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Heroes of Cotton

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WINTER 2014

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CONTENTS

PROJECTS

DEPARTMENTS

Spin·off
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Volume XXXVII
Number 4
Winter 2014

On the cover:
Handspun Veronica Pullover, page 92.

At spinningdaily.com:
Spinner's Connection
Guild News
Calendar of Events
Calls for Entries
Corrections
Index of past issues

A bead-whorl spindle that belonged to Ella Baker, from Judith Towers's collection, with a handspun cotton carrying case and a needlecase made by Ella and given to Irene Schmoller of Cotton Clouds.

76

Some Majacraft dealers you can talk to

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majacraft

all you need to spin your dreams

universal fitting

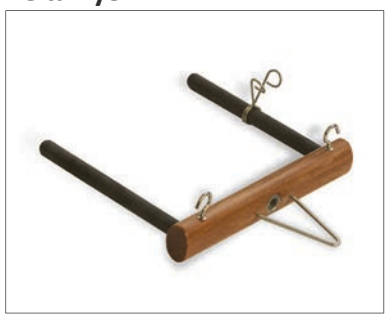
At Majacraft, we are very proud of the range of accessories we offer for our spinning wheels. One of the most valuable features they offer is the ability to fit straight on ANY spinning wheel we produce. Majacraft flyers are an example of this. They are designed to be lightweight, aerodynamically efficient and built to last. Each one is hand balanced to spin smoothly even at high speeds.

accessories designed to fit ALL Majacraft wheels

Fine flyer

For fine and lace weight yarns. Ceramic inserts in the orifices are super hard wearing and have low friction.

Delta flyer



A great genveral purpose flyer that is simple to thread and even easier to use.

specialist tools

Whatever your spinning speciality, we are likely to offer a flyer that will make the task simple and produce a higher quality result. From long drawn lace weight yarns through to art yarns as thick as your thumb, there is going to be a Majacraft flyer to suit you.

flyers to spin from wisps to ropes!

Stylus

An innovative way to do spindle spinning on your wheel. It is fast and easy and the yarn is spun onto the special bobbin.

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Combines a delta for holding the yarn steady and a halo ring for spinning large elements in art yarns with ease.

create with ease

The goal of Majacraft flyers and accessories is helping you express your creativity with ease. Every flyer is meticulously crafted so that when you start spinning, all you have to focus on is your imagination.

our tools help you to create whatever you imagine with ease


CHRISTA TIPPMANN

As our earth tilts away from the sun (at least from where I'm sitting at this moment) and the leaves shift to the ground, the quality of light changes. And sometimes I feel as if the shortage of light makes it more precious—so that the few hours of brilliant sun reflecting off mounds of bright snow make it dazzling and memorable—something we might want to capture in our spinning.

And while we get some real comfort from our ability as humans to change our environment (such as making a cozy nest of fiber to snuggle down into when the chill winds come), we know deep down that in many ways we are still at the mercy of the natural elements. And we know that change is constant—just as the seasons pass from spring, summer, fall, and winter, so will we.

As the earth sleeps, spinning yarn from a spring lamb can remind us of the spring to come at the same time that we enjoy the quiet and reflective nature of cold winter nights. And when the storms intensify and the winds howl, the treadle of our spinning wheels can help calm our beating hearts.

Spinning also brings us together as a community—across cultures, generations, and even oceans. Through spinning, we find friends who share a common bond—a love for beautiful cloth, for muted, natural colors as well as the brilliant ones, an appreciation of the pungent smell of a fresh fleece, or the irresistible urge to squeeze skeins or bumps of fiber.

Among those friends, we also find mentors. Sometimes we only know them through the pages of a magazine or a YouTube video. They share our passion, and we have so much to learn from them. They are our fiber heroes. In this issue, we celebrate just a few of them.

Fiber heroes, such as Sally Fox (figuring out a way to grow her colored cotton), Deborah Robson (illustrating that spinning a rare-breed fleece can help save the breed from extinction), and Ella Baker (recording the cottton-spinning techniques of ancient peoples), are like candles in the darkness.

And though her workings are largely behind the scenes here at Interweave, I'll add Linda Ligon to this list of fiber heroes—for her tireless work over decades to give us access to the best crafting content available, as well as her work in preserving the spinning, weaving, knitting, and dyeing traditions of the Peruvian highlands.

These are individuals whose passion for the fiber and textiles go beyond their own enjoyment in the craft—and they take on a mission to make it possible for future generations to continue finding pleasure in the simplicity of making yarn. Just as the earth turns, so does the whorl—and we are lucky to be a part of it.


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Happy spinning!

Amy

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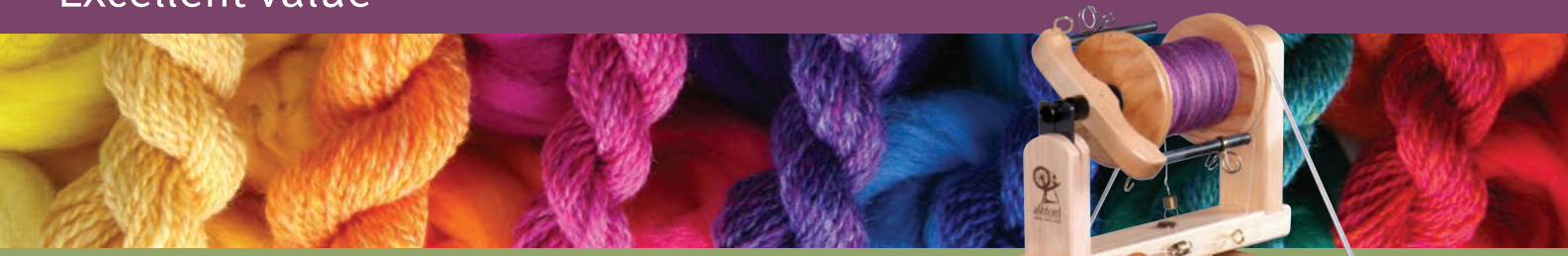

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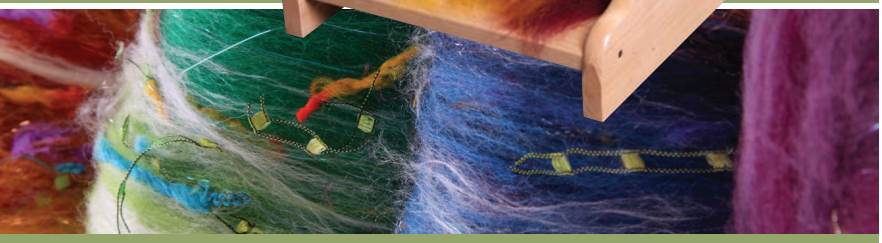

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Looking for Nancy's maker

Regarding the article "Finding Nancy" in the Fall 2013 issue of *Spin·Off,* is there any identification on the make/model of Nancy the spinning wheel? I have the exact same wheel, but it's in sad shape, and I have been meaning to find parts to fix her up. The article does not say. Could Judith Helton, or someone else please fill me in so I can find details for finding info?

Anne Pearn
Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Nancy the spinning wheel.

Response from Judith Helton

I don't know who made Nancy the spinning wheel. When I got her, she had initials carved into the black paint that covered her. Unfortunately, I had someone I thought was knowledgeable about antique wheels do some repair work on her, and he took off the initials before I could copy them. To say the least, I was not pleased. (Lesson: state specifically what you want done and that they are *not* to do anything else!). At any rate, my guess has been it was someone local in the area where Joshua and Nancy lived in Virginia (now West Virginia), but I can't be sure. Wish I could be more help.

Judith Helton
Van Nuys, California

Taking the question to the expert

I enjoyed reading that article when my copy of the Fall 2013 issue arrived. Clearly the author had done lots of research. She was lucky to have the name of the original owner and her location to start from. However, the majority of spinning wheels are unmarked, and very few have notes with names attached to provide a starting point for a search.

When it is the usual structure of a horizontal bobbin/flyer wheel with a treadle, you have to look at the turnings on the components, the legs, wheel supports, spokes, and maidens. Sometimes you can recognize a regional style. Nancy is not the style of New England wheels. I looked in Pennington and Taylor's book (*Spinning Wheels and Accessories*, Schiffer, 2004) and could not find any matches. It came from Virginia so I checked Ron Walter's book (*Stay At Home and Use Me Well: Flax & Fleece: Fiber to Fabric*, National Museum of the American Coverlet, 2010) since he has focused on Pennsylvania wheel makers. The two back braces are sometimes found on Pennsylvania wheels. Still nothing matched.

It is a lovely spinning wheel with beautiful clean lines. I suspect we will never know who made it, unless by luck another identical wheel appears that has provenance. Whoever the maker was, his craftsmanship is wonderful.

Florence Feldman-Wood
The Spinning Wheel Sleuth

The Great Spinning Wheel Roundup

Buying a spinning wheel is a rite of passage for many novice spinners. Buying the right one is like buying your first car. It's exciting and fun and maybe a bit nerve racking. I couldn't decide and bought two on the same day—a Spinolution Hopper and a Schacht Ladybug. I love them both and still lust after an Ashford Country Spinner. I was very happy to see you devote some of your Fall 2013 issue to a comparative list of wheels. One disappointment—I did not see the Clemes and Clemes wheels in your list. I really thought you would include the Modern and the Traditional with all the other commercial wheels on your list. Why, oh why, did you leave them off the list?

Rahsaan Stampes
Dallas, Texas

Eds.—Thank you for bringing this to our attention. We assure you that this was purely an oversight on our part. (We were also notified that Jensen Spinning Wheels was missing from the custom wheel maker list, which was also purely an accident.) An updated version of the article including a bonus section on electric spinners is available on the Fall 2013 issue page of Spinning Daily.

Helpful Comparison

The Great Spinning Wheel Roundup in the Fall 2013 issue is a really helpful comparison for anyone considering a new wheel. This last weekend our spinning group, Murramarang Spinners and Weavers, hosted a spring retreat—yes it's spring "Downunder"—at a local site with the ocean meters away in one direction and National Park around us

in the other directions. (We are on the south coast of New South Wales, about four hours south of Sydney.)

