

THE GUILD OF STRAW CRAFTSMEN

Glory Braid

One of the flat plaits, this corn dolly can be made with a simple hair plait technique, but the Diamond Plait braid gives a more decorative appearance. Very popular at Harvest Festival, these Glory Braids can be used to decorate the pew ends. You can display them either way up, with the heads at the top or hanging down. (See the Glory Braids decorating the church at Siddington).



How to make a Glory Braid

You will need:

Tools

- Scissors

Materials

- 12 thick straws, about 40 cm long, with evenly matched heads
- Strong thread for tying
- Ribbon for decoration

Method of making a Glory Braid

Before you start make sure the straws are pliable. If they have been stored for a time they will need to be dampened. To do this put the straw in a container (like a plastic garden trough) and cover with warm water. Leave for a few hours until the ends of the straw bend without breaking. Try not to get the straw too wet as it will be limp and lifeless.

Work on a smooth, firm surface.

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Step 1

Making a "fan" of ears, bunch the 12 straws together just below the ears, at the top of the stem and tie tightly with a Clove Hitch. With the ears away from you, spread out the straws with a group of six to the left, and six to the right

Step 2

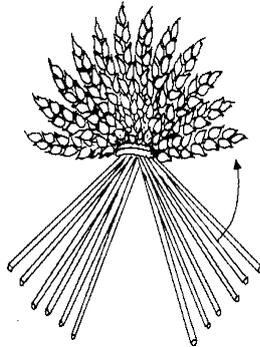


Diagram A

Start working on the right-hand group. Lift up the second straw from the outside top of the group (Diagram A).

Step 3

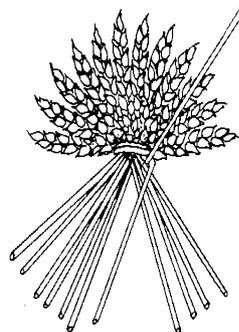


Diagram B

Take the outside straw of the right hand group under the raised straw and over the remaining four straws in the group. Lay it in the centre, next to the left-hand group (Diagram B).

Step 4

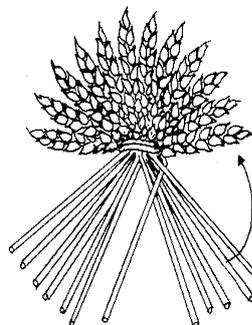


Diagram C

Lay down the raised straw which now becomes the top straw of the right-hand group (Diagram C). Steps 1 to 3 are the basic movements used to complete the braid.

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Repeat them on the right-hand group until there are three straws on the right and nine on the left (Diagram D).

Now start working on the left-hand group using steps 1 to 3, as follows: Take the second straw (outside top) of the left-hand group, raise it up. Take the top outside straw, move it across the remaining straws in the left-hand group and lay it to the inside of the right-hand group. Lay down the raised straw. Repeat the movements until there are three straws on the left and nine on the right.

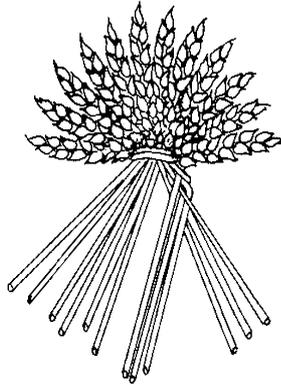


Diagram D

Step 5

Work three more moves until you are back to 6 straws in each group. Work three more moves until you are back to 6 straws in each group. When the braid measures approximately 12 cm (5 in) in length (with 6 straws in each group) you are ready to move on to the next step.

Step 6

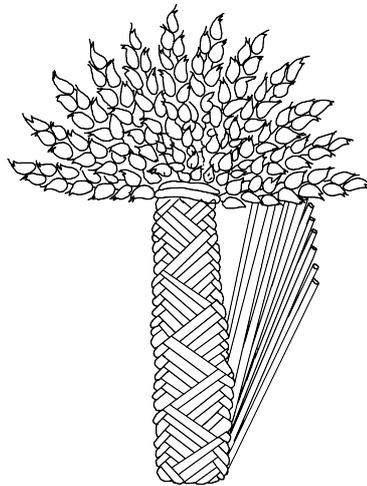


Diagram E

Holding the end of the plait firmly, bend it over a straight edge, such as a scissor blade, so that the straw ends lie behind the plait (Diagram E). With the straw ends lying behind the wheat ears, tie tightly over the first tie, catching in the straw ends. Make a loop hanger from thread and tie it to the back of the braid. Decorate with a ribbon.