

# Swing Your Partner

by Beth Hester



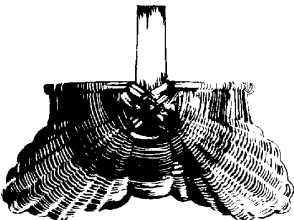
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# Swing Your Partner Basket

An intermediate project, inspired by the Cherokees' use of honeysuckle to make rows of 'wheels' around a basket, this pattern was developed using smoked and natural reed material. The basket has a wooden base, a bit of triple twine and plain weave, and is topped off with two of our handcrafted white oak swing handles. It's a basket that you'll fall in love with and enjoy using. Finished size: 13" x 9" x 9.5".

## Hints in working with Reed

1. When the pattern calls for soaking your Flat Reed, soaking a few minutes in warm water is usually long enough to make reed flexible. Soak the Round Reed and Flat Oval Reed for 5 to 10 minutes in warm water. If reed becomes dry while you are weaving, re-soak or spray until pliable.
2. Do not over soak your reed; it will become mushy.
3. Do not wet the wooden base.
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. Work with the smooth side of the reed to the outside of the basket.
5. Keep your weaving even and the rows touching as you make your basket. Pack the rows following completion of each section.
6. As you weave, gently move the stakes to keep them vertical, to maintain equal space between stakes and to maintain the needed circumference.
7. Reed should be completely dry before being stored.

## Materials

1	6" x 10" Oblong Slotted Wooden Base	60 ft.	3/8" Flat <i>Smoked</i>
140 ft.	1/4" Flat Natural	16 ft.	3/8" Flat Natural
175 ft.	#2 Round <i>Smoked</i>	8 ft.	1/2" Flat Oval
2	8" Round Swing Handles with Ears	4 ft.	#6 Round

## Notes

Read all directions before beginning your basket.

Read each step all the way through before beginning that step.

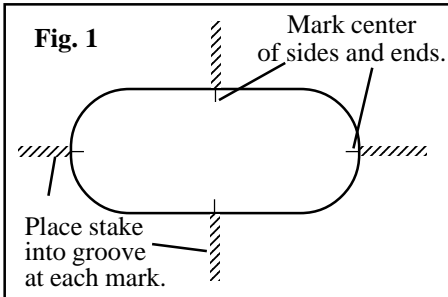
## Supplies / Tools

Scissors or Shears	Chip Carving Knife or Hand Plane
Clothespins (spring type)	Pencil
Measuring Tape	Container to hold water
Basketry Packing Tool	Plastic Twist Ties or Cable Ties
Old Towel	Spray bottle for water
Sandpaper	Glue
Gel Varnish (or other finish)	

## Preparing the Base

Sand wooden base and coat with gel varnish or other sealer. Allow to dry completely.

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 base (on the side that will be the outside/bottom of the basket) in the center on both long sides and on each end with a slight pencil mark.



Cut 48 stakes 12" long from 3/8" Flat Smoked Reed. Turn the outside of the base upward, dampen the stakes and place a stake (smooth side up) deep into the groove at each of the 4 center marks. Insert remaining stakes, spacing evenly around the base, leaving approximately 1/8" between stakes. You'll have 11 stakes per quarter plus one stake at each of the 4 center marks. See Fig. 1.

Soak 3 of your longest pieces of #2 Round Smoked Reed. With stakes laying flat on your table, outside of the base facing up, weave three rows of triple twine.\*\*

After every stitch, place the weaver snug against the base. Spray the weavers periodically with water (do not wet the base) keeping them very wet as you work. Check often that the previous stitches of this first row are all touching the base.