One of the things discussed by people considering a new wheel was the height of the orifice. This seems to be especially important to taller spinners who find spinning on a wheel with a lower orifice can cause back and neck discomfort. Perhaps, if space permits, you could include this statistic in a future Roundup.

Helen Stinson
Mollymook, New South Wales, Australia

In appreciation of flick carding

It was great to see an article on flick carding by Sarah Anderson in the Fall 2013 issue. Flick carding is my favorite way of preparing wool. I learned to flick card wool while living in New Zealand in the early 1970s. Since fresh fleeces were always available, I usually flicked and spun raw fleece in the grease. Worsted spinning was how most New Zealand spinners spun their yarns. Using a soft piece of leather over the knee made a perfect guard for protection from the flicker's sharp wires. We used a flicker similar to the Ashford tool, and if not available, a dog brush seemed to work fine. Especially since we used raw fleece, it was always the custom to flick the tips first and get any dirt or vegetable matter off the locks. Then we carded the cut end last as that was the end we used to spin from, and it was nicely opened making it easy to worsted spin. We would flick for a little while, laying the locks carefully in a shoe box with the cut ends all lined up ready to spin.

I also want to congratulate Lynne Vogel on doing such a great job of making thread with what she had to work with in the Summer 2013 issue. As a cotton spinning teacher, I admired how she worked with such short-staple cotton and overcame all the problems. Lynne did all the right things including throwing out the "rules."

Joan S. Ruane
McNeal, Arizona

Oops!

In the Fall 2013 issue, New Hue Handspuns was misspelled in our Get This! product news section. We apologize for any inconvenience this error might have caused.

If you have comments you'd like to share with Spin·Off, *please write to us at 201 E. 4th St., Loveland, CO 80537-5655, or email spinoff@interweave.com. Be sure to include your full name and your city and state (and country if outside the United States), and let us know whether or not we may consider your comments for publication in future Letters departments.*

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Back to Back Challenge

The International Back to Back Wool Challenge challenges teams consisting of a blade shearer, a sheep, and seven handspinners and knitters to break the Guinness World Record of 4 hours, 51 minutes, and 14 seconds for shearing a sheep, spinning and plying the yarn, and knitting an adult-sized sweater to the International Wool Challenge pattern standards. The record was set in 2004.

In June of this year, nine teams participated in the nineteenth challenge at venues around the world. Team Groenewoud knitted a sweater from a sheep's back to theirs in 5 hours, 32 minutes, and 37 seconds, breaking the European mainland record and winning this year's challenge. They didn't, however, beat the world record. The international team included seven handspinners and knitters from the United Kingdom, Netherlands, and Germany (among them was the world's fastest knitter). The yarn company Fyberspates proudly sponsored the member from the United Kingdom and shared this story with us. The 2014 challenge will take place on or before June 8, 2014. For information about the challenge, see **www.woollythoughts.com/backtoback/index.html.** For information about future challenges, email **backtoback@iprimus.com.au.**

Team Groenewoud at the end of the 2013 Back to Back Challenge.

ALBC is now the Livestock Conservancy

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC), a national nonprofit dedicated to protecting endangered breeds of livestock from extinction, has announced it has officially changed its name to the Livestock Conservancy. According to Eric Hallman, executive director for the Livestock Conservancy, "Interest in heritage livestock breeds is at an all-time high, we are launching a new website, and we are reaching out to more people than ever." Though the name has changed, Hallman said the organization still has the same mission and will continue work on current conservation initiatives.

A Leicester Longwool sheep (critically endangered, according to the Livestock Conservancy *Conservation Priority List*).

The mission of the Livestock Conservancy revolves around conserving the genetics of nearly two hundred livestock and poultry breeds, ensuring their survival and promoting biodiversity in agriculture. While the Livestock Conservancy has been around for nearly four decades, the concept of livestock conservation is not widely known outside of the breeders who raise heritage breeds, or even within the agriculture industry. Membership is open to everyone, regardless of their relation to raising livestock. **www.livestockconservancy.org.**

Colored Sheep Congress

The World Congress on Coloured Sheep began in 1979 in Adelaide, Australia. Colored-sheep enthusiasts have met every five years since then in countries around the world: Australia, Brazil, Great Britain, New Zealand, and the United States. In 2014, the eighth World Congress on Coloured Sheep will convene at the Mercure Porte d'Orléans Hotel in Paris, France, May 19–21, 2014, with one day in Rambouillet, France. Speakers will cover all aspects of colored sheep from genetics and breeding, health and management, to processing, marketing, and fiber arts. There will also be a seven-day post-congress tour offered that will begin in Paris on May 22, 2014, and will travel through Orléans, Arles, Gap, Valence, and Lyon. The highlights of the tour are visits to sheep flocks, a Roquefort cheese processor, the museum of the Merino breed, the Wools of Europe headquarters, and a wool-processing cooperative while enjoying the beautiful countryside of France. Registrations for both are nearing their end, so those interested need to sign up soon. For North Americans interested in attending the congress, please contact Rolly Thompson, **kusiwarmi13@gmail.com** or 30781 Fox Hollow Rd., Eugene, Oregon 97405. **http://users.iafrica.com/m/mw/mwdatru/COLOURED-SHEEP.htm.**

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The Ashford Book of Carding: A Handspinners Guide to Fibre Preparation (Revised Edition)

BY JO REEVE

If there are two subjects that are near and dear to my heart, they would be drumcarding and color. Both of these subjects are the focus of the *Ashford Book of Carding*. The first edition of this book was released in 2006. I think the additions and changes to this revision are, overall, good.

The first chapter covers the Ashford carding tools and does not go into variations of different drumcarders on the market, but because the book is published by Ashford, that would be expected. Next, fiber properties are explained and are succinctly covered. There is just enough information for the reader to make some blending choices.

Flick carding is shown in a great series of photographs that can be easily followed on one's own. The handcarding section is consistent with the last edition, and the photos shown in this edition are clear. One can see how to get color-blended results like those from drumcarding using handcards.

The drumcarding section starts with washing a fleece in locks, then goes to basic drumcarding with illustrations of how much is too much fiber to feed at a time, how much is enough for a batt, and how to cleanly remove the batt from the carder. It even shows a couple of ways to transform the batt to rolags or sliver, ready for spinning. The photographs showing how to blend different fibers are great and easily understood, but I was left wishing there had been more information on how to determine the proportions of each fiber.

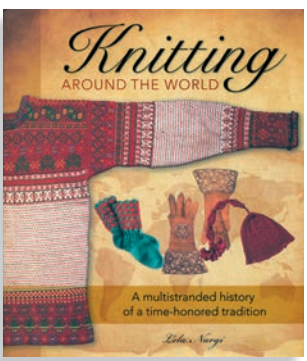
In the color and blending section, I liked the first-edition photos better because they included photos of the yarn. This edition has a photo of a two-ply knitted swatch instead. Instructions for wild carding (using a drumcarder with extralong teeth to blend in extras such as fabric, ribbon, feathers, etc.) encourage creativity and fun and made me want to give it a go! Even better, there was a project using the wild-carded yarn in the book.

The addition of four finished projects is another plus. Each project focuses on an aspect from one of the previous carding sections, and all are easy to do and approachable.

Overall, this is a great book for beginning carders/spinners. It shows the basics clearly, and the photographs enhance the text. It also will whet the appetite for someone who has not carded before. As an experienced carder, I liked what I saw, but at the end of each section, I found myself looking for more detailed how-to information.

—Deb Menz

Ashburton, New Zealand: Ashford Handicrafts, 2012. Paperback, 100 pages, $28.75. ISBN 978-0-958-28819-4. www.ashford.co.nz.



Knitting Around the World: A Multistranded History of a Time-Honored Tradition

BY LELA NARGI

As its title and subtitle might suggest, this is a go at the history of knitting traditions worldwide. However, Lela Nargi starts her introduction with "Knitting is old—well, sort of." This should be your first hint that you are not going to read some bone-dry history. Instead, you begin to realize that you are in the hands of an enthusiastic, eclectic, and free-form chronicler.

Chapters are organized by the Islamic World, Western Europe, the British Isles and Ireland, Scandinavia and Iceland, Eastern Europe and the Balkans, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, the United States and Canada, South and Central America. There are parts of the world missing, such as Africa and India.

Nestled among brief discussions of regional knitting tradition are colorful "postcard" photos of knitters, historical knitted artifacts, tradesmen and publisher's ads, traditional regional knitting techniques (such as twined knitting, nålbinding, and entrelac), and knitting projects. Nargi also includes biographical sketches and work from a couple dozen contemporary knitters.

The photos and images are among the strongest "stories" told. Even if you are familiar with the subject, you may see something here that will leave an impression. A kimono-clad young Japanese woman, knitting needles "at hand," is one of my personal favorites.

Instructions for the projects portion of the text include facsimile recipes from mid-nineteenth century "Ladies' Work-Table Books." These are offered without modern comment, translation, or amendment. Among the fifteen or so projects included are a few that are complete with accompanying illustrations, charts, and/or line-by-line instructions.

Instead of a scholarly opus, Lela Nargi presents a collection of snapshots, strong with visual imagery and tidbits plucked from far-flung places.

—Stephenie Gaustad

Minneapolis, Minnesota: Voyageur, 2011. Hardback, 264 pages, $35. ISBN 978-0-760-33794-3. www.voyageurpress.com.

