



Sally Pointer

Coil Basket from Nettles

Coil baskets are a great way to make use of the strength and flexibility of nettles without going to the lengths of fully processing for fine fibres.



1) Harvest nettles as usual, split the stems and remove most of the pith, but don't worry too much if small fragments remain.

2) Subdivide wide strips into narrower ones so that all the strips are roughly even.



Then hang the strips of bast and bark to dry until you are ready to start your basket.



3) I like to set up my core first, so I dip my dried nettle strips in water to soften them and lay out a long 'snake' of overlapping bundles of nettle until I have enough to do a fair bit of basket. Give this a slight twist to hold it together, and wind it into a ball. The binding thread can be more finely made nettle cord, bought

string or yarn, or in my example, lime bast. Just thread a stout needle (mine is antler) and wrap the end of your bundle of nettle a few times to start, and then begin to coil it up and secure each new coil to the row beneath it as you go.



4) There are lots of possible stitch patterns, but simple is best for starters. My basket is still quite small here. I'm aiming for a bowl shape just large enough to keep my nettle processing flints in.

You may need to damp the fibres as you go, and it's a good plan to twist the core of nettle more tightly as you lay it into place.



A fairly firm twist will make a more solid basket than a loosely twisted core.

Sally Pointer
Nettle Coil Basket