

NETTING

PRIMROSE CUMMING

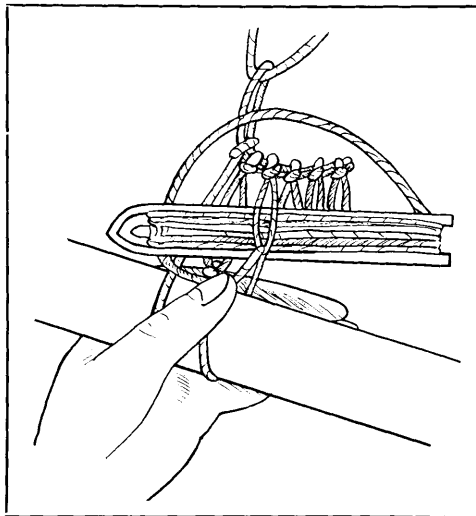


FIG. 3.

DRYAD HANDICRAFTS
LEICESTER

NETTING

THE materials for netting are not many or expensive, and the three main ones are the mesh stick, the needle and the string.

The mesh stick and needle in Fig. 1 are usually made of thin, strong wood. They can also be had in bone, but for netting the articles described in the following pages wood is the more satisfactory.

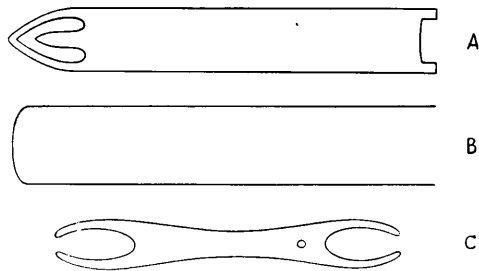


FIG. 1.

The mesh sticks run about a foot in length and the width varies from half an inch up to nearly two inches. Great attention must be paid to the width of the mesh stick as this decides the size of the mesh in the same way as a knitting needle decides the size of the stitch. A mesh stick half an inch wide used in conjunction with thin string will produce a fine piece of work suitable for, say, a shopping bag. A mesh stick nearly two inches wide is employed for big, heavy work such as hammock-making with fairly thick cord.

The width of the needles, A and C, correspond with that of the mesh sticks except that they must always be very slightly narrower to allow for when they are loaded with string. If they are as wide or wider than the mesh stick they will not pass easily through the meshes; on the other hand if they are unnecessarily narrow they will not carry much string, which will mean constant rejoining. There are various types of needles, but the two shown in Fig. 1 are the most useful. The first one has a tongue and closed prongs at one end and is the handier to use, especially for beginners. It should always be employed when the mesh stick is an inch in width or over. The second needle has open prongs at each end and therefore tends to catch in the work until you are used to

it. For fine work, however, it is indispensable and should always be used with mesh sticks less than one inch in width. Its advantage is that, for its width, it will carry more string than the first type, and where the needle has to be very narrow indeed in order to pass through fine meshes it saves frequent reloading.

The kinds of strings used with the various mesh sticks and needles depends largely on the taste of the netter. For fine work such as bags and ping-pong nets macramé string is unequalled, for rabbit and fruit nets hemp, and for hammocks soft cord. Generally speaking, thick string is used for wide meshed nets and fine string for nets with small meshes, but there is no hard and fast rule.

PLAIN DIAMOND MESH

If you have not done any netting before, the best plan is to practise with a piece of plain diamond mesh, as once this is mastered it forms the basis of all the articles illustrated in the following pages.

When practising, choose a fairly thin, smooth string, a mesh stick one inch in width and a needle which is slightly narrower and with the tongue at one end like the first one in Fig. 1.

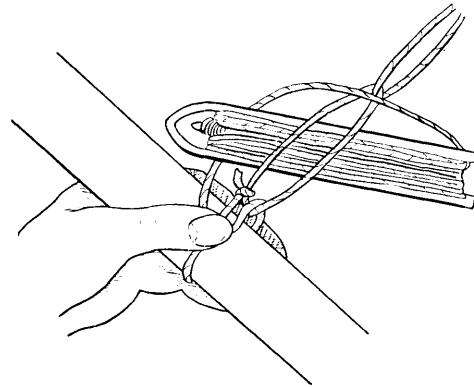


FIG. 2.