—continued on page 16

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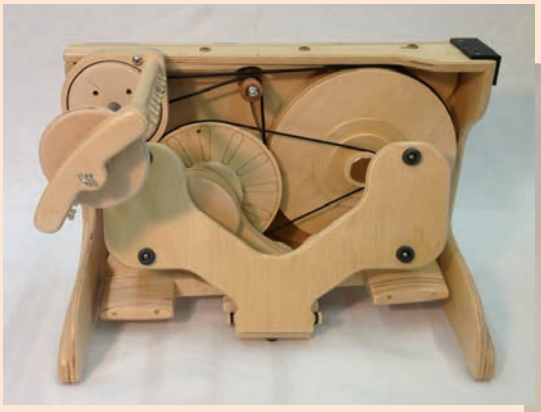

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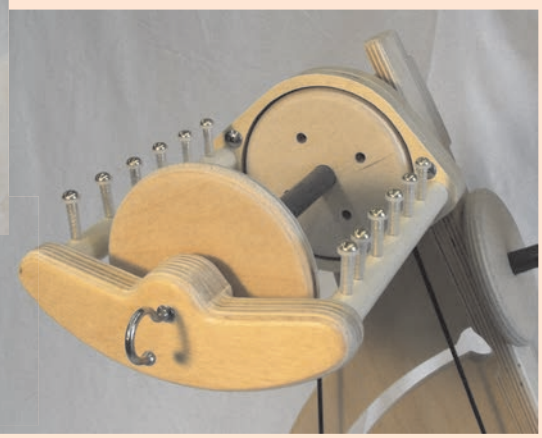

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 (continued from page 14)

Crochet One-Skein Wonders: 101 Projects from Crocheters Around the World

EDITED BY JUDITH DURANT AND EDIE ECKMAN

Crocheters in need of a quick gift or a lovely project to showcase a special yarn will find exactly what they need in this book. It features patterns for a variety of tastes including casual and fancy accessories, jewelry, home decor, and toys. Whether you need a hat or a lobster, you're pretty much set.

While the patterns are geared toward beginner and advanced-beginner levels, even experienced crocheters will find excellent projects that have the simplicity and elegance needed for those times when the yarn does the talking. Handspinners in particular will delight in the fact that the book includes designs ideal for any fiber imaginable from cotton to qiviut, different weights of yarn from lace to bulky, and a wide variety of put-ups. Did your fancy art batt spin up into a hundred yards of whimsy? Turn it loose on the Mobius Cowl by Andrea Lyn Van Benschoten. Did you finally get the smooth 400 yards of fingering-weight yarn you've been practicing for? Try the Sea Breeze Shawlette by Kristen Stoltzfus. Have just a bit left over on one bobbin? How about a handful of the scrunchie patterns by Andrea Lyn Van Benschoten or the delicate motif coasters by Melinda Miller? And if your spinning doesn't turn out the way you envisioned it, there are plenty of felted projects, too!

Once you've burned through your spun stash (ha-ha), you'll find great use here for those single skeins that you couldn't resist—that you bought for the fiber, or the color, or the feel, or because you just couldn't not. Or the single balls of "extra just-in-case" yarn left over from larger projects. Turn that stash into a whole pile of gifts and keepsakes.

However, I can't promise your stash will shrink. You may find you need to spin or buy something specific for a particularly inspiring pattern!

—Sarah Read

North Adams, Massachusetts: Storey, 2013. Paperback, 288 pages, $18.95. ISBN 978-1-612-12042-3. www.storey.com.

—continued on page 18

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 (continued from page 16)

Pure Wool: A Guide to Using Single-Breed Yarns

BY SUE BLACKER

This book is a delightful introduction to using "heirloom breed" wool yarns. The book introduces the reader to sixteen British sheep breeds and the type of wool they produce, and provides basic, classic patterns to best show off each wool's unique characteristics. The book includes breeds most knitters have at least heard of (Bluefaced Leicester and Shetland are likely recognizable), but also highlights Castlemilk Moorit and Zwartbles, for example, breeds that are likely not as well known.

While the book is geared to knitters working with commercially spun yarn, it also provides some helpful information for spinners who wish to try spinning a fleece from one of the breeds in the book. Each highlighted breed has its own section, with a quick overview of the sheep breed and a full-page "fact file" about the fleece that describes the general characteristics of the breed and shows clear photographs of the raw fleece, scoured and carded locks, and small samples of different weights of yarn. Included with each breed's information is at least one pattern (and sometimes several) using yarn from that breed.

Also of great use to handspinners is a set of concise charts occupying eight pages at the end of the book. The charts break down the breeds by wool characteristic, staple length, fleece weight, micron count, wool qualities (such as luster), and spinning and dyeing suggestions for each.

The patterns in the book, it should be noted, are written using United Kingdom abbreviations, but are straightforward enough to be knitted easily by knitters in the United States, and are basic enough to allow for lots of variations using different types of handspun or commercial yarns. While not a completely comprehensive index of every sheep breed out there, *Pure Wool* would be a nice addition to the bookshelf next to other sheep and fiber encyclopedias, and it might encourage adventurous knitters or spinners to take a second look at some lesser-known breeds for their next project.

—*Anne Podlesak*

Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 2012. Paperback, 144 pages, $19.95. ISBN 978-1-811-71103-6. www.stackpolebooks.com.

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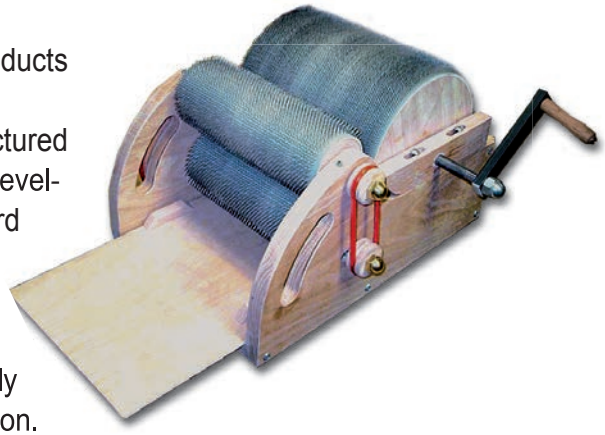

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If you have new product information you would like to see included in Get This!, please contact Managing Editor Liz Good at lgood@interweave.com.

Inspired by Deborah Robson's *Handspinning Rare Wools* workshop DVD, Suzie Sugrue of Hare & There Studio decided to make and sell **heritage sheepskin treadle covers** to help rare-breed sheep farms in the United States. Each set comes with information on the source farm and breed, and each purchase generates a donation to the Livestock Conservancy. The treadle covers fit over your spinning wheel's foot pedals to provide hours of comfy spinning. Covers are held in place by easy on/off Velcro straps. $45–$95 (depending on model).

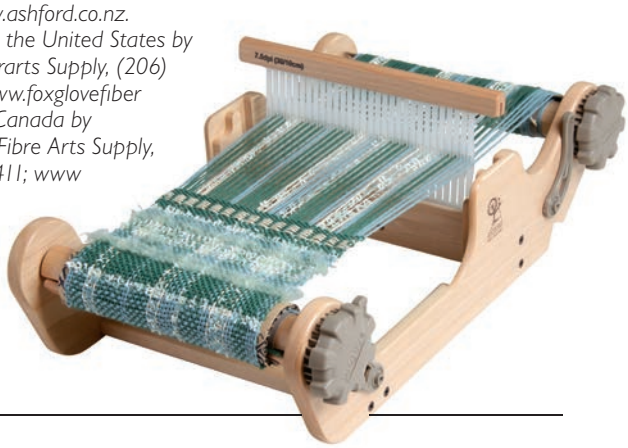
Hare & There Studio, www.hareandtherestudio.com (go to Heritage Sheepskin); www.hareandtherestudio.etsy.com.

Lose yourself spinning yards and yards of **50% superwash Merino/50% silk** from Cephalopod Yarns. It is shown here in the Cellar Door colorway. $28/4 oz.

Cephalopod Yarns, http://cephalopodyarns.com.

The latest from Ashford is the new **SampleIt rigid-heddle loom**. This compact little loom has an 8" weaving width and weighs just 2½ pounds, making it perfect for traveling, sampling, and weaving small projects using handspun. The SampleIt is constructed from solid silver beech timber and includes a 7½ epi reed, two shuttles, a double-ended threading hook, a warping peg, clamps, and a 20-page instructional booklet. $129.

Ashford, www.ashford.co.nz. Distributed in the United States by Foxglove Fiberarts Supply, (206) 780-2747; www.foxglovefiber.com, and in Canada by Harmonique Fibre Arts Supply, (250) 294-4411; www.harmonique.ca.



The lustrous hand-painted **100% bamboo** from FiberLady's Fine Fibers is available by the ounce so you can buy as much or as little as you need. It is shown here (from left to right) in the Rainbow Sherbet, Black Gold, and Red Kimono colorways. $2.99/1 oz.

FiberLady's Fine Fibers, a division of Dachele Enterprises, 438 South Fork Dr., Ste. 200, Lewisville, TX 75057. (214) 803-1243; www.fiberlady.com.

Alpaca Fiber Solutions and Laila's Locks are offering the 13-month (begins December 2013) **Alpaca Farm Boy Calendar**. The perfect stocking stuffer for you or your friends, the calendar features C. T., a *real* alpaca farm boy, carrying out a variety of farm-boy tasks and spending quality time with some adorable alpacas. $15 (includes shipping).

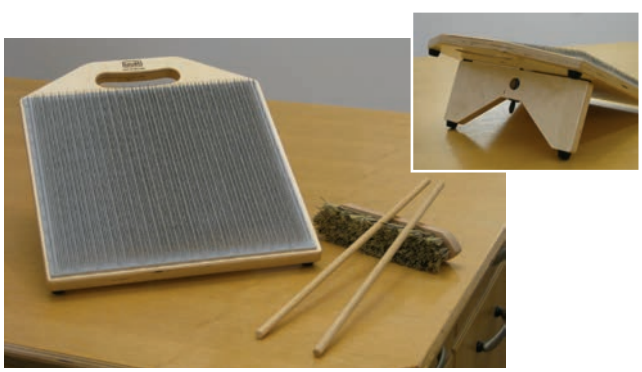
Alpaca Fiber Solutions, www.alpacafibersolutions.com/Calendars/CT.

Perfect for any spinner, this **rare-breed art poster** by Penny Lindop Designs represents a flock of some of Britain's rare sheep breeds. The breeds illustrated are Norfolk Horn, Cotswold, Soay, Portland, and Hebridean. Each breed is presented in Penny's signature style of simple illustration and is hand-finished with real sheep's wool. A variety of fleeces are used to reflect their different colors. Mounted picture size is 10" × 10". Unframed, £29 (~$46.50); framed in oak, £60 (~$96) plus shipping.

