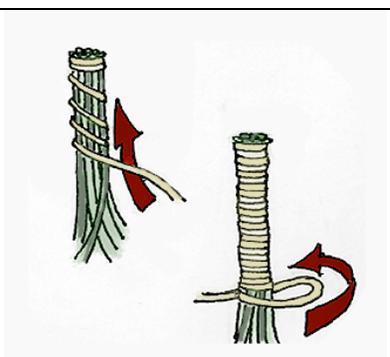
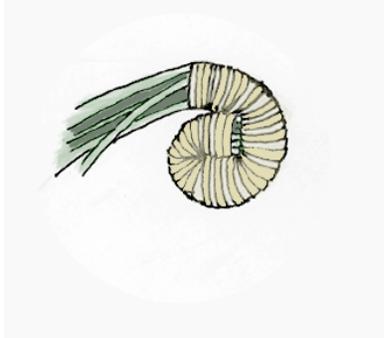
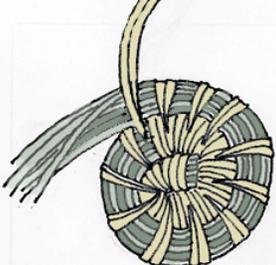
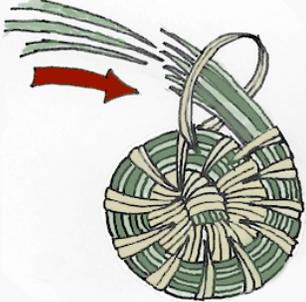
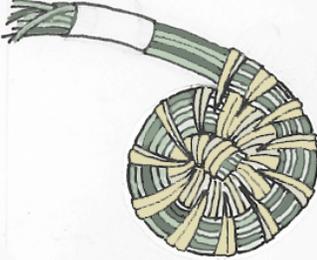
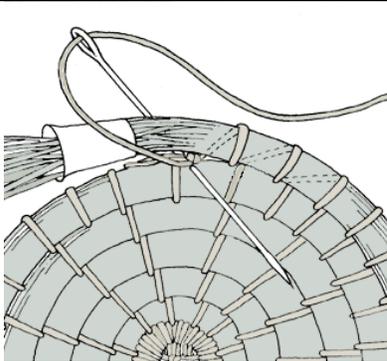
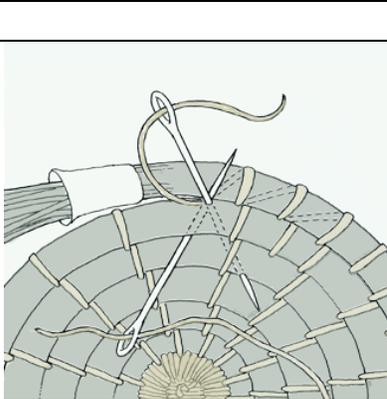
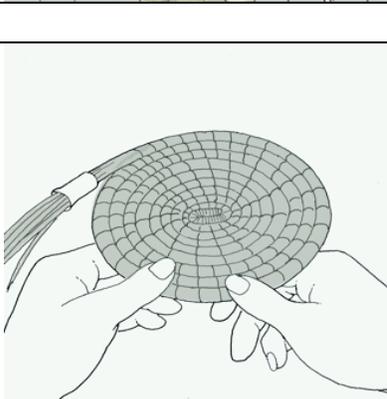
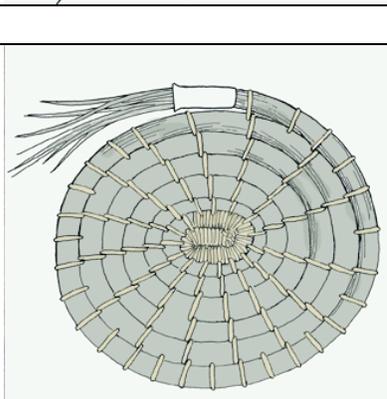