To begin, load the needle by winding the string up round the tongue and down the same side, then up the other side and down again until the needle is comfortably full. Wind the string very tightly so that it will carry the maximum amount with the smallest bulk. If it is too bulky it will not slip easily in and out of the meshes. Make a large loop of spare string and hang it over the window catch or some hook. This loop is called the

stirrup. Into the stirrup tie a second smaller loop so that it will move round and round in the first one. (When sufficient netting has been done, this second loop is cut to allow the work to spread out). Having cut the needle free from the ball, knot the end of the string on to the second foundation loop and cast on in the following manner:—

Hold the mesh stick lengthways between the left finger and thumb and close under the knot just made. With the other hand bring the needle and string down, over the mesh stick and up through the back of the foundation loop, pull tight and secure against the mesh stick with the left thumb. Then bring the string round in a circle towards the left shoulder, insert the needle again, this time between the *entire* loop and the circle just made, Fig. 2. Draw tight, releasing the string under thumb, and the first knot is complete. Repeat the whole process until you have nine or ten stitches on the mesh stick and a row of knots all along the top.

Pull the mesh stick out of the stitches and a row of firm loops will be left. Turn the work right over and start again from left to right so that the last loop of the last row is now at the beginning instead of the end. Work into this row of loops in the same way in which you cast on, doing one knot into each loop, Fig. 3. Turn the work over at the end of every row, and after six or seven rows you should have a piece of netting like Fig. 4. It is important to pull the knots as tight as possible as this makes them neat and strong.

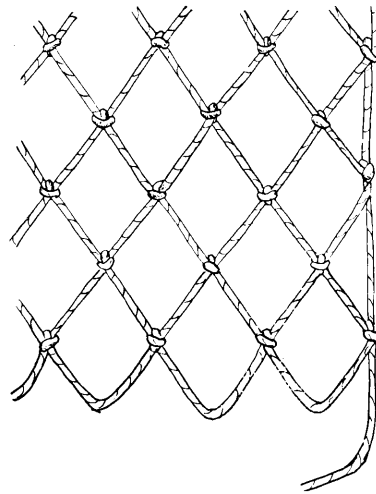


FIG. 4.

When the needle is empty, reload it and join on again, using the Weavers' knot. To make this, bend the two ends to

be joined so that they make two loops and hold one between each finger and thumb. Insert the left loop down through the middle of the right, cross the ends of the right loop and thrust the top-most one down through the end of the left loop, Fig. 5. Draw tight, keeping firm hold on the four ends whilst doing so.

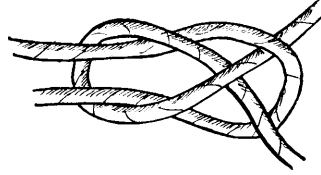


FIG. 5.

A HAMMOCK

For the hammock shown in Fig. 6 you will need a mesh stick one and a half inches in width, a needle slightly smaller, four balls of thick macramé string, either white or coloured, a couple of strong wooden struts about thirty inches long and five in circumference, two iron rings and some thick rope.

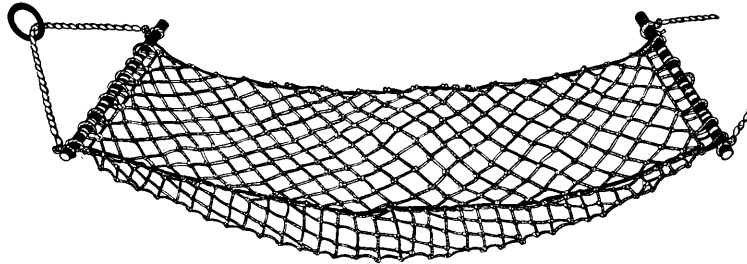


FIG. 6.

Cast thirty-two stitches on to the mesh stick as shown in Fig. 2. If they will not all go on comfortably, let some slip off the left end of the mesh stick and hang down as you work. Turn the work, net into loops, and turn again until forty-six rows have been netted. It takes two rows to make a complete diamond mesh, so there should be twenty-three diamonds end on end. Net one more row with double string as on this row a great deal of the weight depends. For this you will need to reload the needle with the string doubled.

