

RE-IMAGINING NATURAL CRAFT AND FORAGING IN URBAN GREENSPACES

Exploring the re-enchantment of our connection
with nature through contemporary basket making
and foraging.



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CRAFT AND TRADITIONAL FOLK KNOWLEDGE MATTER

Because they are acts of care

Because they can bring us closer to our ancestors

Because nature is fundamentally important to our health

Because they provide nourishment for our lives and community

Because something made with functionality in mind
doesn't lack meaning, ritual or creativity

Because embodied, tacit knowledge is endangered

Because for centuries folk knowledge has been dismissed
and overlooked on racist, classist and sexist grounds

Because they can help mend severed relationships with
the natural world and re-establish reciprocal ways of being

Because against all odds, folk knowledge has persisted
and continues to exist in the tales of great-grandmothers, notes
found in old plant guides, songs, recipe books, mended clothes,
domestic handicraft and family traditions.

WEFAN

*Old English wefan "to weave, form by interlacing yarn," figuratively "devise, contrive, arrange" (past tense wæf, past participle wefen), from Proto-Germanic *weban (source also of Old Norse wefa, Middle Low German, Middle Dutch, Dutch weven, Old High German weban, German weben "to weave")*

The form of the past tense altered in Middle English from wove to wove. Extended sense of "combine into a whole" is from late 14c.; meaning "go by twisting and turning" is from 1640s.

These
artefacts
are part of a growing
body of work exploring foraged
materials and finding enchantment in
a disenchanted world ruled by rationality

*Some experiences are hard to put into words
They inhabit a mystical place
between us and the
surrounding
beings*

DAFFODIL



Narcissus sp

The leaves turn golden in the process of decay. Smells like damp hay and will take long to dry. Can be slightly brittle when woven with. Makes good cordage and fibre for small baskets.

SNOWDROP



Galanthus nivalis

An unusual weaver. First flowers come out around Imbolc.
Associated with Brigid. Collected the leaves after flowering.
Surprisingly pliable and in parts maintains a vibrant green.
Not very strong.

DANDELION



Taraxacum officinale

Not to be confused with daffodil. The stems are flexible and turn all sorts of golden shades when dried. Although they are a short fibre, the colour and flexibility is well worth the efforts. Forget to pick the flower heads off and they will turn to seed while you are drying them. Expect sticky fingers when working with this plant. Make a wish.

IVY



Hedera helix

Easily accessible and quite possibly the best weaving plant to forage in urban environments. The longer the ivy, the better it is for weaving. Do not harvest during nesting season or while the flowers are in bloom. Ivy is believed to attract good fortune and bring peace between two people.

WILLOW



Salix sp

Weaving with willow is an ancient craft. Willow is best harvested for weaving under the November waning moon. It is very pliable when re-soaked. The earliest records of willow baskets date back to the mesolithic period.

In Edinburgh, the Field in Duddingston grow their own willow coppice. This basket was made with William Mackaness. The straps are made from nettle fibre.

NETTLE



Urtica dioica

Nettle cordage. Stinging nettles come in all sorts of sizes and shapes. Where you find them, they often grow abundantly. The fibre is one of the strongest you can forage in urban environments. Nettles have been used in textiles since the late neolithic period.

HAGSTONE



adderstane

A stone with a naturally occurring hole. Found in Dunbar.
Hung up with daffodil cordage.

Hagstones are associated with healing and protection. They are worn or hung up as charms for good luck and protection.

