

# County Fair Basket

by Martha Arterburn and Beth Hester

#8490 - Pattern Sheet  
County Fair Basket



Size: 8" diameter  
Height: 7"

*Each year Martha Arterburn, County Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Development, and I put our thinking caps on and "design" a basket for a 4-H Basket Workshop here in Allen County, Kentucky. This year Martha was gifted with several boxes of reed from two generous local basket weavers and those sizes of material and donated handles were our inspiration. The County Fair Basket has a wooden base, handcrafted oak Swing Handle and 5/8" stakes; it's woven with 1/4" natural and dyed flat and flat oval. An easy and fun basket—just a great little weaving project! Size: 8" diameter x 7" tall.*

## Materials/Supplies:

5" Slotted Base	1	Base
5/8" Flat Reed	25 ft.	Stakes
1/4" Natural Flat Oval Reed	60 ft.	Weavers & Lashing
1/4" Dyed Flat Reed	20 ft.	Weavers
3/8" Flat Reed	3 ft.	Top Row Weaver
1/2" Flat Oval Reed	5 ft.	Rims
#3 Seagrass	3 ft.	Rim Filler
8" Oak Swing Handle with Ears	1	Handle

## Hints in Working with Reed

1. Soak flat reed 1 or 2 minutes in warm water before using; this is usually long enough to make it flexible. Seagrass needs only to be spritzed. Soak the flat oval reed for 5 to 10 minutes in warm water. If reed becomes dry while you're weaving, dip it in water.
2. Soak dyed reed separately, rinse well and wipe with towel before using.
3. Do not over soak your reed, it will become mushy.
4. Flat reed has a smooth side and a rough side. You can determine the rough side by sharply bending a wet piece of reed in half. The rough side will usually fray or splinter more than the smooth side. When using flat oval, weave with the oval/rounded side to the outside of your basket.
5. As you weave you'll want to maintain an equal space between stakes by gently pushing on the stakes to keep them vertical and to maintain a diameter of 8 inches at the top of your basket.
6. Do not leave spaces between the rows of weaving.
7. Reed should be completely dry before being stored.

## Weaving Your Basket

Sand your slotted base and apply the finish of your choice, allowing the finish to dry completely. Cut 20 pieces (stakes) 10" long from 5/8" flat reed. Trace the outline of the base onto a piece of paper. Cut out the shape; fold in half and in half again. Unfold and, using the crease lines as your template, mark the edge of the base in 4 places to indicate the 4 quarters. Soak all the stakes then insert each stake into the slot with the rough side up. Depending on the thickness of your material, you may need to sand the slot and/or carve or pinch with pliers the stakes' ends. Position 5 stakes evenly spaced into each quarter. Split one of your stakes by cutting it in half lengthwise—this gives you an additional stake for a total of 21 stakes (19 at 5/8" wide plus 2 that are half the width of the others).

Select a flexible piece of 1/4" natural flat oval; soak then taper one side of the piece for a distance of 6 or 7 inches. Cut the taper so that the weaver's end is about 1/16" wide; taper out to the full 1/4" width across the 6" or 7" distance. Insert the tapered end into the slot between any two 5/8" wide stakes and begin to weave; position the flat oval reed *flat side up*. As you weave the first row, place each stitch as close to the edge of your base as possible.

Treat the "split spoke" as 2 separate spokes, weaving over and under the split spoke as you would 2 individual spokes. Complete one row and, as you start row 2, your weaving pattern will begin to alternate; you'll be weaving over the stakes you wove under on row 1 and vice versa. Weave a total of 3 rows.

To check the security of your stakes, push each stake into the slot, reseating the stakes if needed. Your stakes are rough side up. Rewet the stakes at the edge of row 3 and round each stake upward. As you continue to weave and the stakes begin to stand upward, the smooth side of the stake and the oval/rounded side of the flat oval weaver will be to the outside of the basket.

Continue to weave, holding your stakes upright, adding color where you like, establishing and maintaining an even space between all stakes and keeping the diameter at 8". To begin a "new" weaver, overlap the end of the "old" weaver and the beginning of the "new" across 4 stakes, hiding each end between stake and weaver.

When your basket is about 7 inches tall, locate the area of the basket directly above the original tapered weaver. Taper the end of your current weaver (to falls in the same area) for 6 or 7 inches and continue weaving to its end. Place the last inch or so of the taper to the inside of the basket; secure it later with a stitch of lashing.

Weave one stop/start row with 3/8" flat reed, overlapping the beginning and end of this row onto itself.

Pack rows. Soak stakes that extend above the top row for several minutes—don't rewet the woven sides of the basket. Identify each stake where the top row of weaver is on the inside of the basket; crease, trim to length, then tuck each of these stakes behind two rows of weaving on the inside of your basket. Cut all remaining stakes flush with the top of the basket.

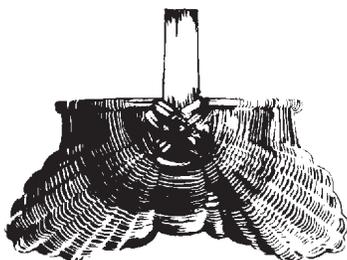
### **Handle, Rims and Lashing**

Locate two stakes, one on either side of the basket, on which to position the handle (choose stakes other than the split stake). Place ears into handle. Starting 2 to 3 inches from the top of the basket along a chosen stake, insert the handle's "ear" behind the weavers on the inside and the outside of the basket, pushing the ear downward behind one row of weaving at a time. Position the shelf of the ear's notches so they're level with the bottom of the rim row. Insert the other ear along its chosen stake. See photo for placement.

Soak the 1/2" flat oval. Determine the rim lengths, allowing about a 4" overlap. Mark and carve each overlap.

Attach rims and seagrass filler around top row with cable ties or twist ties.

Using 1/4" flat oval reed, double lash the rims to the basket creating a backstitch at each ear. Enjoy!



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