



Laundry basket

To introduce you to the alder buckthorn, we would like to propose that we weave a laundry basket. In a copy of the weavers who use willow on chestnut ribs, we will use the alder buckthorn for both the frame and the weavers so as to use this wood in all its forms. This might be a little complicated for a beginner and we would advise them to perhaps start with a smaller example of the same shape.

Loosely

Dimensions: L = 60 cm (24 inches); W = 40 cm (16 inches); D = 16 cm (6 inches).

Technique: Frame basket.

Level: Confirmed weaver, practiced in making the laths.

Materials: A range of alder buckthorn shoots of all sizes.

The bottom piece, which is extended by two gripping handles (b) measures 1.2 meters (4 feet) long and it is curved up on each end by about 25 cm (10 inches). These two prepared curved parts can then be assembled.

Use a weaver to join the handle and the top rim together (c).

Use some pieces of wood to make frame to help maintain the shape of your basket (d). Take the ribs, thin them and point them for 10 cm (8 inches) at each end. Insert the first two into the weave (e).

The frame

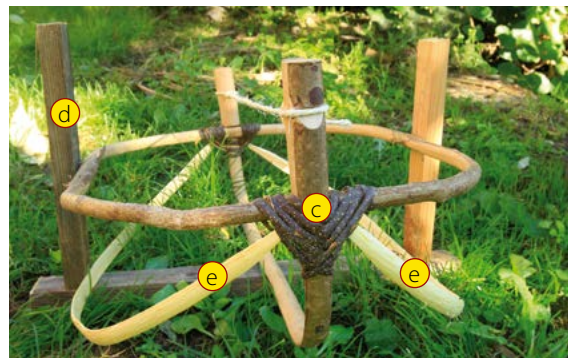
As for all frame baskets, start by making the frame (this one is in hazel), consisting of the central rib and the rim of the basket.

These two pieces should be prepared several days in advance and are formed either cold or hot (preferably hot). The better they are prepared in advance, then the better they will keep their shape which will make the rest much easier.

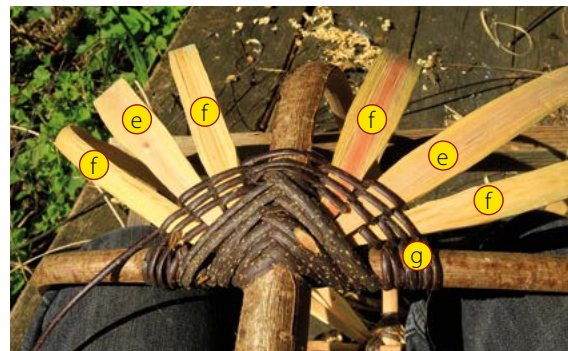
The top rim is made from either a nice shoot of 2.2 meters (7 feet 3 inches) long and formed into an oval shape (a), the head and tail joined with a bevel (oblique cut), or from two U shaped pieces 1.1 meters (3 feet 8 inches) long.

The skeleton

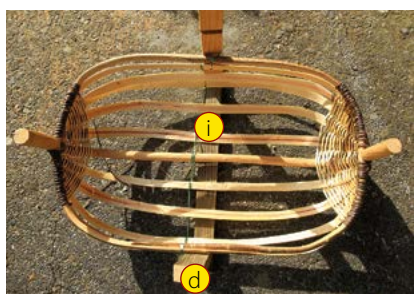
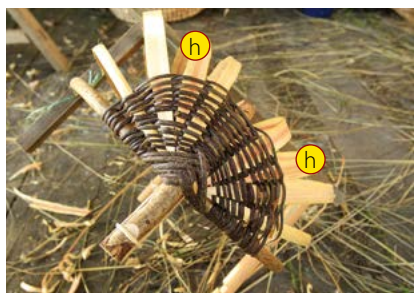
You can now prepare the ribs which will complete the skeleton of the basket. You will need 10 of about 1 meter (3 feet 4 inches) long. For this, split a piece of alder buckthorn, with a diameter of 2.5 to 3 cm (1 to



Add four more ribs, one per quarter (f). Block with a fine weaver and start to weave all the pieces together (g).



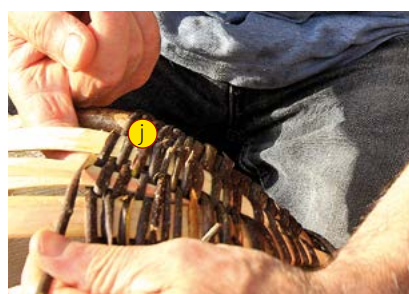
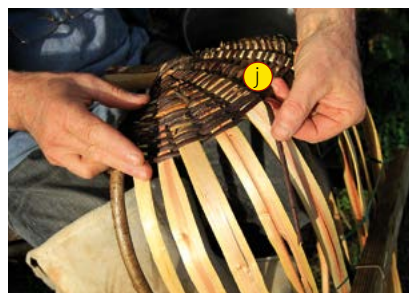
1.¼ inches). The pieces should be about 2 mm (½th inch) thick and evened out with a plane or spokeshave (see image above). Make them supple.



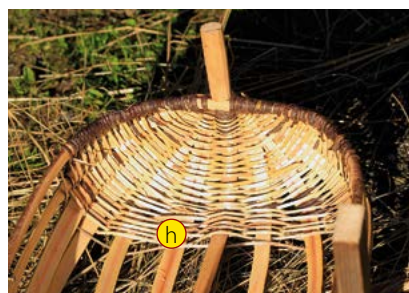
Weaving

The weaving is done from the two opposite ends of the basket at the same time. Add in two more ribs as soon as the spacing between the first ribs becomes too great. This will take the total number of ribs to 5 each side of the central base rib. A cord linking the ribs to the frame (d) can be very useful to help keep them in place.

Adding new weavers is done with a simple overlap so that the new weaver is trapped under the end of the end of the old one. This way, the joins are invisible.



For the moment your weave is on a curve. As you fill out the end of the basket you will need to fill out the volume. To do that you just need to add in short weavings, first at one side and then at the other (j). So instead of your weaving going from one side of the basket to the other you will go back and forth on the same side (j). In this way you will keep your weave "straight" and at right angles to the ribs.



Transition

Because weaving with fine weavers is a long process it is now time to replace them with larger flat ones. When you do this exactly is an aesthetic choice.



photo ©Muril Bailou



Taking your shoots of 3 cm (1.¼ inch) or more in diameter and prepare new laths which are split down to ½ mm (1/50th inch) thick. The technique is all about suppleness and once finished these weavers should be capable of being rolled round a finger without breaking.



Continue the weaving.

To make the transition between the types of weavers, use the narrowest ones first of all.



After a few rows you will be able to remove the frame.

Keep the weavers tight against each row as you weave and continue until you fill the bottom of the basket.