Now cut the foundation loop upon which the work hangs and pull out the string, unpicking the knots with a darning needle. They may need a little persuasion to come undone, and once they are unpicked they will form into a row of ordinary loops. Hang the work up by the bottom end and net a row with double string into these loops as you did at the bottom.

Take the struts and bore a hole through each end an inch and a half from the edge, taking care that the holes at each end run in the same direction. Then slip the struts through the double rows of netting, Fig. 7, so that there is one at each end. Cut two lengths of string a little longer than the hammock, thread the ends through the holes in the top strut, thread all down the sides of the hammock and knot through the holes of the bottom strut again. This will prevent the hammock from going flat when anyone is lying in it, but do not make the side lines so short that all the weight falls upon them instead of upon the network.

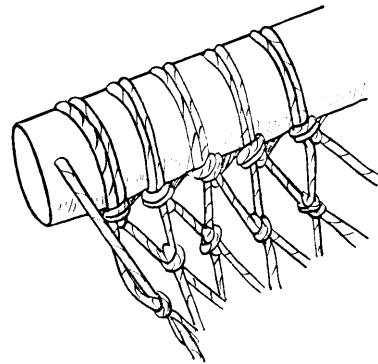


FIG. 7.

Finally, thread some rope through one of the iron rings and tie to the ends of the top strut in the form of a V. Do the same with the other ring to the bottom strut and the hammock will be finished and ready to sling between two trees or posts.

A PING-PONG OR TABLE TENNIS NET IN SQUARE MESH

Ping-pong nets can be made in the ordinary diamond mesh, but when worked in square mesh the result is sturdier and more like a miniature tennis net. The actual knot used in

square mesh is exactly the same as in the diamond, it is only the angle of working which is different.

The materials consist of two balls of fine green macramé string, one half-inch mesh and a needle to match. For this finer netting use a needle like the one shown in Fig. 1 C, which has converging prongs at each end.

Tie a foundation loop into the stirrup and cast two stitches on to it. Slip out the mesh stick, turn the work and net into these two loops, increasing one in the second loop. To increase is to net two stitches into one loop. Turn the work again and continue to net, always increasing one in the *last* loop until you have done eighteen rows and there are twenty stitches on the mesh stick.

If you smooth the work out flat you will find that it represents two sides of a square, across which you are working diagonally, Fig. 8. Turn the work again and at the end of the next row decrease one by netting two loops together.

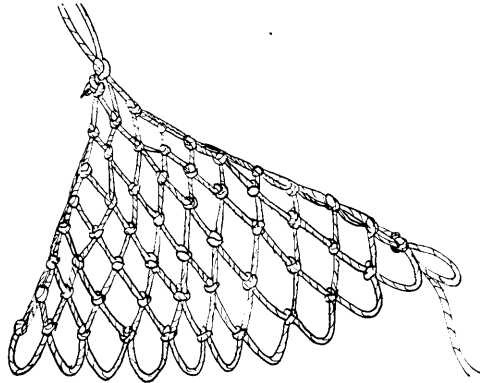


FIG. 8.

On the next row increase one at the end, and on the next decrease again. Continue increasing and decreasing on alternate rows so that you always have the same amount of stitches on the mesh stick and so that all the increasing comes on one side of the work and the decreasing on the other. It is a good idea to tie a piece of bright wool on to the increasing side so that you can see at a glance where you are. Otherwise, unless a sharp look-out is kept, the work may become zig-zag instead of an oblong.

The length of the net depends, of course, on the width of the ping-pong table it is expected to fit. Continue netting

with the decreasing and increasing until the increasing side measures the width of the table. After this continue netting, but now decrease at the end of *every* row until once more only two stitches are left upon the mesh stick. Cut the string and end off the netting by tying the two loops together with the tag end. Cut the foundation string and unpick the cast-on knots with a darning needle so that they become two ordinary loops. These loops tie together in the same manner as the bottom two.

