Details

Stiching

Natural fiber bags are the beautiful creations and best alternatives when compared to other material bags. These bags are made of natural fiber and cloth. De-fibered natural grass is first cut as per the required size and colored. Bunch of fibers are placed on the thin cotton cloth and stitched. Different parts that are required to make bag are prepared separately and then patched together.



Fiber is brushed to clear knotted threads.



Colored fibers.



Thin cotton cloth is placed and fiber is arranged.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/grass-basketry-sitargang/stiching>

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. **Stiching**
7. Products
8. Contact Details



An initial stitch to fix the fiber with base cloth.

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Technique of using Natural Grass

by

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/grass-basketry-sitargang/stiching>

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. **Stiching**
7. Products
8. Contact Details



Stitches are made at equal length.

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Technique of using Natural Grass

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1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. **Stiching**
7. Products
8. Contact Details



Bags made of natural fiber.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/grass-basketry-sitargang/products>

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. **Products**
8. Contact Details

Products

Coiled grass products are ideal to use in everyday activities. The natural grass products can be used as containers for food storage and wall decorators. Other products include idols of god, carpet mat.

The products are very simple, attractive and eco-friendly. Motifs patterns are inspired by floral forms, geometric patterns. A different color of colored grass is inserted while weaving to create attractive motif patterns.

Large varieties of all-size baskets are weaved for several uses. Ranges of flat trays are used in the ceremonial occasions to serve.



Inner view of basket with geometrical patterns.

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Source:

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1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. **Products**
8. Contact Details



Basket of the similar form with different sizes.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/grass-basketry-sitargang/products>

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. **Products**
8. Contact Details



Multi colored basket with base stand.



A unique folder made of grass mat.



Circular design pattern is created with two combination colors.

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1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. **Products**
8. Contact Details



Floral motifs in geometrical patterns.

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Contact Details

This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ankana Sen, Mahesh S., B. Srikanth and Vijay G. at [NID Campus, Bengaluru](#).

You can get in touch with

- Prof. Bibhudutta Baral at [bibhudutta\[at\]nid.edu](mailto:bibhudutta[at]nid.edu)

You could write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

Helpdesk Details:

Co-ordinator

Project e-kalpa

R & D Campus

National Institute of Design

#12 HMT Link Road, Off Tumkur Road

Bengaluru 560 022

India

Phone: +91 80 2357 9054

Fax: +91 80 23373086

Email: [dsource.in\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:dsource.in[at]gmail.com)

1. Introduction
2. Location Map
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Dyeing
5. Making Process
6. Sticking
7. Products
8. **Contact Details**