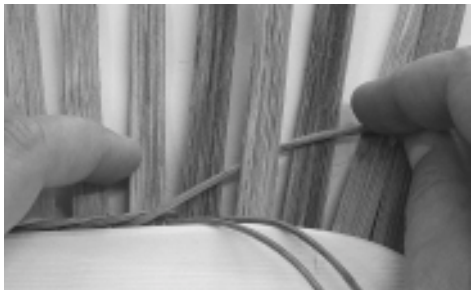
\*\*Start triple twine with 3 pieces of #2 Round Smoked Reed. Insert a piece of #2 Round into the groove of the base to the right of each of 3 consecutive stakes on one of the basket's long sides. Mark these 3 stakes with clothespins. See Photo 1. *Pull the weavers downward so they lay on the base.* Weave the left-hand weaver over two stakes, behind one stake and out toward yourself. Push this weaver tight against the base. (The weaver you just moved is now the right-hand weaver; you still have a weaver to the right of each of 3 consecutive stakes.)

Pick up the *new* left-hand weaver and weave over two stakes, behind one stake and out of the space; push the weaver tight against the base. Adjust the stakes as you weave, keeping their space equidistant.

**Photo 1**



**Photo 2**



When you reach each pencil mark stop weaving and double check that you have 11 stakes in that quarter plus the center stakes. Keep the #2 Round very wet as you work and be sure each stitch touches the base; check often that all previous stitches remain against the base. See Photo 2.

*'Step Up'*: To end the first row, continue around until your three weavers are in the three spaces to the left of the three spaces where your weavers began (to the left of the stakes with clothespins). Now, with the **right-most** weaver weave over two, behind one and out. Repeat over two, behind one and out with the middle weaver; repeat the stitch with the left-most weaver. You've just completed the first row.

Start the second row with the left-most weaver (over 2 behind one and out), etc.

After completing the second row (including the step up), stop weaving and adjust each stake by pushing it into the groove. Hold the stake directly above the weaving and push inward to reseat any stake that may have worked itself out of the groove.

### **Weaving the Sides**

Turn the outside/bottom of the base down, touching the table. Spray the stakes with water at the edge of the weaving (don't wet the base). Gently bend (but do not crease) each dampened stake upward.

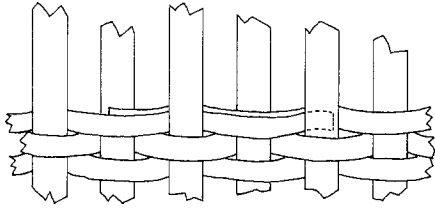
Measure directly on top of the last row of weaving and note the circumference. As you continue to weave, you'll work toward having a 36" circumference (18" from center to center).

While weaving 4 more rows of triple-twine, gently pull tighter on the weavers and bring your stakes upward a bit. Hide the ends of any joins of #2 Round by tucking them down into a couple of already woven rows or catching the ends in a couple of stitches in the following rows on the inside before trimming. You'll have a total of 6 rows of triple twine, ending with the step up. To complete the 6th row, the end of each weaver should remain on the inside of the basket after you weave its over-two step up stitch. Tuck ends behind a weaver or two before trimming.

The dimensions of the top of your basket need to be 8" to 9" x 13" with a 36" circumference—18" from center to center on the long sides. Take a few minutes to measure your basket directly on top of the 6th row of triple twine (use clothespins and a flexible measuring tape). Determine if you need to bring the sides straight up, pull the sides in or if you need to flare out a bit more as you continue to weave. *Check these measurements every few rows and adjust the tension of your weaving and the stakes accordingly.* Make adjustments toward the 36" circumference gradually—enlarging or tightening the basket a bit at a time over many, many rows of weaving.

Set aside a long, thinner piece of 1/4" Flat Reed for the lashing. Soak the shorter pieces of 1/4" Flat and weave 19 or 20\* independent rows, continuing to pay

**Fig. 2**



attention to shaping and checking your measurements every few rows (18" center to center). Weave with the smooth side of the reed to the outside. Overlap the ends of each row across 4 stakes hiding the weaver's ends on the inside and outside of the basket. See Fig. 2. *Dampen the stakes* as you weave the rows of 1/4" Flat and make the space between all stakes as equal as possible.