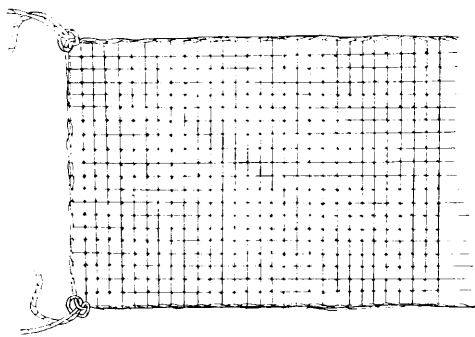


FIG. 9.

At first the finished net may not be of a good shape, but repeated pulling will form it into an oblong. A damp cloth and hot iron may be used if necessary. To complete the net, tie strings to each corner of the oblong so that it may be fastened on to the uprights, Fig. 9.

A PING-PONG NET IN DIAMOND MESH

Tie a very long foundation loop into the stirrup, and using a one-inch mesh and needle, cast on forty-three stitches. These will not all go on the mesh stick at once, but as you work let some of the loops slip off the left end and hang down. Net thirteen rows into the loops and then cut off the working string. Cut the foundation loop, unpick the cast-on knots so that they become a row of loops. Through these loops thread a length of string, allowing enough at each end to tie on to the uprights. Tie strings to the bottom corners for the same purpose and the net is finished.

The chief drawback to diamond mesh for ping-pong nets lies in the difficulty of judging the length when casting on,

whereas in the square mesh the work simply continues until it measures the correct length. If forty-three stitches seem too long or too short for a particular table, experiment with cheap string for a few rows. The number of stitches given here should work out at about three feet in length without being unduly stretched.

SHOPPING BAG IN GREEN AND WHITE

MACRAME STRING.

The string bag shown in Fig. 10 is ideal for carrying home the household shopping. Being made in diamond mesh it will stretch to an extraordinary size if desired, and will obligingly swallow parcels of the most awkward shapes. Netted in green and white stripes upon big rings it is pleasing to look upon.

The solid black lines in the illustration represent the netting worked with the green string.

The materials required are two balls of macramé string, one green and one white, two rings about four inches in diameter, one mesh stick one and a half inches in width, another mesh stick half an inch in width and one needle like Fig. 1 C, narrow enough to work with the smaller mesh stick.

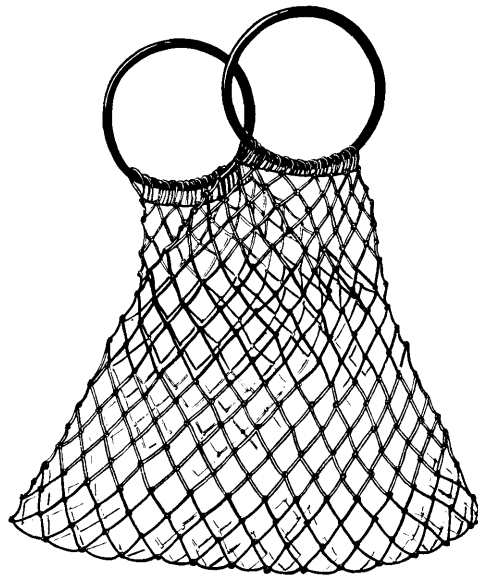


FIG. 10.

Begin by tying one of the rings into the stirrup in place of a foundation loop. Load the needle with white string, tie the tag end on to the ring and, with the larger mesh stick, cast on thirty stitches in the following manner. Hold the ring in the left hand with the mesh stick

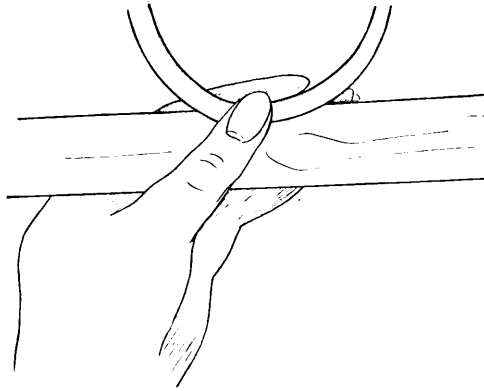


FIG. 11.

