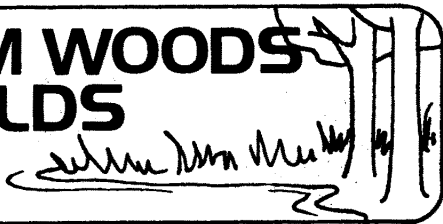


FROM WOODS & FIELDS



by Connie Magoffin

This month a collection of miscellany:

I have, unfortunately, received only one more dye plant catalogue. It is, however, a good one on perennials from Garden Place, 6780 Heisley Road, Mentor, Ohio 44060. The catalogue is free, very well organized and easily read. I counted over 15 dye plants among their listings.

The Weavers Guild now has 3 chemicals for use in natural dyeing. Our recent addition is alum at 40 cents per pound (yes, that is the correct price!). We also have tin at \$1.25 per ounce (a little goes a long way) and sodium hydrosulfite for use in dyeing with indigo at 25 cents per ounce (hard to find). If you wish to purchase any of these just give me a call (822-8358) and arrangements can be made to pick them up at my house (3248 Colfax Ave. S.) or at the Guild (I'm there Mon., Tues., and Wed. evenings from 6-8 p.m.).

I have often read that cochineal, until very recently, was used as a food coloring and was perhaps the red used in maraschino cherries, hot dogs, lipstick, etc. While browsing through a recent acquisition to my cookbook collection, I came upon a recipe that brought this suggestion to reality. I don't anticipate anyone actually using those adorable little bugs in their next batch of turkish delight, but I thought you would enjoy reading it if only for curiosity's sake.

Turkish Delight* (a soft cherry candy)

- 1 envelope gelatin (6 leaves, if leaf gelatin used)
- ½ cup cold water
- juice of 2 lemons, strained
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon rose essence
- 1 cup almonds, blanched and slivered
- cochineal (or red food coloring)
- 1 cup confectioner's sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornmeal

First: Add gelatin to water and dissolve over hot water. Add lemon juice and sugar; allow to melt slowly. When melted, boil quickly for 5 minutes. Add rose essence and almonds; pour ½ of the mixture into a greased soup plate. Second: Color remainder with cochineal and pour into second greased soup plate. When quite set and cold, turn out onto pastry board, cut in squares and roll in confectioner's sugar to which some cornmeal has been previously added.

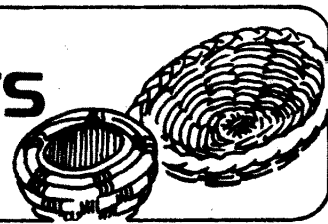
Cooking cue: If mixture is difficult to remove from plate, dip in hot water to loosen.

Makes 45 1½-inch rectangles.

*This recipe was offered by Victor Babin (composer and pianist) for Encore, The Favorite Dishes of the World's Most Famous Musicians, Compiled by the Women's Association of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Inc., Random House, New York, 1958.

Perhaps we should add this experiment to our curriculum in Natural Dyes III!

OF BASKETS



by Catherine Ingebretsen

"The center is the beginning of life, moving outwards. Then the rain comes. These are black clouds. The red lines are the red or pink in the sky and clouds. The outer white part is the increase of the People. This can be any size till the basket is finished. The pathway is to let the People emerge: a way out."
—Navajo Medicine Woman

In my readings, I have come across many descriptions of the probably meaning of certain designs. I have also come across comments such as these: "... most honest Indians will say that most non-religious designs have no meaning other than the obvious." "Most ethnologists agree that the Pima woman attaches no meaning to a geometrical design that she may weave into a basket." "... when people tend to read hidden symbolism and mysticism into these designs... we must warn "go slow!" Naming a design does not make it a symbol and usually names have no connection with symbolic practice."²

Some designs were consciously woven as meaningful symbols. Many were not. Many designs were created unconsciously and later given a symbolic meaning. The only person that can truthfully explain the meaning, or lack thereof, is the person that wove the design. And many weavers will quickly make up some meaning if asked about the symbolism, in order to give their basket added importance. Others will be silent because they don't wish to share their story verbally. Still others have faithfully held to the traditional designs of their ancestors and the meanings may have changed, grown or disappeared, with all the telling.

I do, however, believe that it is sometimes possible for the symbolic intent of the weaver to be known to others, especially where there has been a tradition of weaving certain shapes and designs for specific occasions. Two examples of this are the Navajo wedding basket, and the friendship basket.

"A friend or tribe, desiring to show great respect or confidence toward another, presents as a mark of esteem a specially-woven basket, following about the same spiral lines of design. These lines, coming from the small basket bottom, represent the confidence and love which flows from their hearts to the recipient, the bottom of the basket representing the heart."³

Whatever the meaning, or lack thereof, behind a design, "... the women accept these designs as part of the 'being' of the basket. Designs are not laid on or made up. They are an organic part of basket weaving, as they follow the form and technique."⁴

¹Newman, Sandra Corrie, *Indian Basket Weaving*, Northland Press, Flagstaff, 1974, p. 82.

²Cain, H. Thomas, *Pima Indian Basketry*, Heard Museum of Anthropology and Primitive Art, Phoenix, Arizona, p. 31.

³Navajo School of Indian Basketry, *Indian Basket Weaving*, Dover Pub., reissued in 1971, New York, p. 15.

⁴Newman, Sandra Corrie, *Indian Basket Weaving*, Northland Press, Flagstaff, 1974, p. 20.