\*Your top row of 1/4" Flat must weave on the outside of the center stakes of the long sides—this determines whether you need 19 or 20 rows. (We're planning ahead for the wheels and handles.)

Check the size of the basket and pack each row of 1/4".

Using a packing tool or your fingers, begin with the first row of 1/4" Flat and 'pack' or pull each row toward the base—this step rids the basket of unwanted space between rows.

**Photo 3**



Next, we'll make the band for the wheels. Weave one row of 3/8" Flat Natural (smooth side out), weaving under the center stakes of the long sides. Do not overlap this row across the stakes where you'll insert the handles' ears (see cover photo for reference).

Weave 3 rows of #2 Round Smoked in an over, under, over, under pattern. (The first row of #2 weaves opposite the 3/8" Flat row.) Leave a 3" long tail of #2 on the outside of the basket where you begin. See Photo 3.

After completing each row, continue with the same piece of #2 by weaving behind 2 consecutive stakes before continuing over, under, etc. Do not pull the weaver too tight.

When 3 rows are completed, leave a few inches of #2 on the outside of the basket. See Photo 3. In the next step, cut the ends of the #2 to hide behind the wheels.

Add a row of 3/8" Flat weaving the same over and under pattern used on the previous 3/8" Flat row, overlapping as described above. See Photo 3. Pack the rows of 3/8" Flat and #2 Round. Check the circumference and center to center measurement.

## Wheels go Round and Round

**Photo 4**

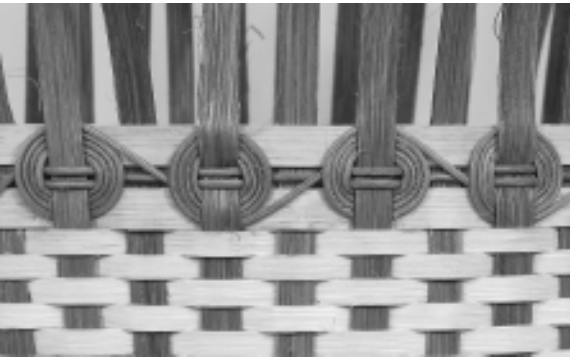


The wheels are a Cherokee decorative element; they are woven at every other stake along the band of #2 Round and 3/8" Flat weavers. Find the center stake on one of the long sides. This stake is on the outside of the 3/8" Flat natural weavers.

Begin your first wheel on this stake by inserting the end of a very wet long piece of #2 Round Smoked reed behind the stake just

above the rows of #2 Round. Taper the free end for a length of 2 to 3 inches, making it thinner. Using a packing tool to open a space behind the stake, insert the tapered end behind the same stake *below* the rows of #2 Round weavers (from right to left) and pull the #2 into a *tight* half circle. Bring #2 Round behind the same stake *above* the #2 weavers. See Photo 4.

**Photo 5**



Pull each 'round' into a *tight* circle. Make 4 rounds to form a wheel, positioning each round flat against the basket. Carry the #2 Round across the outside of the next stake and begin another wheel on the following stake.

One wheel is woven clockwise and the next woven counterclockwise; thus, the piece of #2 that connects one

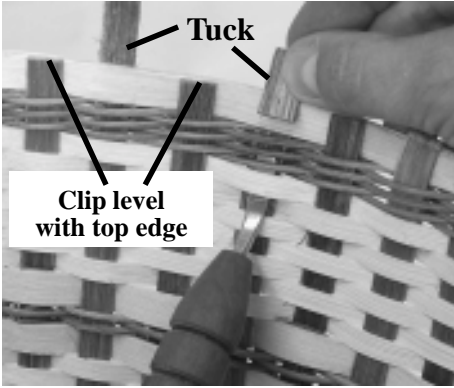
completed wheel to the beginning of the next wheel moves from the upper part of one completed wheel to the lower part, center, of the next wheel (and then from the lower part of that completed wheel to the upper center of the next). See Photos 4 and 5.