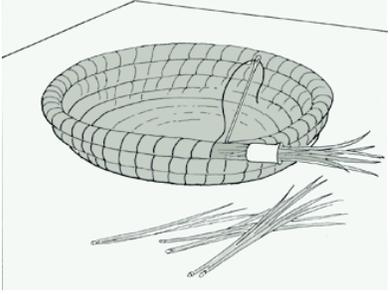
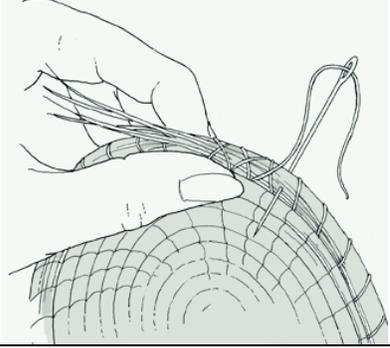
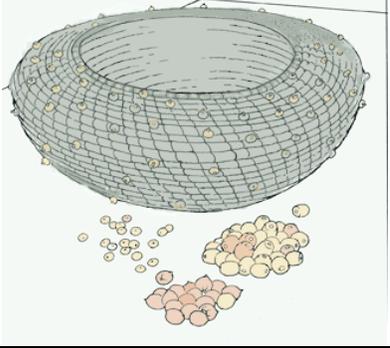
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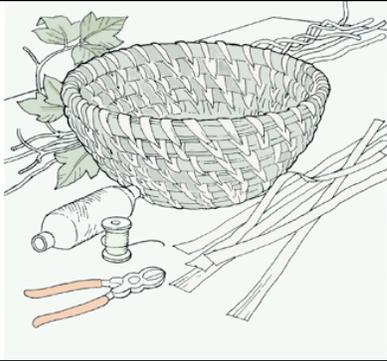
Making Pine Needle Baskets	
Keywords:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hank: looped bundle, as in "hank of yarn." • raffia: leaf fibers of a palm tree that are often used to stitch. The pine needles were "stitched together using lengths of raffia." • length: a strand of raffia roughly two feet long. Thread the thick end of the raffia through the needle. • fascicle: head of a pine needle cluster that holds the cluster of needles together in nature • cluster: pine needles naturally held together by a fascicle or head 	
List of Ingredients:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large bunch of pine needles, with the needles measuring at least 5 to 6 inches in length • 1 pint of boiling water • 1 large pan in which to soak the pine needles • 1 large tapestry needle (purchased at craft store) • 1 hank of raffia • Scissors • 1-inch length of soda straw 	

Directions		
1)	Gather your pine needles and place them in a large pan. With an adult to help you, pour about a pint of boiling water over the needles. Let them sit in the water for 10 minutes to soften, then using tongs, place the needles on paper towels to let them drain and dry. The needles can remain a little damp to help soften them so that they are more pliable.	
2)	The fascicle or head of a pine needle cluster is what holds the cluster of needles together. It can be removed for looks. These heads are also sometimes referred to as "caps" or "sheaths". If you choose to remove these caps, slide your thumbnail against the side of the pine needle cluster and pull the caps off. Do this to several dozen pine needles so you will have enough pine straw to complete your project.	
3)	First start with the foundation, or bottom, center portion of your basket. Trim about 10 lengths of raffia from the hank. Trim any thin, trailing sections from the raffia. Using a blunt 1-inch tapestry needle thread the thickest end of the raffia through the eye of the needle. Hold the clusters of pine needles together, wrapping the ends of them with raffia.	
4)	Shape the covered needles into a small circle by first curling the cap or sheath end. Keep in mind that the caps or sheaths themselves may have been removed, but in these instances you can still usually tell.	

5)	Push the threaded needle through the circle of dampened pine straw, drawing thread through from back to front. Go around the circle, stitching each new row onto the previous coil.	
6)	As the circle increases in size, you will need to add more dry pine straw and will need to add new lengths of raffia to sew the basket.	
7)	Insert about seven new clusters of needles into the center of the bundle of straws that you are holding, deep enough so that the new sets of needles will stick.	
8)	When inserting new needles to extend the length of your coil, consider using a 1-inch section of soda straw over the needles to be a gauge. A gauge will help you keep an even amount of straw being fed and sewn to the basket. Once the thickness of the coiled bundle has been matched with the new needles, secure the new ones by binding the raffia around the portion where the new and old bundles overlap.	

9)	<p>When you have to add a new piece of raffia, thread the needle with the new piece of raffia, and knot the end of the old section with the longer new piece of raffia. Continue to work around the coil, blending the knot and any excess material from the old raffia into the coiling and stitching.</p>	
10)	<p>*Keep coiling and sewing stitches to hold the coils of rows together. Try to keep the circle of pine needles flat at this point by bending it flat, and by pressing it flat against a table so that it doesn't rock like a boat. The spacing of the stitches will widen as the circle grows. Again, keep adding pine needles as needed to maintain the thickness of your coiled row.</p>	
11)	<p>Add additional stitches to the growing coil. Take one or more stitches in the space between the wraps as you go. Try to keep the spacing as even as possible.</p>	
12)	<p>After you have about 8 rows of pine straw sewn together, build the sides of the basket. To start the sides of your basket, place the next row of pine needles on top and at the edge of your coil of pine needles. From this point, continue to add pine needles and raffia as needed, stitching each row down on top of the last row.</p>	

13)	When you have added at least three or four rows of pine straw to make the sides of the basket, continue weaving rows until you reach the height that you desire, but start to reduce the amount of pine straw that you add as you approach the top of the basket, until the basket is flattened across the top.	
14)	The amount of pine straw that you use should be slowly thinning as you reach completion.	
15)	Stitch over the last stitch twice, and then push the needle down through the wall of the basket to the inside. With your scissors, snip off the last of the raffia where it cannot be seen. You have just made your first pine needle basket!	
16)	Besides using different ornamental stitches to hold your coils together, you can also vary the look of your basket by using raffia of different colors, by adding beads and stones to your design, or you can even dye your pine needles!	

17)	For fun, try making coiled baskets out of other materials, such as sweet grass or kudzu. Or try using waxed linen or wire to stitch your basket together.	
18)	Store any extra cleaned and softened pine needles in a plastic bread bag up to two weeks so that they will be ready for your next project. You should not store pine needles in a completely airtight container.	