Penny Lindop Designs, The Spinney, The Street, Garboldisham, Diss, Norfolk, IP22 2QN, United Kingdom. penny@pennylindop.com; www.pennylindop.com.

This decadent natural-colored **100% yak** from Anzula is shown in the gray colorway. It is also available in white (depigmented), light brown, and dark brown. $53/4 oz.

Anzula, 740 H Street, Fresno, CA 93721. http://anzula.com.



Louet will release its **new carding board** this December. It uses the same cloth as the XL Drum Carder and has 72 points per square inch. The points are not too sharp for hands-on working. The pivoting stand offers three positions. $175 ($200 with optional Louet flicker).

Louet North America, 3425 Hands Rd., Prescott, ON, Canada, K0E 1T0. (613) 925-4502; info@louet.com; www.louet.com.

Abstract Fiber's **superfine Merino** is very, very soft; with all the crimp of regular Merino, it is sure to spin into a fluffy, lofty yarn. It is shown here in the Tahoe colorway. $20/2 oz.

Abstract Fiber, 3676 SE Martins St., Portland, OR 97202. (503) 703-1120; www.abstractfiber.com.

The **Notta Noddy** from Moondance Color is a **portable skein winder** based on an old design for a string/rope reel. With this design, you are able to slide the skein off the winder with no arms in the way. The winder is available in two sizes, to make either 36" or 24" skeins, and it is made of solid oak with a birch handle. $35–$55.

Moondance Color, askme@moondancecolor.com; www.moondancecolor.com.

Thanks to the **custom-mixed Merino bag maker** from World of Wool, you can create your very own mixed bag of dyed Merino tops for spinning or felting. Choose between 4 and 10 colors from the 80 available in 23-micron-range Merino. You receive 25 grams of each color but can select each color more than once if you wish. £3.80 (~$6)–£9.50 (~$15.25).

World of Wool, Unit 8, The Old Railway Goods Yard, Scar Lane, Milnsbridge, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD3 4PE, United Kingdom. +44 (0)1484 846878; info@worldofwool.co.uk; www.worldofwool.co.uk.

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A Conversation with

Kim Semler of Lucky Cat Craft

Located on a lovely little farm built in 1856 in Ohio, not too far from Columbus, you will find Lucky Cat Craft. Established in 2011 when Kim Semler serendipitously ended up with a large supply of possum fiber, Lucky Cat Craft has become a source of unique fibers and fiber blends for handspinners.

SPIN·OFF: *How did your business start?*
KIM SEMLER: I really wanted raw possum fiber and couldn't find it anywhere. That's New Zealand brushtail possum, not our North American opossum (big difference!). I was able to finally locate some, but I had to buy 5 kilos. That is a lot of possum. I opened an Etsy shop, and it did well there. I started to think, if I could find possum, what else could I find? Then came wild silks from India and yak from Tibet. Next thing you know I'm in New Zealand trapping possums myself.

SO: *Where do you get your fibers?*
KS: From all over the world. I work with producers in India, New Zealand, the United States, and China. I bring the fibers together and have them blended here in Ohio. I like to think I'm the melting pot of fibers, bringing treasures here to the United States and putting them together in unique ways.

SO: *Do you create your own blends? If so, how do you come up with them? What is the testing process?*
KS: I do create my own blends. I try new blends out on a drumcarder first—a little bit of this, a little bit of that. If I can spin it and I love the finished yarn, then it goes to the mill. Sometimes I feel like a mad fiber scientist when something works out really well! "It's *alive*!!"

SO: *How many employees do you have?*
KS: None, unless the cats count! Then too many!

SO: *Is that where the name of your business comes from?*
KS: Oh yes. When we moved in, there were more cats living in the barn than there were people in the neighborhood. Once you give them a name, they are yours for life. Of course, we gave them all names and built them a greenhouse so they would have someplace warm for the winter. Friends would say, "Those are some lucky cats," which led to Lucky Cat Farm and then Lucky Cat Craft.

Kim Semler and Charlie Bear, who is one of several lucky cats enjoying the good life at Lucky Cat Farm.

50% yak/50% dehaired angora

SO: *What type of equipment do you use in your business?*
KS: A drumcarder and handcards at the moment. Oh, and my beautiful, Schacht Matchless spinning wheel. I got to meet Barry Schacht and Jane Patrick at the National NeedleArts Association (TNNA) trade show this year. It was an honor meeting my wheel's "parents."

SO: *What is the trickiest part of what you do?*
KS: Coordinating the shipping from all over the world. It can be difficult to find affordable options in remote areas. Customs can be a bit uncertain about some of the items I bring in as well. You should have seen the guys at the airport looking through my luggage when I returned from New Zealand. They thought I was nuts with all the fleece and possum in there.

SO: *What did you do before Lucky Cat Craft?*
KS: I have been in the fashion industry for thirteen years and still work as a sweater designer. I've worked for companies such as Abercrombie & Fitch, Aeropostale, and JCPenney, and currently I'm freelancing. I don't make patterns for handknitters, I design sweaters for production to be sold at retail. It's a totally different language and process than handknitting. For example, a handknitter would say that alternating rows of knit and purl is called garter stitch; I would call it links links. There is a lot of different vocabulary because it is automatic and hand-operated flat machines that are doing the knitting. I even use different measurements for the size of yarns and the gauge of the sweaters, again all based on industry standards and the knitting machines. I choose the yarn, the stitch, the color, the trims, and design the silhouette. Then it's also my job to see the garment through to production—from fit, color approvals, label placements, even how it's folded for shipping. I love it, but it is so different from handknitting. When I sat down to write a pattern for one of my yarns, I couldn't do it. I am currently learning the handknitters' language and trying out some different software programs.

SO: *When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?*
KS: Mostly I wanted to be Laura Ingalls Wilder, although a textile artist was my second choice. I went with fashion designer at the last minute, and it worked out pretty well.

SO: *Outside of work, what are you excited about?*
KS: I'm excited to finish my sheep to blanket project. I've got several fleeces that I'm in various stages of washing and spinning. I want to weave two blankets, one for me and one for my brother. I owe him a wedding present from about seven years ago. Luckily, he owes me one as well, but if I finish this blanket, then I can tease him about it, and that's what a big sister is for. Besides, how could he ever top a handspun, handwoven blanket from fleece I processed myself? Best gift ever! My brother and I are just ever so slightly competitive . . .

Lucky Cat Craft
www.luckycatcraft.etsy.com

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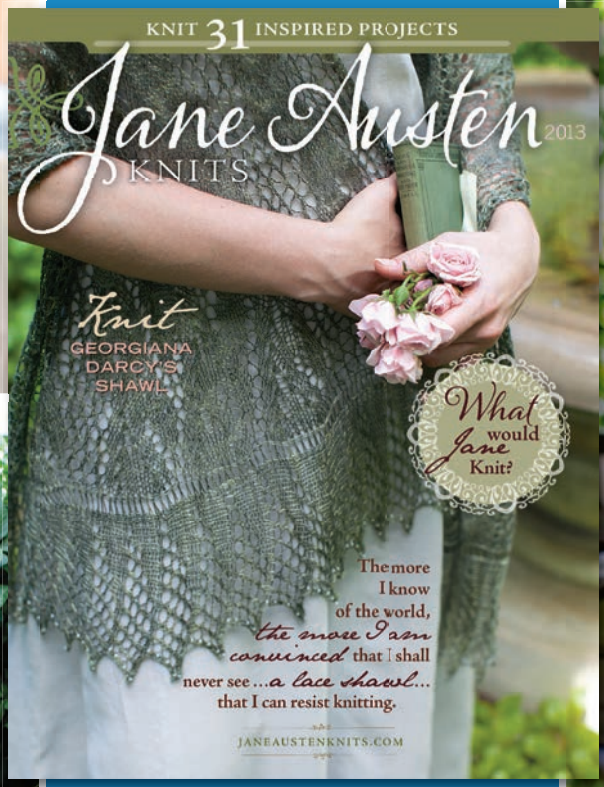
50% cashmere/50% muga silk

Knit 31 inspired projects

From the editors of *Spin-Off* magazine comes another edition of the popular special issue *Jane Austen Knits*!



Drawing on a love for literature and the Regency era, this magazine is full of knitwear inspired by the novels of Jane Austen and the Regency era within which she lived. Knitwear designers have created 31 beautiful and functional garments that are wearable today by women, men, and children.

This special issue is available at your local yarn shop or online at **InterweaveStore.com**.

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On Being Judgmental!

Judging and Standards from Northwest Regional Spinners

BY ANN W. KLINECT

"I don't like the color yellow and I won't judge it!" This from the expert hired to judge handspun yarn and projects at a regional fair.

"I like this one," declared the home economics college instructor asked to judge the Handspun Gallery at a major eastern Washington State stock show. She merely walked quickly from one end of the exhibit to the other without scrutinizing any of the other entries.