just below it, Fig. 11. Bring the needle down over the front of the mesh stick and up between the ring and the mesh stick, draw tight and hold the string down with the left thumb. Bring the needle round in a circle towards the left shoulder, insert through the back of the ring again and through the half-circle of string just made, Fig. 12. Draw tight and repeat the action in Fig. 12, casting on to the ring only and not the mesh stick. This completes the first

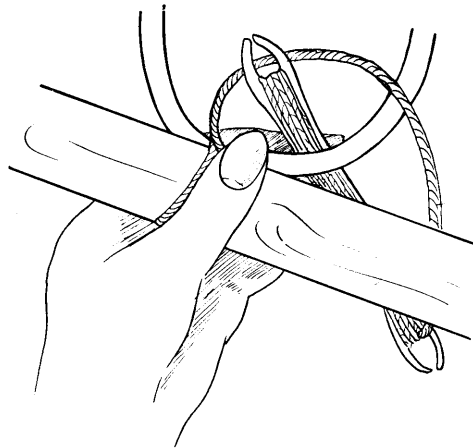


FIG. 12.

stitch, making one long loop right round both the mesh stick and ring, and two short loops round the ring only. Cast on thirty stitches in this manner and then slip out the mesh stick, leaving a row of loops hanging from the ring.

Now take the half-inch mesh stick and net one stitch into each of these loops in plain diamond netting. On the next row increase one in the first and last loop. Next row is plain netting. Next row increase again. Next row plain. Next row increase again. Change to the green string and net six rows of plain netting. Change again to white and net another six rows. Continue netting six rows of green and six of white until you have done four stripes of white and four of green in all. Change to the white string for the last time and take two together at the beginning and end of the first white row. Next row plain. Next row decrease. Next row plain. Next row decrease. Next row plain.

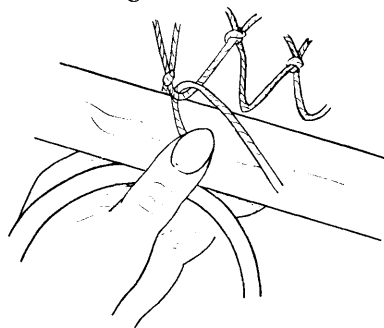


FIG. 13.

For the last row change to the one and a half inch mesh stick and taking the second ring hold the two together in the left hand, Fig. 13. Now, with the same needle and the white string begin to net into the last row of loops, putting the string round both the mesh stick and the ring as in Fig. 13. Pull the knot very tight and before going on to the next loop slip the needle once round the ring alone and then between the loop thus made from left to right, Fig. 14, and draw tight on the edge of the mesh stick. Net into the next loop and repeat the looping round the ring, and continue to do so in between each

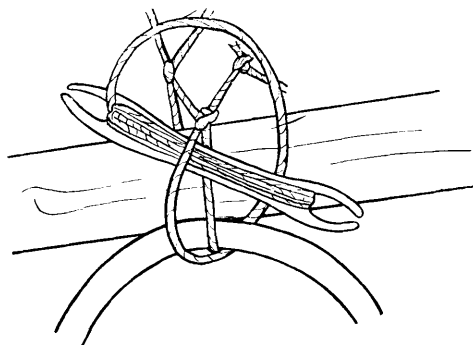


FIG. 14.

stitch until the end of the row.

Withdraw the mesh stick, cut the needle free and knot the tag end of string firmly on to the ring. Fold the netting exactly double, ring to ring, to make the bag, and with a length of white string lace the sides together, beginning and ending about eight meshes from the rings. This allows the bag to open easily, as may be seen in Fig. 10.

RABBIT OR PURSE NETS

The hemp string used for rabbit nets is usually sold by the hank, also the thicker cord for bordering the nets. In addition to the string, each net requires two metal rings about one and a quarter inch in diameter and a wooden peg.

