

ANSWER — Thanks to Fran Pierman, Stockton, N.J., for sending directions, which had been requested from a Honsdale reader, to make a basket from paper grocery bags.

Paper Bag Basket

- 16 yards (3 packages) raffia ribbon
- 5/8 yards material
- 5/8 yards quilt battin (1/2 -inch thick)
- 1 1/4 yards lace
- 3 grocery bags

You'll need a stapler and a hot glue gun. Measure, cut and unwrap raffia as follows:

- 6 pieces 25-inches long
- 4 pieces 29-inches long
- 4 pieces 40-inches long

Handle: 3 pieces 24-inches long

Bow:

- 2 pieces 36-inches long
- 2 pieces 13-inches long

To cut bags, leave folded and cut where bottom folds against side of bag. Cut tops off bags. Set one bag inside of the other and staple edge of top. (To make more sturdy, glue cardboard to paper bags).

To unwrap raffia, wet to slightly dampen strands. Do not wet heavily or the strands will take too long to dry. Just wet hand and squeeze strands in groups then unwind raffia. (Strands split easy—be careful).

Take 25-inches raffia, which has been unwrapped and is dry, and fold over side of bags at one end (corner) about 1 1/2 -inch and staple. Continue all six pieces in same manner. Take 29-inch pieces, weave across bottom—draw up ends, bend over edge and staple.

Now take 40-inch strands and weave around sides of bag. Starting and ending on the underside of a strand and staple. Where stapler doesn't reach use hot glue.

Next hot glue batting by spot touching glue about 1-inch from top on outside of basket. Just let hang loose on inside.

Take material and fold in half lengthwise and cut on fold.

Bees Help Maintain Plant Collection

GREENBELT, Md. — Maintaining collections of seeds and plants for many generations without altering their genetic variability is not a simple matter of occasionally producing fresh seed supplies. It's a laborious job - for man and bees.

At the North Central Regional Plant Introduction Station in Ames, Iowa, a new addition to this vital workforce is the Osmia or

mason bee.

When the Iowa station was founded in 1948, hand pollination was the norm. Honey bees were put to work in the 1970's, and they remain the station's principal pollinating workhorses.

But, over the winter, hives normally don't have enough time to build up their numbers for pollinations that must be done in the spring. Purchasing additional bees

from suppliers in the southern United States is costly and runs the risk of conveying diseases and mites.

That's when cool-season workers like Osmia come in handy.

Introduced from Japan in 1977, solitary, hard-working Osmia bees have for the past two years proved their worth in pollinating canola and other members of the mustard or Brassicaceae family. The bees emerge from artificial nests to pollinate at precisely the time Brassica plants flower.

The station also uses bumblebees. Their long tongues and large size allow them to pollinate flowers like snapdragons.

Other plants the station maintains include pumpkins, corn, sunflowers, melons, cucumbers, carrots, chicory, herbaceous ornamentals and shrubs.

An article on controlled pollination appears in the October Agricultural Research magazine. The article also is on the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/oct97/pollen1097.htm>

Spot glue at close spots around edge of batting and attach material then turn over basket to hang on inside as did with batting.

Pillow for the bottom: Take the three cut-off bag tops and fold in half and staple to hold. Wrap around with batting—staple and then wrap around with material. Cut off excess piece. Glue across pillow. Fold ends as you would a package and glue. Put in basket.

Edge outside of basket covering glued part of material with the lace.

Use the three 24-inch pieces of raffia and braid for the handle. Glue handle tightly to each side.

Lastly, take one 36-inch piece and fold ends to cross in middle to look like a bow. Pull ends to give bow shape. Just pinch together. Now take 13-inch piece and bring ends together in middle just crossing about an inch and squeeze the middle. With material, cut strip about 2-inches wide and 6-inches long. Fold material about 1-inch and holding both pieces of raffia together like a bow, wrap and glue material to hold firm and glue on end of handle. Do the same with the other side.



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The North Central Regional Plant Introduction Station's home page is:

<http://www.ars-grin.gov/ars/Midwest/Ames/>

The Ames station holds more than 40,000 genetically separate types of plants from around the world. The facility is part of a national system for maintaining the genetic diversity of crop plants and their relatives as potential sources of disease and pest resistance or as future crops.



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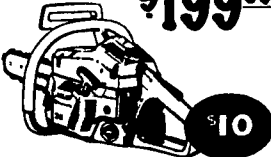
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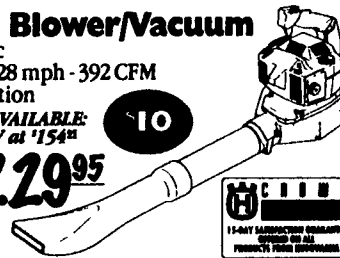


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