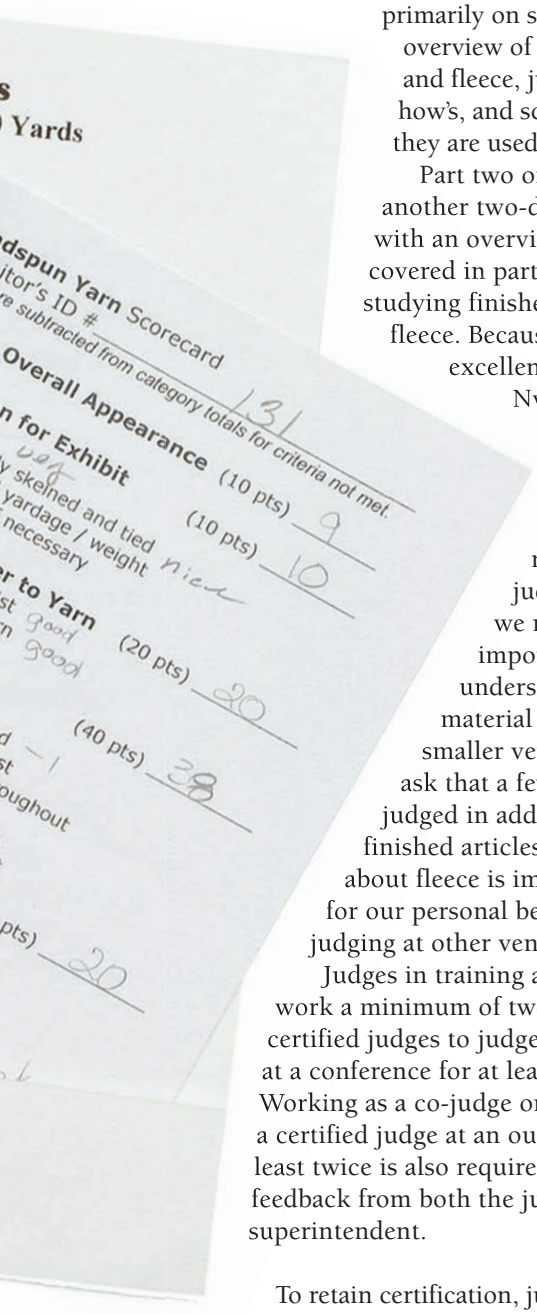
That was all the impetus needed for Marie Gettmann to act. In 1986, she gathered a core group of members from the newly established Northwest Regional Spinners Association (NwRSA). Their skills ranged from superb spinning experience, to raising sheep for handspinning fleeces, to textile conservancy, to fiber arts applications of handspun yarn. This group developed the scoring system currently used by NwRSA judges.

The goal was to emphasize quantifiable objectivity, and the committee sought to reduce subjectivity in the scoring. They worked on a system to evaluate craftsmanship rather than interpreting the artistic merits of a piece. The committee believed that scorecards for categories such as Handspun Yarn and Articles Made of Handspun are most important for spinners. Several secondary scorecards for categories such as Articles from Commercial Yarn, Handwovens from Commercial Yarns, Fleece, and Felting have also been developed by the group.

The entrants and audience at the annual NwRSA conference are people from local, county, regional, and state fairs and other fiber events. The committee members who developed these scorecards wanted to encourage and educate NwRSA members as well as the general public, so the Danish judging system was used for the point structure. All scores from 90 to 100 receive blue ribbons, scores from 80 to 89 receive red ribbons, those scoring 70 to 79 receive white ribbons, and thank-you-for-entering ribbons go to anything less

than 70. Best of Show, Best of Class, and Best Use of Handspun can also be awarded for exceptional merit as determined by the judges. Skeins entered are required to include intended purpose on the exhibitor's entry tag with an automatic 10-point deduction if that is missing. Anyone in the judging program is expected to make positive, encouraging notations, and trainees are given a page of brief sample statements to get them started.

With a judging system in place, the next step was to develop a program to train judges. The training is a multistep process starting with candidates taking a two-day training course. Emphasis here is primarily on skeins, with a quick overview of finished articles and fleece, judging why's and how's, and scorecards and how they are used.



Part two of judge training is another two-day session starting with an overview of material covered in part one and then studying finished articles and fleece. Because there are already excellent wool judges, NwRSA chose to focus on handspinning and use of handspun rather than fleece judging (though we recognize how important it is to understand the raw material we use). Some smaller venues frequently ask that a few fleeces be judged in addition to skeins and finished articles. Thus learning about fleece is important not only for our personal benefit but for judging at other venues.

Judges in training are expected to work a minimum of two hours with certified judges to judge gallery entries at a conference for at least two years. Working as a co-judge or clerking for a certified judge at an outside venue at least twice is also required with written feedback from both the judge and the superintendent.

To retain certification, judges are required to do the following:

Scorecard for articles made from handspun yarn

Exhibitor's ID #_____

Points are subtracted from category totals for criteria not met.

General overall appearance (10 pts) _____

Suitability of yarn to article (20 pts) _____
- Consistency of spinning
- Appropriate yarn characteristics

Suitability of fiber to project (20 pts) _____
- Appropriate fiber choice
- Fiber preparation
- Drapability
- Hand
- Durability

Technique (30 pts) _____
- Gauge/sett
- Even tension
- Perfect execution—no uncorrected mistakes

Finishing (20 pts) _____
- Blocking
- Ends
- Cleanliness
- Appropriate notions

Total _____

Handspun yarn scorecard

Exhibitor's ID #_____

Points are subtracted from category totals for criteria not met.

General overall appearance (10 pts) _____

Preparation for exhibit (10 pts) _____
- Clean
- Properly skeined and tied
- Of listed yardage/weight
- Blocked if necessary

Suitability of fiber to yarn (20 pts) _____
- Amount of twist
- Diameter of yarn

Technique (40 pts) _____
- Fiber preparation
- Twist evenly executed
- Appropriate plying twist
- Diameter consistent throughout
- Structurally durable
- Designed yarns consistent
- Dyeing/blending consistent

Suitability of yarn to use (20 pts) _____
- Appropriate fiber choice
- Direction of twist
- Diameter of yarn
- Handle of yarn
- Appropriate number of plies

Total _____

Here are three skeins spun and plied at the same time. The skein on the left has not been finished, and it is tied with contrasting yarn (as an example of what not to do). The skein in the center is tied so you can see the path of the ties—but when tied for show, yarn should be used that matches the skein. The skein on the right is finished, correctly skeined, and tied for show.

- Judge in a larger venue with a favorable evaluation from the department superintendent at least two out of every five years.
- Work with at least one judge-in-training per five-year renewal period either by clerking or as a co-judge.
- Continue education by taking or teaching spinning-related classes to show they are current with what is being offered as well as new trends.
- Enter handspun yarn and finished articles regularly in fairs and in the annual NwRSA conference to stay in touch with the spinning world and show they can take criticism as well as give it.
- If a judge has not stayed current with certification, either part one or part two of the training will need to be repeated before recertification.

Ann W. Klinect of Everett, Washington, is an original member of NwRSA, has served on the board of directors in many capacities as well as on conference committees, and is a certified judge. She wrote the Spinner's Connection column in *Spin·Off* from 1983 through 1997.

About NwRSA

Spinners came together from Washington, Oregon, Montana, and Idaho in 1983 to form a regional organization to promote awareness of and support for handspinning in the community at large as well as provide a communication network for spinners in the Northwest region. An annual conference rotating from eastern Washington to Oregon to western Washington has become the primary educational opportunity that draws many internationally known textile-related instructors for the benefit of members. NwRSA members are encouraged to submit skeins and finished projects for judging and exhibition at the annual conference and then to also enter these items in their regional and local fairs. Because of the objective standardized exhibition qualifications required at the conference, department superintendents at many other venues have seen an increasing skill level and attention to finishing that certainly makes putting their displays together much easier.

A master list of both certified judges and judges in training is maintained for area fairs and other venues to use. Some of our certified judges have been invited to conduct initial judge-training seminars for other groups in Arizona and Montana. If this is of interest to you, contact **judging@nwregionalspinners.org** for more information.

Moths

A Flock of Sheep, a Murder of Crows, a Fluttering of Moths

BY ALLISON JUDGE

Mention of clothes moths strikes terror in the hearts and minds of those of us involved to any extent with fibers but most especially to those of us who purchase fiber in raw, cleaned, or spun form. If you have never encountered these busy beasts, count yourself among the lucky; if you have encountered them, you may understand what a true vendetta is, as I have. They are very, very good at what they do. Their range is the temperate portions of our planet, i.e, Europe, North America (introduced), the southern coast of Greenland, Australia (introduced), and the temperate climes of South America and Africa. Although research has shown that they enjoy a humid environment, my 5% to 20% humidity climate doesn't seem to slow them down.

Clothes (or wool) moths are represented by three species: *Tineola bisselliella* (webbing clothes moth), *Tinea pellionella* (casemaking clothes moth), and *Trichophaga tapetzella* (carpet or tapestry moth). All of these moths are very small. *Tineola bisselliella* and *Tinea pellionella* have wingspreads of about ½ inch and body lengths of ¼ inch, and *Trichophaga tapetzella* has about a ¾-inch wingspan and body length of ⅓ to ¾ inch.

Knowing what these insects are attracted to and repulsed from is vital for keeping them under control. Complete eradication is just about impossible, so vigilance is key to keeping damage to a minimum.

BEHAVIOR

First of all, clothes moths are photophobic (they avoid light). They like dark places, and if you see them fluttering around, it will most likely be at dusk and later into the evening. Revealing a hiding place with bright light (in a closet or drawer, behind a wall hanging, or under a floor covering) will send adults scurrying. Adult males will fly; adult females creep and hop as they cannot fly. Flying moths are tricky to catch because their flight pattern is erratic. The females are unbelievably quick at creeping and hopping along a shelf or wall. Unlike larger, more common moths, they are not attracted to artificial light, but my experience has shown that they can occasionally be found in the early morning near a dim night-light left on overnight.

The adults are often the first indication of an infestation. If you see the adults, understand that they are the reproductive part of the moth's life cycle. Adults do not have functional mouth parts, so it is the larvae that do the damage, and they can be very hard to see. The only actual larva I have seen had dropped by happenstance into a sticky trap I'd just put out. It was about 1/16 inch long.

Clothes moth larvae are most often attracted to protein fibers. They rarely feed on silk or cotton, but these can be a part of their diet if there is nothing else to feed on. My experience has shown that they go for the darkest fibers first. Cashmere and alpaca seem to be favorites. Soiled garments/yarn/fiber are preferred over clean.

CLUES TO INFESTATION

About twenty-five years ago, I attended a wool festival as a new spinner. I purchased some luscious black-as-black-can-be natural alpaca. Like many of us new to spinning, I didn't want to spin up this fiber before I felt I was worthy. So I stored it in my burgeoning fiber stash in the closet, still in the brown paper bag it came in.

When I had the confidence to spin it up, I lifted the bag out of the closet and heard a sickening sound—a rattling. I knew this was frass sifting to the bottom of the paper bag. I had the wherewithal to not open the bag and to enclose it in a plastic bag and throw it into the trash. I didn't want to see what I knew was in there, nor did I want a fluttering of moths to escape.