Use a one and a half inch mesh stick and a needle to correspond. The best needle for this work is the one with a tongue shown in Fig. 1 A. Load the needle tightly with the thinner string and tie on to the foundation loop, leaving a tag end about a yard long. This tag end is important, as later it

will be used for netting into one of the rings. Having done this, cast eighteen stitches on to the foundation loop and then net twenty-two rows in diamond mesh. Withdraw the mesh stick for the last time and unwind whatever string there happens to be left on the needle. If there is a lot, cut it off at about one yard from

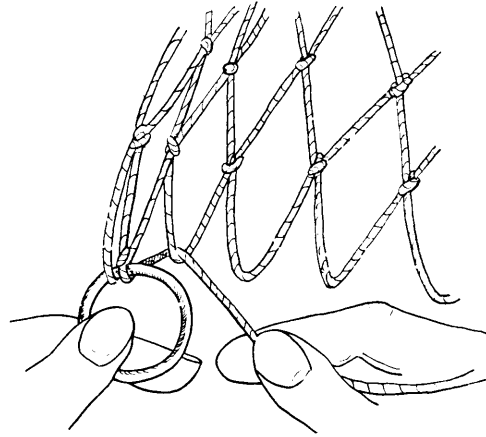


FIG. 15.

the netting. Next take one of the rings and, using it in place of the mesh stick, net one more row upon it, working the long tag of string with your fingers instead of the needle, Fig.

15, until the whole end of the netting is gathered on to the ring. Do the last knot twice to make it really secure and then cut off the surplus string close to the knot.

Cut the foundation string and unpick the cast-on knots so that they become a row of loops. Hang the work up by the bottom end and net the top loops into the second ring in the same way as the first, using the long tag of string left at the beginning. With the thicker cord, thread through one ring, all down the side of the netting, through the bottom ring, up the other side of the netting and through the top ring again. Thread the cord sufficiently loosely to allow the net to be spread out flat without puckering, and leave about six inches over at the top end to which the peg is tied, Fig. 16.

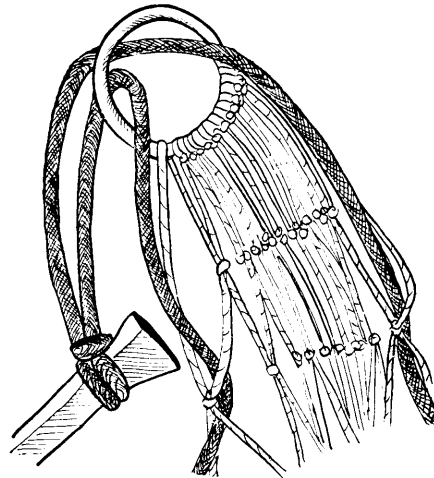


FIG. 16.

SCARF IN DIAMOND MESH.

Although string has been used for netting the articles in this leaflet, wool can be used for making scarves, turbans, etc. The following instructions are for a short scarf, approximately 31" long by 9" wide, netted with double wool.

The materials required are $1\frac{1}{2}$ ozs. of soft four-ply wool, one half-inch mesh stick and a bone needle (Fig. 1C).

The scarf may be in one or two colours. In either case, the wool must be wound into two balls. It is finished off at each end with a fringe, so that, before starting to net, it is advisable to cut off the required amount of wool to make this. For the

two-colour scarf, cut off 24 lengths, 18" long, from each ball and lay on one side until required.

Having made a loop of string and hung it over a hook, as described on page 4, tie another large loop of *wool* into this. Allow about 48" for this second loop.

Load the needle with double wool, winding it tightly, and proceed to net as described on page 3, casting on about 23 stitches. When the needle needs reloading, the best way to join the wool is by threading the ends through each other with an ordinary needle. If possible, avoid allowing the joins in both colours to come exactly opposite.

As the netting progresses, the length may become awkward to manipulate, in which case tie something round the netting a short distance from the end at which you are working, and re-hook it.

When the netting is complete, cut off the string loop, spread the long wool loop out evenly between the cast-on stitches, and loop the pieces of wool for the fringe into these loops, each piece being folded into three, and then into half. Loop the remaining pieces of wool into the loops at the other end of the scarf and cut the ends level.

This leaflet, one of a series covering practically every branch of craftwork, is published by

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