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Where are You Going to be Weaving at this Year?

I'll be headed out the door in just a few days for the Stateline Friends weaving retreat in Richmond, Indiana on April 19th through the 21st. This is one of the largest annual gatherings of basket weavers. And all hats off to Pam Feix, Debbie Cates, and the Whitewater Basket Guild! They are to be highly commended for their planning and the orchestration it takes to sponsor an event of this magnitude. Keep in mind that folks like this do it for the love of basketry. These Event Coordinators are not paid a salary and don't receive the recognition that they deserve. If you're going to be there ...tell them how much you appreciate what they do for all of us. And if you have a chance to stop by and introduce yourself to me, please do. I'll be teaching on all three days and am REALLY excited!

The Missouri Basketweavers Guild convention is August 2-5, 2018. This annual event alternates between St. Louis (for this year) and Kansas City. I love their theme for this year "Weavin' on Route 66". My husband really likes nostalgic memorabilia and has spoken many times about journeys on this historic byway. I don't have these childhood memories to reflect on, so I'm planning on making some memories this summer while teaching and meeting up with old friends and making some new ones.

Bringing the summer to an end in my home state of Illinois, I'll be teaching at Camp Tuck-a-Basket (is that a neat name or what??) on September 7-9, 2018. I've always wanted to attend this event (and the one at Starved Rock) and my schedule finally allows me to this year. If you're in the Midwest, please plan to come. There are some great classes! Plus, we need a chance to meet, don't we?

TEACHERS ... The deadline is approaching!

The teacher proposal letter and application are available at www.WeavingInTheSunshineState.com. The deadline for submitting your proposals is April 15, 2018.

Did you know that you can access back issues of "The Reed Reader"? If you'd like to read any of the newsletters you missed or share back issues with a friend, just click here ...

www.BrightExpectationsBaskets.com/TheReedReader

"CYAN" & "PATCHOULI" – Biscuit Baskets



To purchase this pattern, please click here ["CYAN"](#).



I'm always on a quest for healthier eating habits ... like avoiding pie, lol. And cupcakes. And pasta. And Girl Scout cookies. But somehow biscuits just can't be turned down. Give me a home cooked biscuit, some butter, and homemade strawberry jam or honey ... and oh my heavens, that's some good stuff! Making my mouth water right this minute just talking about it.

This month's two baskets are just cutie patooties for your biscuits and rolls. Both are woven on wood bases and have fun and funky bead accented rims. "Cyan" has a stitched on bead technique with waxed cord lashing. "Patchouli" has her hippie vibes going on with a fun bead mix on the rim row.

Each only take maybe two hours to make and trust me ... they are going to make your biscuits look simply divine. Now someone ... pass me some butter.

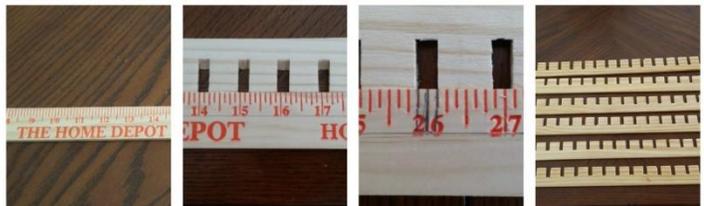


To purchase this pattern, please click here ["PATCHOULI"](#).

This is a Brilliant Idea! (plus check out her cute and practical basket with bandana liner)

If you're like me, I'm a bit fussy on basket shaping and am always looking for better ways to shape a basket. Beverly Ashton Vickers has generously shared this unique and truly awesome method.

To make a full set of shapers (4 – 18" pieces and 2 – 36" pieces), you'll need four yardsticks. Home Depot has thicker ones (about 1/4" thick). You'll also need a saw, some sand paper, and polyurethane.



Easy steps to make your own basket shapers ...

Make a cut at each "inch mark" with the saw. Then make two additional cuts 1/8" on either side of the first cut, leaving a 1/4" gap (the thickness of the yardstick). This places the notches at 1" apart, center to center.

If you wish, sand the yardstick pieces to remove the markings and coat with polyurethane to seal the wood.

And that's it! Now you have the ideal basket shapers and your total cost is about \$4 and just an hour or two of time (or another item on your "honey-do list" :o).

Kudos to Beverly for the idea and for permission to share it with you! Don't you just love to see affordable and practical techniques?

E-Commerce and Facebook Business Pages

As of the 4th quarter of 2017, there were **2.2 BILLION** monthly active users on Facebook. And **1.4 BILLION** of that number used Facebook on what is considered a DAILY basis. That's some pretty hefty statistics and a sizeable market base. Many say that Instagram and Snapchat are the choices of today's youth, but Instagram reports only about 800 million users (it's funny to use the word "only" and 800 million in the same sentence, lol). Did you know that you can set up a Facebook BUSINESS PAGE *and market your baskets from it* – which also allows you to keep your private stuff on your personal page and not require you to share photos of your kids, grandkids, or publish when you're out of town on vacation to strangers? Let's explore this and talk about how to do this ... and what the benefits to you could be.

Setting up a Facebook business page has three primary advantages. 1) It's FREE. There is no cost (currently) associated with it and you are free to post and share content. 2) You can promote your baskets to sell them, offer seasonal sale items, or post classes you're offering. 3) Interact and stay in contact with your customers. It provides a great platform for you to provide information to your customers ... and for them to respond to you either by a post or direct, private message. (You can even set it up where you have authority to approve any post made by someone else before it appears on your page if you feel the need.)

