

THE LEARNING CIRCLE

by Loren Woerpel, Noc Bay Trading Company

PARTRIDGE TAIL FAN

Fall partridge hunting season is a good source of feathers for a nice women's fan. The tail of the ruffed grouse, spread and dried is your basic ingredient. Ask a hunter to save you a tail, if you are not hunting yourself. The traditional way to make a handle with birch bark may not be available to everyone. The instructions here show how to use a scrap of pine wood from the lumber yard.

MATERIALS: 1 Partridge tail; 1 piece of 3/4 inch pine; 1 piece of leather for fringe; 1 piece of leather for wrapping handle; glue.

STEPS:

1. Starting with a freshly killed partridge, cut entire tail off with a sharp knife. Include most of the fleshy part of the tail.

2. Salt the flesh remaining with the tail feathers. Spread the tail as desired, and pin it in that position onto a heavy piece of cardboard. Let dry for several weeks. Remove from the cardboard when tail is stiff.

3. Draw out a pattern using the dimensions in figure 1. Trace the pattern onto a clear piece of 3/4 inch thick pine. Cut out the handle with a coping saw (or a band saw if you have access to one). Drill a hole with a 1/4 inch bit in the bottom end of the handle for the fringe. Cut out the notch at the top end of the handle as shown in figure 1.

4. Using a pocket knife, whittle down the edges of the handle into a nice curved shape. Finish the job with a piece of 100 grit sandpaper.

5. At this point the handle can be given a finish. You could paint it, leave it as is, but hand rub in a

furniture wax, or blacken it by burning it over a candle. A propane torch can also be used. Heating bee's wax and rubbing it into the wood after blackening it is another natural finish.

6. Using a scissors or sharp knife, trim off dried flesh at the base of the tail until it fits snugly into the notch of the handle.

7. Coat the inside of the notch with white craft glue. Insert the base of the tail into the notch and position it as it looks best. Let dry.

8. Cut 6 to 8 pieces of leather fringe out of buckskin or other soft leather. They should be about 8 inches long. Bundle the fringe together and wrap the top end with thread. Put a large drop of glue into the drilled hole in the bottom of the handle. Force the wrapped end of the bundle of fringe into the hole and wipe off any excess glue. Let dry.

9. If you want to use bead wrapping on your handle, cut out a piece of soft leather to wrap the handle as illustrated in figure 2. Fringing both ends up about 3/4 inch looks nice. Glue the leather to the handle, cutting the leather so there is no overlapping, raised seam. This forms the base for bead wrapping. See our book. BEADWORKING WITH TODAY'S MATERIALS for instructions on bead wrapping.

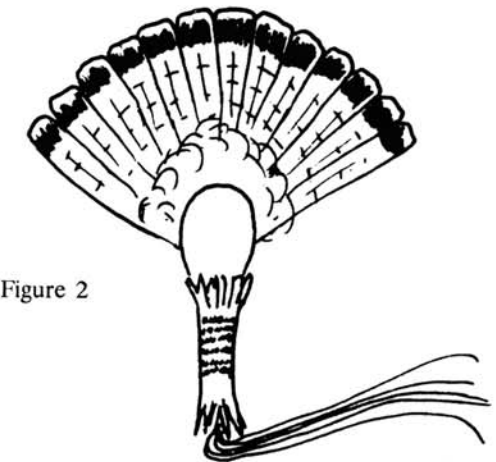
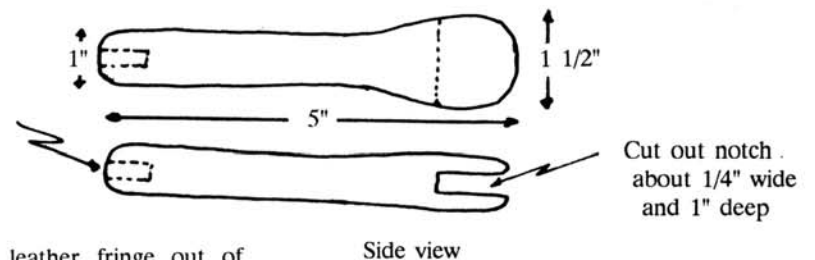


Figure 2

Figure 1

Drill 1/4" hole
in end for
fringe

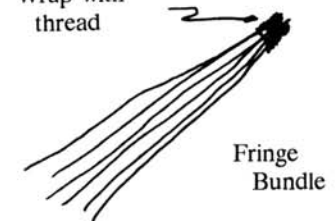


Top view

Side view

Cut out notch .
about 1/4" wide
and 1" deep

Wrap with
thread



Fringe
Bundle

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