If you see a moth flying at around dusk or dark in your house, purchase a clothes moth trap or two and put out pantry moth traps as well (see the box on page 34 for details).The moths are very similar in appearance (pantry moths are slightly larger than clothes moths but are still quite small). The clothes and pantry months are attracted to different pheromones, and by setting out traps and observing what is caught, you will know which moths you've got in your home.

Examine garments, yarn, and raw fiber. Around the time of the alpaca disaster, I pulled a ball of yarn out of the same closet. As I was knitting with it, it kept falling apart as the yarn was pulled out of the center of the ball. Moth larvae had drilled into the ball and through every layer of yarn. I couldn't pull a length of yarn that was more than a yard long without it coming apart. I

did not see a creature, but it was clear I had moths.

When examining garments, look for small holes, channels (created when moths graze along the fabric), casings, and webbing. I was once paid for repairing holes in a client's cashmere sweaters. He was fortunate enough to have many sweaters but unlucky to have attracted moths. I insisted he dry-clean the sweaters before bringing them into my home for repairs.

CLEANING

Dry cleaning will rid garments of all cycles of moths. Scouring fleeces will take out most of them. Moths do not like cleaned fibers (the larvae depend on soil and spilt liquids for their fluid needs). But no matter how clean exotic fibers such as cashmere, mohair, and alpaca are, the moths love them. I wonder if these fibers store more moisture in their shafts than a cleaned sheep's wool?

Vacuum regularly, making sure to get down and dirty at the edges of carpet and wall. Pull up area rugs and vacuum both sides. Whenever possible, move heavy furniture. Clothes moths love those dark places, and pet fur (which clothes moths also feed on) may collect under furniture. If there is a serious problem, take area rugs outside into the sun. Using a lint roller over smaller hangings and garments will pull off casings and webbing.

PREVENTION

Good housekeeping practice will go a long way toward keeping these pests at bay. If items are expected to be stored for a length of time, clean and place them

Tineola bisselliella, the webbing clothes moth

Larvae: ½ inch long when mature, and clear to creamy white with tan heads. They weave patches of silken webbing (casings) to hide and feed under. These casings are not portable. The casings can incorporate fiber and frass (excrement). The fiber they are living off of is great camouflage. It is easy to assume you have an errant bit of fiber or thread on the article they are feeding off of when it is actually a casing or some webbing.
Adults: Light tan, tiny moths.

Tinea pellionella, the casemaking clothes moth

Larvae: Smaller than *Tineola bisselliella,* with dark heads. The first thoracic segment is also dark. They live in portable silklike casings that they carry along with them while grazing.
Adults: Tiny moths with spotted wings. When caught in traps, they may appear black because their color has rubbed off in the trap, but untrapped moths are bronze/black.

Trichophaga tapetzella, the carpet or tapestry moth

These moths are much less common than the casing and webbing moths.
Larvae: Prefer bird nests, hair, and fur, as well as clothing and floor and furniture coverings made of animal skin.
Adults: Bicolored forewings that are brown with dark areas toward the base and small dark markings by the wingtips. In the United States, they are found in eastern coastal and southern gulf areas. Once common in the United Kingdom, they are now relatively rare, presumably because of central heating.

in sealed containers. Don't put off scouring that prize sheep's fleece you bought at the state fair. Move your stash around *a lot*! Not only will this expose the moths to the light and disturbance they don't like, but it will give you the opportunity to examine for a possible infestation.

Placing items in plastic bins and plastic bags that zip closed will prevent moths from entering, ruining, and wrecking your precious stash. (In a humid climate, there is a worry that this prevention may cause felting.) By isolating your items, you will also prevent existing moths from moving on, as they will be trapped inside the container.

Finally, if your best buddy from the guild is destashing, and has mentioned moths, be very reluctant to accept any fiber without first examining it closely. Quarantine and/or freeze new acquisitions and observe. During summer months, clothes moth eggs may take 4 to 10 days to hatch, and they hatch in up to 3 weeks during the winter. Depending on humidity, moth development time (from egg to adult) may be 1 to 3 months, or in very dry climates, up to 3 years.

I have been surprised at the infestation I've witnessed since the fall of 2012. Sadly, I have thrown out a tall trash can full of very expensive yarn and fiber—twice. Sometimes that is the only solution. Keeping it would have been a threat to the remainder of my fiber.

Pay attention to the flutterings.

Allison Judge lives in Reno, Nevada, where she wages battle against clothes moths. She is currently on a "fiber diet" so as not to bring in too much fiber until these little critters are dealt with—once and for all!

Treatment Options

Pheromone traps

These are sticky traps made of cardboard and folded into a triangle. They are placed in dimly lit areas and where moths are expected to be present. They use a female moth pheromone to attract the flying males. If you have flying males, they have developed from foraging larvae. The traps will capture moths, somewhat interrupting the reproductive cycle, and will give you a good idea of just how bad an infestation might be. I have used two brands, Safer and Pro-Pest. I couldn't find them at my big-box hardware store but was able to order them online.

The traps are perfectly safe to have around food, children, pets, and spinners. There is no environmental impact from the pheromone, and they are safe to put into landfills.

Freezing

Putting items in the freezer is an easy way to kill larvae and adults—a temperature of 0°F is recommended. As it so happens, this is normally what freezer temps are set at since food expirations are based on these numbers. Not all eggs may be killed, so remove the items from the freezer for a few days and then return them to the freezer; this will give eggs the chance to hatch and the larvae to emerge and then freeze again before more damage is done. Alternating with direct sunlight will be even more effective.

Dry ice is an excellent method of treatment. Put the items into a trash bag with dry ice (but don't allow the ice to touch the items). Cinch up the top of the bag leaving enough of a hole at the top for the nitrogen (off-gassing from the dry ice) to escape or else your bag will explode. Lack of oxygen and cold will do the job. Follow safety procedures when handling dry ice as it will burn your skin.

Light

Because clothes moths avoid light, placing your infested items in direct sunlight will cause them to flee. I live in a climate with very intense sunlight and have found this works well. Some studies report that this is more effective than freezing. Of course, you run the risk of light damage to fibers and nonlightfast dyes. I was careful to turn the items often and to leave them outside for just a few hours in the morning. I also shook them vigorously when turning.

Natural aromatics

These are repellents and will serve to deter moths but won't cure an ongoing infestation. Aromatics include cedar, lavender, dried mint leaves, cloves, thyme, ginseng, and rosemary. Aromatics require replacing several times per year. Make sachets and place them where moth-prone items are stored. Chests made of cedar and closets lined with cedar are effective repellents, but the potency of cedar will diminish over time.

Mothballs

Mothballs are a chemical repellent combined with a pesticide. Naphthalene was used in years gone by, and many of us associate the aroma with our grandmother's closet. However, naphthalene is extremely flammable. The chemical in use now is 1,4-dichlorobenzene, which is somewhat less flammable but still thought by some scientists to be a carcinogen. Mothballs come in ball form and evaporate over time, releasing a vapor that is toxic to moths and silverfish. They are effective in a sealed container, which is the only situation in which they should be used as they are extremely toxic when ingested by people or their pets. As there are many other (albeit a bit more labor-intensive) ways to rid yourself of clothes moths, the use of chemicals should be considered only as a last resort. Never mix old naphthalene moth balls with newer ones, as the combination will form a liquid that will damage clothing.

Spinning the Unusual

Chinchilla, Cactus Cotton, and Spanish Moss

BY JEANNINE GLAVES

I'm always looking for what's new to spin and came across some chinchilla fiber. Chinchillas are in the rodent Chinchillidae family and look like fat, very fluffy, big-eared mice; they are the size of a squirrel and have a fluffy squirrel-type tail. Historically, they lived in the high altitudes of the Andes and today are only found wild in Peru. Chinchillas can make great pets, but use care around children as they are fragile and can bite. They lack the unpleasant odor that most rodents have and are curious and happy by nature, with beautiful soft, gray, lush hair that can be released if needed as a defense mechanism. High humidity and hot weather is hard on them. They have short attention spans, like burrows, and can jump up to 6 feet in distance. Some are high-strung and therefore hard to handle.

When I purchased chinchilla fiber, the tag assured me that the fiber came from animals that were unharmed and alive. I did learn later that the fiber had actually come from dead animals—the fiber harvested from their pelts. That seller is no longer selling the fiber. I would prefer to know the truth about a new fiber so that I can make an informed decision when purchasing fiber for spinning. If you want to be sure that your chinchilla fiber comes from a happy chinchilla, then beyond raising them yourself, you should talk to the seller and ask how the animals are cared for and how the fiber is harvested.

That said, chinchilla is a wonderful, soft, 13-micron fiber that has a 1½-inch staple with up to sixty hairs sprouting from one follicle. It needs to be handled gently so that the fiber isn't damaged and to prevent it from flying around as you work with it. I started spinning with 100% chinchilla fiber to get the feel of it. Because it has a short staple like cotton, I started by making punis on my cotton handcards to organize the fiber. Using my forward hand to control the twist,

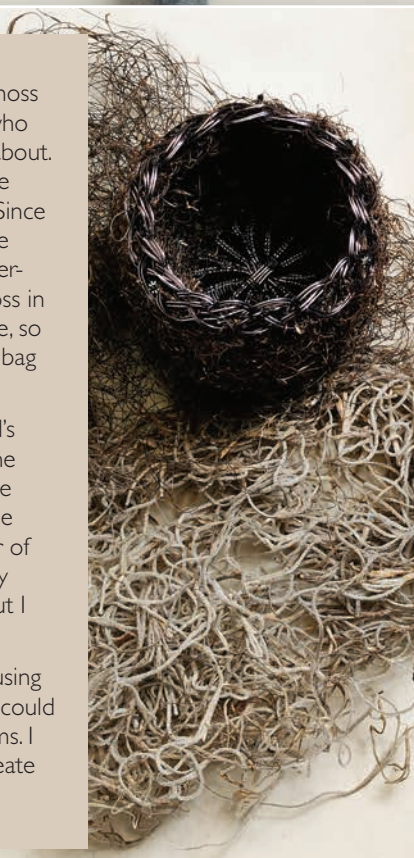
Cactus cotton

Early in my spinning life, I was teaching at an atelier (a workshop focusing on the fine or decorative arts). For fun, we offered a "stump the spinner" opening to draw attention to the various classes being taught. I would spin anything brought to the opening provided we could get it through the orifice of the wheel. (If I were to do this today, I would not have the orifice limitation, and I would use spindles.) A Native American brought his long hair to be spun so that he could weave it in a dance belt that he was creating. It was slick and a bit coarse, but the length made it easier to spin. Other fibers that I spun included cat and dog hair as well as toilet paper. The most unpleasant thing I was asked to spin was medium-coarse steel wool scrubbing pads (and yes, it can be done). Ever since then, odd things seem to find their way into my spinning fibers. I love the challenge!