When ending a piece of #2 Round and starting a new piece, hide the ends securely behind a wheel stake at the beginning of a new wheel. Create wheels on every other stake. Pack #2 Round and 3/8" Flat weavers if needed.

Dampen the stakes, wet your weavers and work 7 rows of 1/4" Flat (no overlaps across the stakes where your handles' ears will be inserted). Pay attention to the space between stakes, making the space as even as possible. Check the circumference (18" center to center) every few rows. Pack after 7 rows.

Add 3 rows of triple twine with #2 Round Smoked as described above. Tuck the beginning ends under the second row of triple twine before trimming. The third row stops after the step up. Tuck the final ends of the #2 underneath to the inside and trim. Pack these rows.

**Photo 6—View from inside**



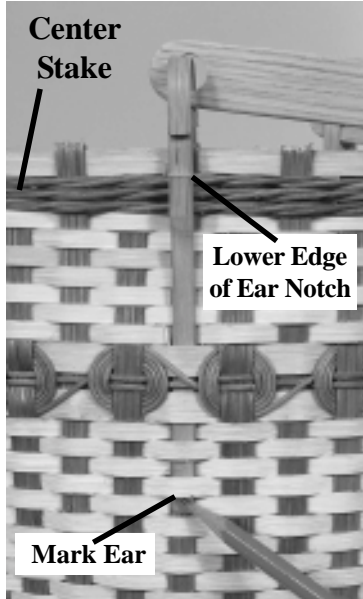
The final row is flat material and it needs to be  $\frac{2}{3}$  the width of your rim material. Measure the rim and measure a piece of  $\frac{3}{8}$ " Flat. Trim some off the width of the  $\frac{3}{8}$ " Flat with scissors if needed so that it is about  $\frac{2}{3}$  the width of the rim material.

Weave this final row using the same over under pattern as in the top row of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " Flat.

### Finishing the Top Edge

Soak the ends of the stakes that extend above the weavers for a few minutes—do not wet the woven sides of the basket. From the outside of the basket, identify the stakes that are *outside the weaver on the top row*. Fold these stakes to the inside, creasing at the top edge of the basket. Mark to length, at the lower edge of the top row of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " Flat, with a pencil. Cut to length.

**Photo 7**



Tuck each folded and cut stake to the inside of the basket—over the top  $\frac{3}{8}$ " Flat weaver, under the #2 Round and under the top row of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " Flat. A basketry packing tool will help open the weavers to accept the stake. Clip the remaining stakes level with the top of the basket. See Photo 6.

### Attaching Handles

To attach the handles, the handles' ears will be inserted behind some weavers on the outside and inside of the basket. With a 36" circumference (18" center to center), the handles will fit into the basket along the third stake to the right and to the left of center on the long sides.

*Before attaching the handle, check to see if you need to trim a bit off the end of each ear.* Beginning with the uppermost  $\frac{3}{8}$ " Flat weaver at the wheel band, push one 'leg' of an ear behind the outside weavers until the lower edge of the ear's notch is level with the lower edge of the top row of

weaving. Mark the ear's length with a pencil (so the trimmed end of the ear will fall behind a row of weaving). See Photo 7.

Also, mark the ear's notch and the corresponding stake so you can reposition them after trimming the ear. Remove the ear and cut to length.

Taper the ear's cut end with a knife or sandpaper so it will more easily slip into position. Repeat for each ear. If you haven't already done so, place ears into handles.