Setting up a Facebook business page is super easy to do. Almost TOO easy, as you can slip into some decisions on start-up that you might want to re-think later. And changing certain settings is not the easiest thing to accomplish. All you basically need to get started is a name for your business and a few photos.

After you log-in to Facebook (FYI ... the entire process is easier from a computer as opposed to a tablet or mobile device), use the arrow at the upper right-hand corner to access the drop-down menu. Choose CREATE PAGE. Note that "Create Group" is a different category and not the focus of this discussion.

Once you choose CREATE PAGE, you'll be given a few different options ... 1) Local Business or Place, 2) Company, Organization, or Institution, 3) Brand or Product, 4) Artist, Band, or Public Figure, 5) Entertainment, or 6) Cause or Community. Choosing one of these is just a broad category and it CAN be changed later – or added to. For our purposes today, let's choose BRAND OR PRODUCT. Once you choose it, another drop-down menu becomes available and the most logical for marketing baskets would be HOME DÉCOR. You will now be required to fill in your Brand or Product Name in the box provided beneath Home Décor. Choose your name carefully. Quite honestly, it's a good idea to include "BASKETS" in your title. This will help those who type in randomly looking for baskets to find you. SEO, or Search Engine Optimization is a topic for another day, but it's the technical term for how a search engine (or Facebook search) finds related websites.

You'll now be asked to upload a Profile Pic and a Cover Photo. You can skip these options for now if you choose but be sure to add them ... and change them occasionally to reflect your latest work or seasonal promotions.

Wow! You just created your Facebook Business Page and you're ready to get the party started. Options will be given to you to "Invite Your Friends" which are pulled from your personal Facebook page. Unless they accept your invitation and "like" your new business page, they won't ever see posts that you make on it. Keep in mind that your business page also acts like your personal page in that not every person who "likes" the page will see every post. Facebook algorithms weight the personal (or business, group, etc.) page's posts that you click on the most, as the pages that you'll see show up in your newsfeed the most often.

Browse around in all the different categories and fill in as much information as you can ... particularly in the "ABOUT" section tab. Be sure and use "keywords" that let people know about your business. Use the words baskets, basketry, classes, patterns, etc. as the words used here are also picked up on by Google and other search engines.

After your page has 25 likes, you will also be able to select a user name in your Facebook URL (i.e. www.Facebook.com/BrightExpectations). You can only select this ONE time, so choose carefully. Note on mine that at the time I set mine up, the legal name of my LLC didn't include "Baskets" in my name and now I can't add it.

E-Commerce and Facebook Business Pages, cont.

Facebook has what that refer to as a “Call to Action” button. If you notice below your page’s cover photo (that I hope you’ve added by now), you’ll see “Add a Button”. You can choose from a variety of options. You only get to choose one though. Since you’re trying to SELL your wares, choose SHOP.

You will then have two options for that button. 1) Upload your listing information and connect a payment processor (PayPal or Stripe). 2) The second option is to connect your website to the “Shop” button – as I have done.

If you only have a few products to sell, option #1 is totally doable. You will need to log in to Facebook to process and manage orders and mark them as shipped.

Now you have an online shop! You can add the shop name to your business cards, share it with family and friends ... and start promoting it.

There are many ways ... both free and paid ... that you can market your Facebook shop. Post regularly with new products, share new listings, offering sales and specials are just a few free methods. Keep in mind that when you post on your business page, you are posting as “**the business**” – *not you personally*. Be sure and go back to your personal page, search for your business page, and “like” it. That way your business page posts will show up on your personal page newsfeed and you can choose to “like” the post, or preferably ... **share it** so your family and friends who haven’t liked your business page will see it.

“Boosted posts” are a bit more budget friendly than Facebook ad campaigns and I suggest you give either of these special considerations before jumping in and signing up. I personally have never bought either one of them as I’m not sure, based on my research for my type of product, that it’s work the money.

The biggest potential downside to using the Facebook shop **ONLY**, is that you can only sell your products on Facebook. Linking another ecommerce platform to your Shop button (as my website is linked to mine) has the benefit of marketing your products to other venues (i.e. Pinterest, Instagram, Tumbler, etc.).

I’m going to just briefly touch on a relatively inexpensive option to consider. The ecommerce platform that I use for my website is Shopify. I have (and use for multiple purposes) many facets of the website and use their “Pro” version. However, Shopify does offer a “**LITE**” version. The lite version is currently only \$9 per month. It does NOT include a website (easier for a start-up company). Some businesses utilize this low-cost option forever. After setting up your Shopify Lite account, you can choose to integrate it with your Facebook business page and populate the shop automatically from listings you make there. Check-out can be done directly from Facebook.

Benefits:

- Selling outlets include your new Facebook business page’s shop, Pinterest (with buyable pins), Twitter, Instagram, and even Amazon. Using their “buy now” button you can even add it to blogs.
- Easily add your listing information one time and share it automatically to various social media and/or online ecommerce sites. Inventory is then managed from a single site.
- Discounted shipping rates are available.
- Adding products with listing details and photos is super easy. You can also add product variants such as color choices to the listing.
- You can use a Shopify credit card reader (or record cash transactions) at local venues where you sell your items using POS (point-of-sale). Your inventory is automatically adjusted for all selling venues. Deposits to your bank account are automatic based on the company information you added when you set up your account. Accepting credit cards at local venues **WILL** increase your sales. Trust me on this.

I hope you feel comfortable now setting up and opening a shop on Facebook and are not intimidated by what you may have once believed to be too intimidating. If you open shop, share it with me. I’d love to “LIKE” your page!

Sampling of Bright Expectations Basket Patterns

Clicking on any PICTURE will connect you to the pattern listing.