One such fiber presented to me early this year was cactus cotton. Along with fiber from the seed buds that were on the main body of the cactus, I was given a picture of the cactus. We don't have many cacti in Tulsa so I started looking for information. I learned it was a golden barrel cactus *(Echinocactus grusonii)*. The yellowish/creamy-colored fibers are at the top of the globe or barrel. Birds and small mammals like the fruit and use the fluff, found at the bottom of the seed pack, for nesting materials. Like kapok, another seed fiber, my guess is it may have had limited use as stuffing or insulation. The fragile fibers are ½ inch to 1 inch long and at about 100 times magnification look like crystalline threads with little flecks of colors. One cactus can provide about 1 ounce of fiber. Spun by itself it is very weak yarn, so it is better to spin it in a blend or as a core spun yarn. I spun with the gently carded cactus fiber in my back hand along with a 5/2 unmercerized cotton core yarn. Letting the twist run up the core and catch the fibers, I could, if needed, encourage them to attach by pulling and fluffing as I spun. This seemed to work better than feeding the fibers at a 90-degree angle to the core. I wonder what my friends will bring me next.

55/23/22 chinchilla/ silk/Merino, punis, and smoke ring cowl.

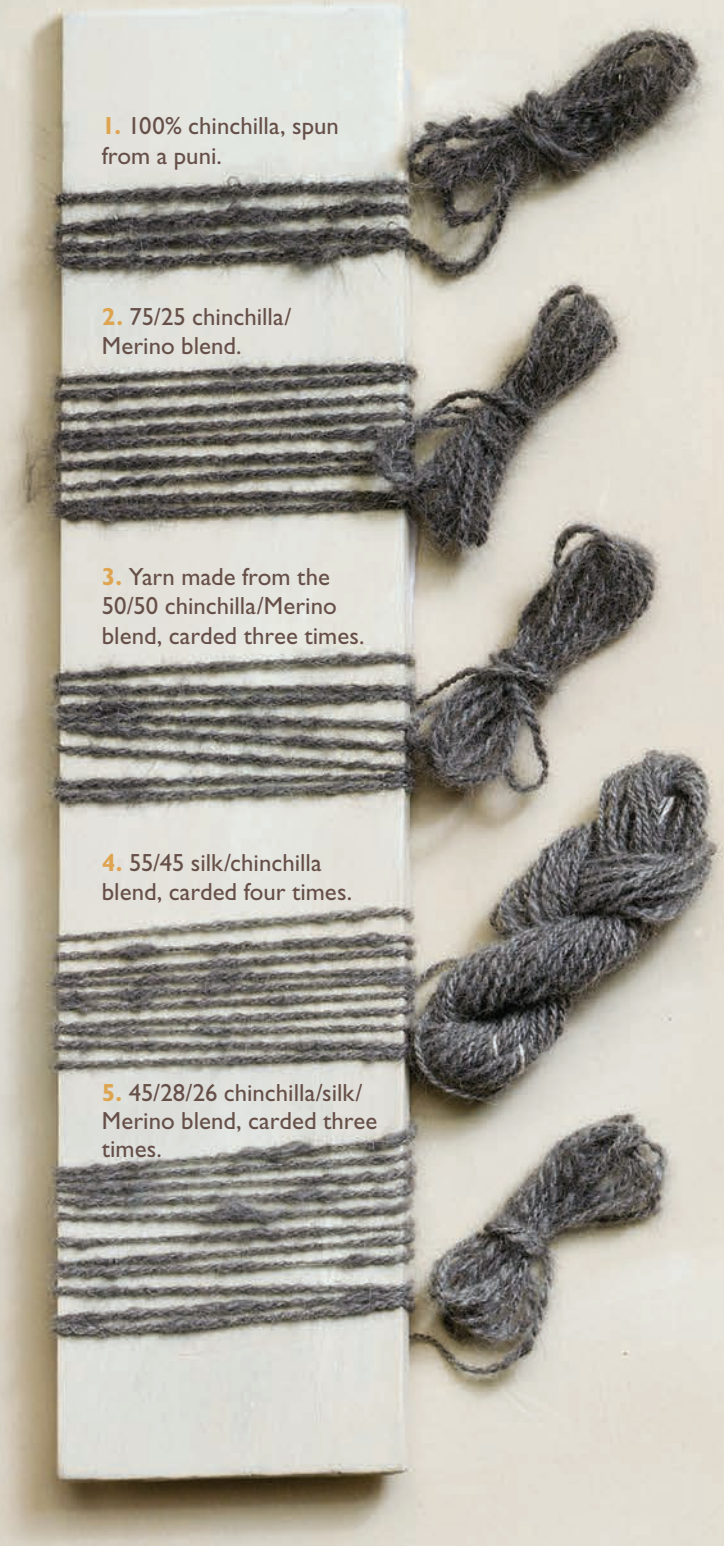
Spanish moss



About a year ago, I was checking the *Spin·Off* group on Ravelry and there was a new thread—Spanish moss prep for spinning. Raveler Cyndi Muller (whose ravatar is MullersLaneFarm) was looking for someone who could share the process with her. I had heard of spinning Spanish moss but had no idea what it was all about. I was intrigued and had to try my hand at spinning Spanish moss. I had already spun some moss with the green outer covering intact, but my real goal was to rett the moss and get the inner black fiber to spin. Since I have allergies and it was noted in the group thread that a reaction was possible when working with the moss, I knew I would need to be extra careful to avoid making dust. Cyndi reported she tried three different methods to rett the moss: first, putting the moss in plastic pails full of water; second, putting wet moss in black plastic bags in the sun; and third, putting some moss on a compost pile. I don't have a compost pile, so I tried some moss in a bucket of water (it stinks) and some moss in a black plastic bag. The black plastic bag worked best for me.

The moss I used came from the hobby shop (used in flower arrangements) or a master gardener friend's greenhouse, so I didn't have to worry about mites and bugs. I worked with smaller amounts, so when the moss was retted and most of the outer covering biodegraded, I then processed it. I was afraid to run the moss through my drumcarder thinking the fiber would be bad for the teeth or the teeth might break the fibers into smaller pieces. I found that taking a couple of handfuls of retted moss at a time in a container of water and processing small batches was a good way for me to work. I would run each fiber that had any outer covering left between my thumbnail and first finger to scrape the leftover off. It was slow work, but I got a very clean fiber, and a lot of satisfaction.

After it was cleaned, I took a handful of fibers, teased them (fluffed them), tied some to my leader, and using medium tension on my wheel and a short forward draw, spun and then plied the yarn back on itself. It could also be plied with another yarn. I did my spinning and plying while the fiber was dry and had no problems. I believe every yarn has a use. This yarn told me it wanted to be a basket. Cyndi is using her yarn to recreate Civil War–era items such as horse blankets and Confederate carbine slings for reenactors.



I spun with a short backward draw and a 9:1 ratio on my wheel to achieve a 35-degree angle of twist in my plied yarn. Next I added extra twist by using less bobbin take-up and made a balanced two-ply yarn with a 45-degree angle of twist in the finished yarn. Even with a higher amount of twist, it was very soft. I was trying to control the flyaway tendency in the fiber and make it easier to work with.

I was ready to try blends, so using my cotton handcards for sampling, I started with a 50/50 chinchilla/Merino batt. This is the blend I start with whenever I'm trying out a new-to-me fiber. The resulting yarn had a nice chinchilla halo to it, but the overall hand was more like wool. I tried again with a 75/25 chinchilla/Merino blend. This time, the yarn had a nice chinchilla halo and a softer, smoother hand that I associated with the chinchilla fiber.

I decided to add silk to the blend and made a batt with a 55/45 silk/chinchilla blend. The yarn had a subtle halo, was soft, and had a pleasing sheen. I tried 45/28/26 chinchilla/silk/Merino next. The wool added loft to this yarn, making the hand softer, and yet it maintained a nice chinchilla halo and silk luster. I tweaked the numbers a bit for my last sample of 55/23/22 chinchilla/silk/Merino and made punis on my cotton cards to spin. I thought this blend would make a nice weaving yarn, so I added extra twist. This fuzzy-type yarn needs extra twist to help minimize any sticking when changing sheds. This was my favorite sample yarn for weaving.

I then made more batts with the same blend and a 35-degree angle of twist using the 9:1 ratio, spinning a very soft yarn for knitting. Rosemary Carlson knitted the smoke ring cowl on page 37 using a lace mesh pattern for the body and Mrs. Philpot's Spider Edging and Easy Eyelets on the edge. She reported that this softer yarn with more chinchilla halo caused some fluff to fly around during knitting. The lace pattern doesn't show as well with this yarn as it would with tighter-twist yarn, but this soft-spun yarn sure is warm. The best thing about making our own yarn is that we can design the best yarn for the job.

Jeannine Glaves of Tulsa, Oklahoma, loves the challenge of a new fiber. Her husband wonders what she'll be up to next. Fresh corn for dinner means that corn silk yarn will be drying that night (it's surprisingly strong). She believes that curiosity keeps her young.

Resources

Chinchilla

Plum Crazy Llama Ranch & Fiber Art, www.etsy.com/shop/PlumCrazyRanchFiber.