*Inserting the handles is much easier if the sides of the basket are completely dry.*

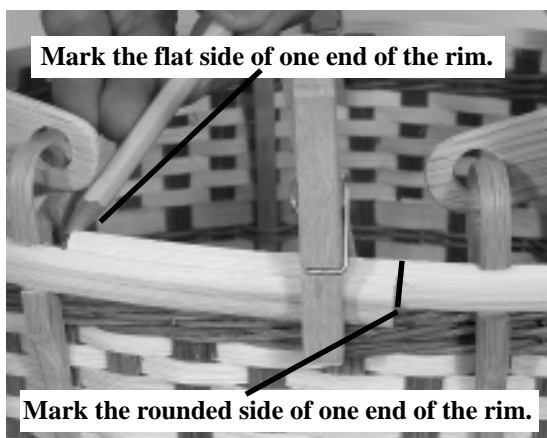
On the outside of the basket, using a packing tool to pry the weaver, insert an end of one ear behind the uppermost 3/8" Flat weaver at the wheel band along one of the marked stakes. Now, look to the inside of the basket and, prying with the tool, push the inside 'leg' of the ear behind the rows of #2 Round. Continue working the ear behind a weaver on the outside and then on the inside of the basket, pushing the ear downward behind one row of weaving at a time to the proper depth.

Insert this handle's other ear and double check the handle's placement. Align the lower edge of both ear notches with the lower edge of the top row of your basket. Attach the second handle to your basket and check placement.

*Note:* If the weaving is too tight for the ears to slide through the wheel band area, cut both legs of each ear so the 'outside leg' will hide behind the uppermost 3/8" row of the wheel band (cut off about 1 3/4"). Taper cut ends and insert ears as described above starting from the inside. When the legs are in place, they'll be behind 2 rows of weaving on the inside (the 2 rows above the wheel band) and 2 rows on the outside.

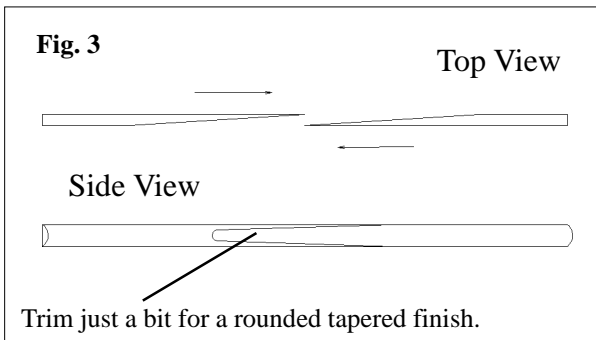
## Photo 8

## Basket Rims



Measure the outside of your basket around the top row, placing your measuring tape into each ear notch, to determine the basket's circumference. Cut a length of 1/2" Flat Oval Reed 4" longer than the circumference for your outside rim. Cut a length of 1/2" Flat Oval for your inside rim that is 1.5" shorter than your outside rim. Cut a length of #6 Round for your rim filler the

same length as your inside rim. Sand the rounded side of each rim. Soak the rims and filler for 5 to 10 minutes.



In order to form a smooth joint where the rims overlap you need to carve some of the thickness from both ends of each rim.

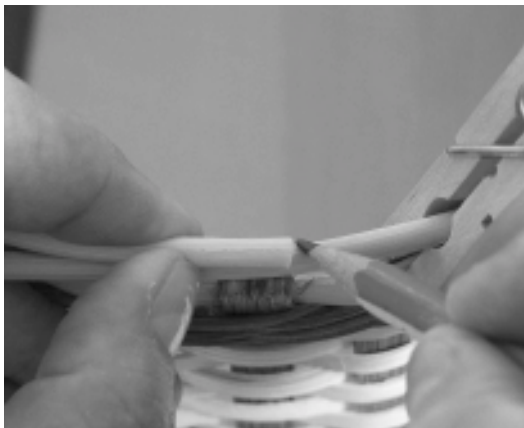
To determine exactly where to carve, attach the outside rim around the top of your basket (with clothespins). Mark the rim where it

overlaps—marking the rounded side of one end of the rim and the flat side of the other end. See Photo 8. Remove the rim. Carve the rounded side of one end at an angle and the flat side of the other end at the same angle using a carving knife or hand plane forming a smooth overlapping joint as shown in Fig. 3.

