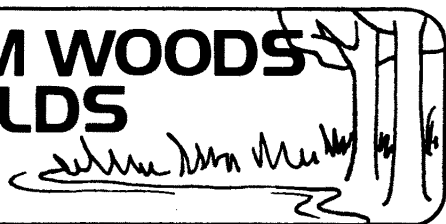


# FROM WOODS & FIELDS



by Connie Magoffin

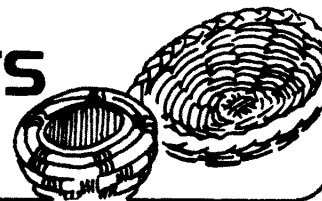
The last warm spell brought wild feelings that spring might be on its way. After spending several happy hours at the Arboretum sorting through what seemed like hundreds of compelling catalogues, I finally narrowed down my selections to order to about 20. As the catalogues began arriving in the mail, I began envisioning color in every corner of my yard. If you have decided to try your hand at growing your own dye plants you are probably an experienced gardener and you may have your favorite catalogues already ordered. However, if you are a novice, as I am, you might want a few names with which to get started.

Of course, several favorite dye plants (marigolds, coreopsis, lily of the valley, etc.) can be found in general gardening catalogues such as Burpee and Gurney's. These are free and also include vegetable offerings. However, because so many of the plants we use for dyes are unobtainable elsewhere, you might want to send for the following, more specialized, catalogues.

1. **Casa Yerba** (Rare Herbs, Seeds, Plants), Star Rt. 2, Box 21, Days Creek, Oregon, 97429. This excellent catalogue offers over 30 dye plants available at 50 cents for a seed package and 7 kinds of dye plants available in plant or root form at 3/\$5.75. The catalogue charge is 50 cents.
2. **Greene Herb Gardens**, Greene, Rhode Island, 02827. Greene offers over 10 dye plants among the 88 herbs grouped according to perennial, annual, or biennial. Last year's catalogue lists them as 2 packets for \$1.00. They have saffron crocus bulbs. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the catalogue.
3. **Hilltop Herb Farm**, Cleveland, Texas, 77327. Although I have as yet only received a partial catalogue, Hilltop appears to offer an astounding variety of dye plants; they even have a special section entitled "Dyeing and Coloring." The plants are \$1.75 each and they offer some seeds for 60 cents/package. Their complete catalogue is \$1.00 and they also have a list of dried natural dye plants for 20 cents and a stamped, self-addressed envelope.
4. **Lamb Nurseries**, E. 101 Sharp Ave., Spokane, Wash., 99202. Lamb specializes in hardy perennials and rock plants, including approximately 10 different dye plants priced between \$1.00 to \$1.75 each. They list the proper Latin pronunciation for each plant (for those of us who are not "in the know"), in addition to planting instructions. The catalogue is free.
5. **Midwest Wildflowers**, Box 64, Rockton, Illinois, 61072. Midwest offers over 10 dye plants among their vast seed list at 50 cents/package. Their seeds are hand collected and they encourage requests for seeds not listed in the catalogue. The catalogue is 25 cents and, besides the complete seed list, it includes illustrations and detailed information on 12 of the wild flowers.
6. **Straw Into Gold**, P.O. Box 2904, 5509 College Ave., Oakland, Calif., 94618. This catalogue offers any supplies for the weaver, spinner, or dyer that you can imagine. Besides dried dye plants, mordants, and dye books, they list nearly 30 kinds of dye plant seed for 50 cents/packet. The catalogue is 50 cents.

There are a few other choice catalogues that I have sent for but have not as yet received. Hopefully, by next month I can share these with you. Be sure to call me if you have any cultivation questions about specific dye plants. I will consult the experts at the Arboretum and put the answers in next month's column. Many others are probably interested in the same question and we all want to know how to grow the best quality dye plants with the greatest dyeing potential.

# OF BASKETS



by Catherine Ingebretsen

*"While basketweaving sit with your back to the fire.  
Be cheerful. Do not think of it as hard work  
or the basket will not be good."<sup>1</sup>*

There is much to be said of the mental attitude of a basket weaver; and of his/her physical surroundings.

It is important that you want to do the basket; that you like the materials that you are using; and that you choose a technique or combination of techniques that will give you the results you desire within your time limits. It is also important that you try to do your best work while keeping your mind open to the possibilities of change. You must remember that each material has its own characteristics and be willing to work within the material's limits. You should look at the limitations positively. For instance, if you are using an irregular basketry material, which is causing your basket to bubble or pucker, you have a number of choices: 1) Accept the way it's bubbling; 2) Make the material more regular (even); 3) Accentuate the puckering and maybe go into a sculptural piece in which you and others would find the puckering interesting rather than defective; and 4) Change materials. If you take the attitude of swearing at the materials for not doing what you want, you'll find the basket terribly tedious and disagreeable to weave.

You will hopefully find a happy medium where you and the materials are working together.

Your mental attitude is not only affected by the materials and techniques you are working with, but also by your physical surroundings. Have you ever woven a basket sitting by a stream on a warm summer day? By a campfire while your friends play music? In your back yard in between hanging out loads of washing? In the bathtub while you are soaking? In your bed when you can't sleep at night? You really should try to be physically comfortable when you are making a basket.

Being comfortable and thinking positive will not insure you a beautiful basket. Nor will it eliminate the pains and disappointments that are often part of the creative process. What it can do though, is help you to work with the pains and disappointments and make the best basket that you can, with the most enjoyment possible.

<sup>1</sup>Newman, Sandra Corrie, *Indian Basket Weaving*, p. 25, Northland Press, 1974.