

Design Resource

Coir Bird Nest - Alleppey, Kerala

Coir Fiber Handicraft

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Sandhya B.
NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/coir-bird-nest-alleppey-kerala>



1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Introduction

The Coir bird nest is one of the noted products that is manufactured at Alleppey. Kerala on the first hand is famous for coconuts and the fiber that is got from coconuts is processed to convert them into natural and eco-friendly, which are already to products such as doormats, mattresses, and brushes and more. It is a land that is called God's own country for the lushness and the beauty of the place itself, it also literally means the land of coconut trees. (Nalikeram-coconut and Nilam-land).

Alleppey or Allapuzha (Malayam) is a city center where a lot of coir processing is witnessed. There are traditional industries founded on coir and coir products, marine products, handlooms and other types of handicrafts that have been active from early times. The first Indian coil factory is said to have been set up at Alleppey in 1859 and the central coir research institute was established in 1959. The history of Coir and its association with the state of Kerala dates back to the 19th Century. Coir is one of the traditional industries of Kerala and has given employment to a lot of people over the years. Coconut husks are beaten into fiber to make beautiful mats and other products, people have keenly taken part in the production of coir and both men and women are seen working actively. The women are mainly involved in the yarn spinning section and the coir industry is said to be the largest cottage industry in the state of Kerala employing close to a million people. It is a natural fiber taken out from the husk of the coconut. And then beaten and processed using it as a variety of products. One such product that is made and widely sold is a coir bird nest. It is used as decoration for the gardens or simply hung on the open balcony to attract birds and sometimes they are also used as feeders.

The nest is a very interesting thing if one observes. With simple strands of coir, leaves, threads or twigs they get built to form an amazing structure. It becomes a home in which bird can lay their eggs, raise the young or stay at rest. The nests are built in various shapes and forms while some are hollow bowls others are oval with a small opening at the top. The smallest nest is that of a hummingbird which measures a mere 2cms. Not all species build some dig a burrow, make a depression in the sand and so on. Although they are majorly used for breeding, they are also used for roosting. Some build nests that are meant only for roosting. The sight of these nests is energizing and craftsmen have tried to recreate the nests from the coir and have been successful.

A lot of demand is seen for these products both nationally and internationally. And this business of coir bird nest runs successfully. As the technology increases production new uses for coir fiber are actively promoted. The use of coir products is recommended as they are eco-friendly, degradable and natural fiber.

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A close view of the coir bird nest.



A set of coir bird nest.



The coir bird nest hung together.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Tools and raw materials that are used in the making of coir bird nest:

- **Thread:** It is used to tie the coir.
- **Scissors:** A pair of scissors is used to cut the coir.
- **Coconut Shell:** Shells are the basic raw material needed to build the coir nest.
- **Coir:** It is used to cover the coconut shells.
- **Twine:** It is used to tie the coconut shells together to form a hollow.
- **Meat Hook:** It helps to hang the coconut shells tied with twine.
- **Glue:** It is used to apply on the coir.



Thread is used to tie the twine threads.



Pair of scissors help to cut the coir.

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Coconut shells.



Coconut coir.

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Twine threads are used to tie the coconut shells.



Hook is used to hang the coconut shell.

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Glue is poured to apply on the coir.

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Making Process

The coir bird nest making at Alleppey is a known craft that has been carried. The coir undergoes many processes before beginning to use. The coir that is used can be distinguished from ripe or immature coconut husk. The husks of fully ripened coconuts yield brown coir that is strong, the methods of processing also protect it from the damaging component of sunlight. The ones that yield dark brown are used to make brushes, floor mats and other products. Fair or white coir comes from the husks of coconuts harvested shortly before they ripen and light brown or white coir fiber is softer and less strong compared to brown coir. They are spun to yarns and perhaps woven to mats or ropes later. Coir is the only natural fiber to be resistant to saltwater hence it has a big advantage of getting used in marine applications. A few of the products that are manufactured from the coir are coir brushes, curled coir, needled felt, coir ply articles, coir braid, coir tea leaf bags, coir rope, coir geotextiles (soil erosion control mats), molded coir pots, and coir baskets. The Coir bird nest among a few of the products are manufactured and used for revitalizing the living space and also as decoration for the gardens. The making of the coir bird nest follows:

A complete coconut shell is split into halves. The two coconut shells are placed in such a way to form a c shape (one is held horizontally and another is placed inside vertically in it forming a hollow) It is held together by tying it with the help of thick twine threads. This is hung to a rope to cover the outer layer of the shell with the natural coir fiber. A good amount of coir fiber is arranged and tied to the twine above the coconut shell which is hung. The coir is spread evenly to cover the outer shell, and the excess coir that is held beneath the coconut shell is tied. This strengthens the coir and the coconut shell stays stiff. Glue is poured on plastic gloves and applied to the coir. The coir becomes stiff after a few minutes of drying and a small hole is cut with help of a scissor on top of the oval-like structure where coconut shell doesn't obstruct. The coir is rolled to get a thin twine that is bordered for the small opening that is made and the coir bird nest gets accomplished.

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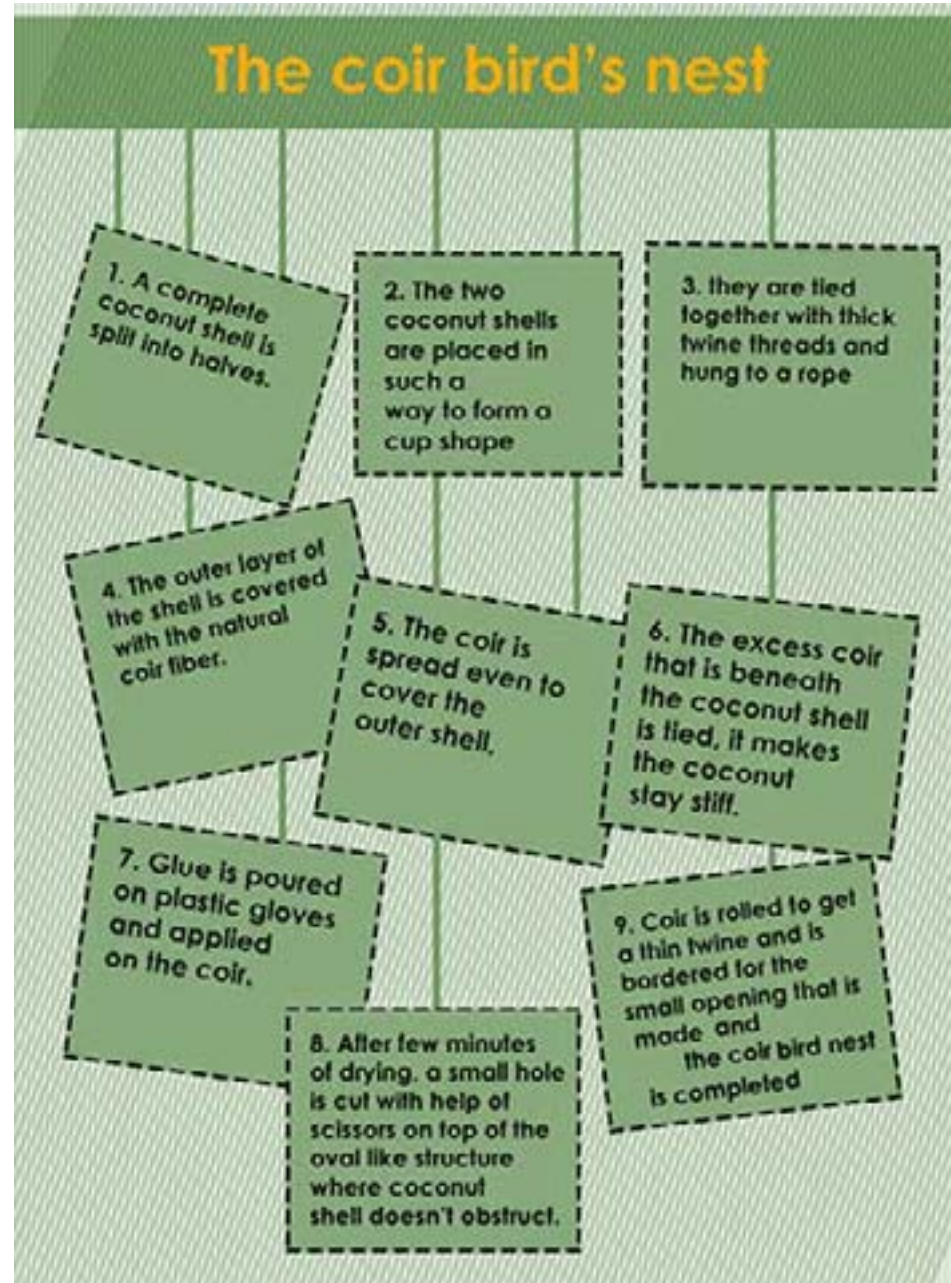
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Flow Chart:



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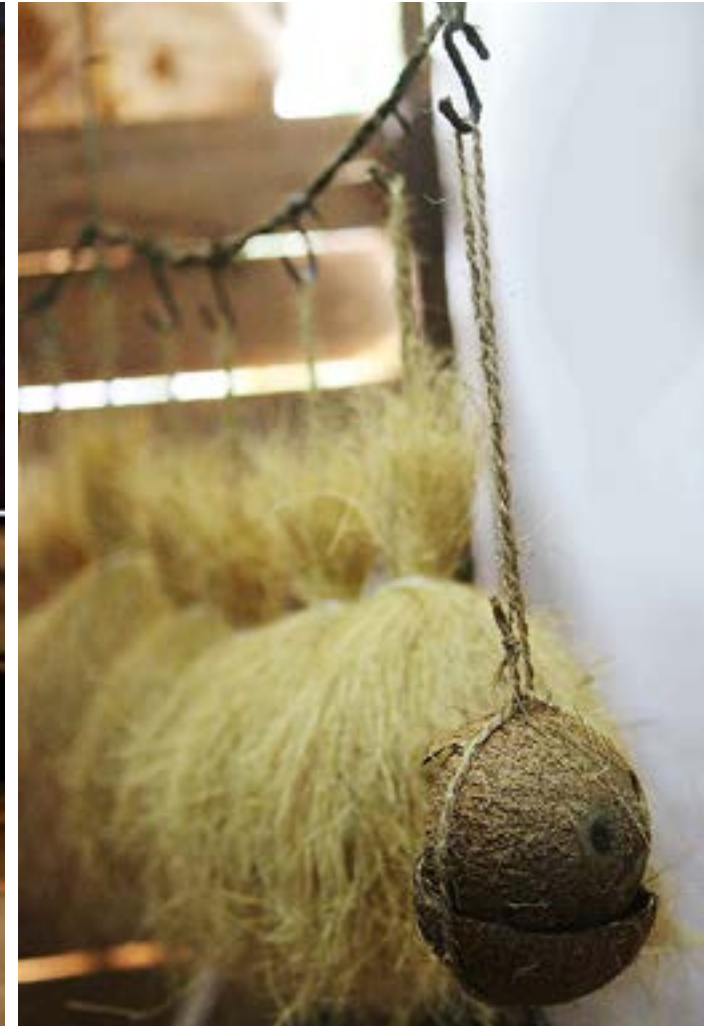
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The two coconut shells are tied together.



The tied shell is hung to a hook.

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The coir is being arranged.



The coir is tied to twine covering coconut shell.



The coir is made even and tied in the end.



Glue is poured on the plastic gloves.

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The glue is spread on the coir.



A pair of scissors help to cut.



The outer covering of the coir becomes stiff once the glue dries.

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Coir is cut into a small circle.



Coir is to make a small opening.



Glue is applied on the edges.



Coir is kneaded to a thin thread.

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It is lined across the hole.



Thin coir thread is glued.



The coir bird nest is allowed to dry.



Neatly finished coir bird nest.

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Products

The coir bird nest is in huge demand nationwide as well as internationally as they contribute to showcasing the creativity of the craftsmen. It is made in various design patterns and is durable. The price ranges from INR 150. The coir bird nest are utilized as decorative items in houses and gardens. They are ecofriendly as it is made of coir fiber and coconut shells.



The coir bird nest made in Alleppey.

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Video



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This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Sandhya B. at [NID, Bengaluru](#).

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

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