Repeat this procedure with the inside rim and the rim filler; clothespin each in place, mark the overlap, remove the piece and carve the overlapped sections.

*Note:* Place the rim filler *through* the ears to get an accurate measurement; allow an overlap of about 1” to 2”. See Photo 9.

**Photo 9**



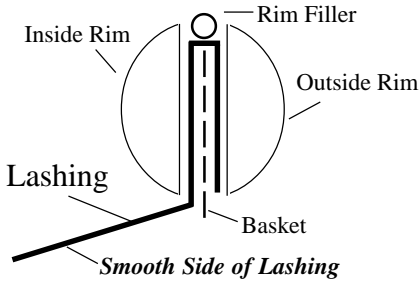
**Photo 10**



After carving the rims and rim filler resoak for a few minutes. With scissors, trim just a bit from one end of each rim creating a rounded tapered finish as in Fig. 3.

Place the rims onto your basket, positioning your rim overlaps just a few inches apart—with the rim’s flat side touching the basket, place the inside rim around the basket into the ear

**Fig. 4 - Cross Section**



notches securing with a few clothespins. Position the outside rim around the basket; secure with clothespins.

Beginning at the inside rim overlap, position the rim filler between the inside and outside rims and through each ear.

Push the filler down between the rims and secure both rims and rim filler to the top row of weaving with twist ties, clothespins or cable ties every few inches. See Photo 10.

**Photo 11**



### Lashing

Looking at the outside of the basket, locate a stake to the right of the outside rim overlap. The space following this stake is where you'll start lashing. Soak a long piece of 1/4" Flat and note its smooth side. As illustrated in Fig. 4, secure one end of the 1/4" Flat (in the identified space) under the inside rim, beneath the filler and under the outside rim.

Working left to right from the outside of your basket, bring the 'free' end of your lashing over the rims (smooth side out) and insert it into the space between the next two stakes just below the rims. Pull one arm's-length of reed through to the inside of your basket. Now, insert the lashing's end between the next two stakes and pull the end to the inside until you have a small loose loop of reed around the rim. Repeat in the next several spaces. See Photo 11.

**Photo 12**



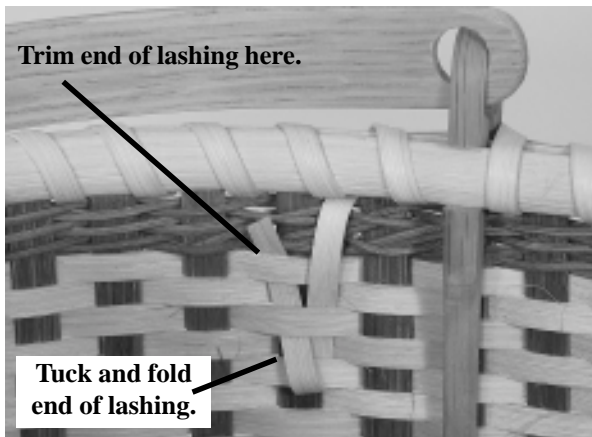
After making four or five loops around the rims and between the stakes, tighten the loops of reed—one at a time—from left to right by pulling the lasher *to the inside*. See Photo 12.

Repeat the looping process working your way around the basket. If the reed becomes dry, simply soak it again before continuing. Remove the clothespins (or ties) as you progress.

At each ear, lash diagonally across the outside rim and continue lashing as before.

See cover photograph of completed basket.

**Photo 13**



When your lashing reaches the place it began, insert the final stitch into the space where you secured the beginning of the lashing. Pull this stitch to the inside and tuck its end behind a couple of weavers on the inside of your basket, then fold the end upward, over the lower weaver, and behind another weaver or two above. Trim the end to hide behind a weaver. See Photo 13 showing the inside of your basket.

Gently shape the rims if necessary.

Apply a bead of clear-drying glue around the edge of the base on the inside of your basket and allow glue to dry completely.

Swing Your Partner!

Enjoy.