Spin Zen, donna@thespinnerswheel.com.

Spanish Moss

Ravelry *Spin·Off* group, Spanish moss prep for spinning, www.ravelry.com/discuss/spin-off-knitters--spinners/2121916/1-25.

Cactus

www. kingdomlandscape.com.

www.birdandhike.com.

A Tale of Three Bamboos

How they spin and knit up

BY MAGGIE CASEY

Bamboo is bamboo is bamboo—right? Well, it depends! The way bamboo is processed makes a huge difference in the fiber and yarn. We spinners have choices—we can spin regenerated bamboo, bast bamboo, or carbonized bamboo. How do you choose? I couldn't decide, so I tried all three.

To understand the differences in the fiber, I decided to spin the fibers all the same way and the same size. All of the fibers came as roving and two of them were combed top, so I spun all the samples as a worsted yarn, and by that I mean that I used a short forward draft and didn't allow any twist between my front and back hands. I spun the samples on my scotch-tension wheel with an 11:1 drive-wheel ratio.

After spinning and plying each sample, I washed the yarns in warm water with hand dishwashing detergent, rinsed them twice with warm water, and hung the skeins to dry without weight. I knitted each yarn into a swatch, and the swatch was washed, allowed to dry flat, and lightly steamed.

RAYON BAMBOO

This is the most common type of bamboo fiber available to spinners. It is a regenerated fiber, meaning that leaves and other parts of the plant are dissolved in a caustic solution and turned into a viscose solution. The solution is then extruded and hardened into fibers. The pearly white fiber is very smooth and has a high sheen.

FIBER Soft white, very lustrous combed top with 5½" staples, from Ashland Bay (www.ashlandbay.com).
YARN Singles: spun Z, 35 wpi; 2-ply: plied S, 23 wpi; 3 tpi (after washing, 21 wpi; 3½ tpi).

These fibers were soft and slippery and (in dry, arid Colorado) full of static electricity. I spun them with a worsted draw keeping the twist between the orifice and my front hand to accentuate the luster and drape of the fiber. It took some time to adjust my wheel to get just the right amount of twist into the fibers.

After washing, the yarn was silky and smooth; it bloomed a bit and had a little elasticity.

BAST BAMBOO

Bast bamboo is processed in a mechanical method similar to flax and other bast fibers. The fibers are separated from the outer woody part of the plant, retted, and then combed into a spinnable fiber. The roving is bright white and combed, but the fibers seem coarser than in the other samples, and some of the fibers were different lengths, very much like flax roving.

FIBER Bright white, lustrous combed fibers with 7" staples and some shorter fibers, from Ashland Bay (www.ashlandbay.com).
YARN Singles: spun Z, 37 wpi; 2-ply: plied S, 26 wpi; 3 tpi (after washing: 26 wpi; 4 tpi).

This bamboo spun very much like flax roving, but the fibers seemed to be softer and finer than linen. I spun a worsted yarn with no twist between my hands. Not all the fibers were the same length, and there were occasional noils. The fibers were much stiffer than in the other preparations, and if a little twist would get between my hands, the twist could really lock those fibers together. When I plied, I added a little extra twist because when I let my freshly spun singles yarn twist back on itself, the ply was so open that my knitting needles would have constantly split the yarn as I knitted.

When I washed the yarn, it had much more body than the other bamboos and even less elasticity. It softened a little in washing but was still a little stiff, and it did not bloom at all.

CARBONIZED BAMBOO

According to Judith MacKenzie in her book *The Intentional Spinner* (Interweave, 2009), carbonized bamboo fiber is created by impregnating bamboo fibers with very fine carbonized bamboo powder. The fibers seem similar to rayon bamboo. They are very soft and have a low sheen.

FIBER Soft charcoal gray, low-sheen combed top with 4" staples, from Ashland Bay (www.ashlandbay.com).
YARN Singles: spun Z, 36 wpi; 2-ply: plied S, 24 wpi; 3 tpi (after washing: 21 wpi; 4½ tpi).

When I predrafted some of these fibers, they almost squeaked as they slipped past one another in my hands. I spun the fiber as a worsted yarn with no twist between my hands. The fibers drafted out nicely, but there was some resistance as I drafted that had nothing to do with the twist. While the rayon bamboo was very smooth and a little slippery, this fiber had some tooth

Left, bast bamboo: This is the least forgiving of all the samples; any inconsistency in my spinning and knitting is apparent. However, the swatch has a nice drape, is softer than linen, and wasn't hard on my hands to knit. I used a smaller size needle than the other samples (size 1 vs size 3), because the yarn size did not change after washing. **Center, rayon bamboo:** The sample is shiny, slinky, and has lots of drape. I don't know how well it will hold its shape when it is knitted up into a project, but the swatch feels quite sensuous, and the luster is amazing. **Right, carbonized bamboo:** Has a soft, matte surface and seems more like cotton than rayon—it feels quite comfortable next to the skin and has some bounce.

to it. When I would drop the yarn, the twist didn't run out as quickly as I expected.

After washing, the yarn had quite a bit of loft and a surprising amount of elasticity.

I had no idea that there would be so much difference between the three fibers when I embarked on this project, and as I admired my swatches, I immediately started planning on ways to use each one. I can imagine a scarf woven from the rayon bamboo, a summer top knitted from the bast bamboo, and maybe a sweater from the carbonized bamboo. Now which one should I start first?

Maggie Casey spends her days behind the counter at Shuttles, Spindles & Skeins in Boulder, Colorado, and her evenings starting more projects than she can ever finish. She'd like to thank Jim Laski from Ashland Bay for answering all her questions.

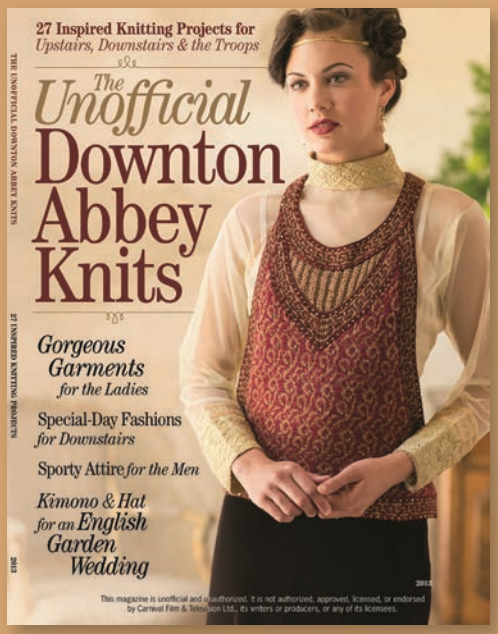
Resources

"The Yarn of the Hour: Bamboo." *Handwoven* (March/April 2008), 64-65.

Ashland Bay's blog on bamboo, www.ashlandbay.com.

Take a look at knitting *through the eyes of* Downton Abbey

Enjoy **26 knitting patterns** inspired by the lavish sets and styling of the hugely popular television series Downton Abbey, from the editors of *PieceWork* magazine.



Transport yourself to Downton Abbey! This 144-page special issue dives into the true history that surrounds the fictional setting of the hit television show, and includes projects inspired by the lavish sets and styling including knitted lace cardigans, socks, and more.

Available at your local yarn shop or at **InterweaveStore.com**

Mercerized Wool

Enhanced luster and hand

BY JOY SELBY CAIN

I was helping my friend Kim Semler of Lucky Cat Craft run a booth at A Wool Gathering in Yellow Springs, Ohio, when she handed me a bag. "Here, try this! It's mercerized lambswool." I felt the fiber and bought all of it.

Most weavers are familiar with mercerized cotton. When cotton yarn is mercerized to enhance the luster of the cotton during commercial manufacturing, it is chemically altered by bathing it in sodium hydroxide solution, then neutralized in an acidic bath. The yarn is then quickly passed through a flame to remove stray fibers. The result is a lustrous yarn that takes dye very well and has a softer hand than unmercerized cotton.

Mercerized wool is not so different in that the goal is a lustrous fiber that takes dye well and has wonderful drape. Mercerized wool starts with Merino fleece. The scales are removed through rapid chlorination (in a closed system) followed by the application of a silicone polymer. While the diameter of the fiber does not change, the fiber feels finer than the original wool.

CHARACTERISTICS

Mercerized wool has a silklike luster and the softness of hand of cashmere. Because it has had the scales removed (and has been through a chemical alteration process similar to that for superwash wool), it will not felt. However, mercerized wool has an entirely different hand than either superwash or Merino top. It does not have as much loft as untreated wool, and the drape of the finished item is more like silk than wool.

Handling the fiber is a little challenging. The fiber will drift away from the top and separates easily. This can be used to your advantage when stripping the fiber for fine spinning. This characteristic also gives a slight halo to your yarn and your finished product.

DYEING MERCERIZED WOOL

Mercerized wool takes dye beautifully but must be handled carefully. I like to use acid dyes after the fibers soak for at least 4 to 8 hours. Like silk, the mercerized wool top can be quite dense, and a longer soak will help the dye penetrate all the fibers and yield better results. Handle it as little as possible during the dye process because the fiber can be slippery and can pull itself apart. I use a colander to pull the fiber out of the water bucket so the wool stays together.

If you are painting the dye onto the fiber, again you want to handle it as little as possible. Gently soak a sponge brush and tap the fiber. Turn the fiber over and apply more dye to make sure the dye penetrates all the way through.

SPINNING

While mercerized wool can be spun using a short draw, I've had more success with a modified long draw. My spinning method is to draw out the fiber with my left hand, pinching near the orifice with the right hand and drawing out the fiber a bit more with the left to eliminate slubs. My long draw is also fairly short—about 6 inches. Mercerized wool requires more twist due to the lack of scales. I use the smallest whorl on my wheel and treadle an extra couple of times to make sure it stays together.

I like to spin fine and ply to get the diameter yarn I want. As a weaver, I usually make and use two-ply yarns. However, for one mercerized wool project, I wanted a three-ply yarn and tried to chain-ply the singles. I didn't start with enough twist in the singles for chain plying, and the yarn untwisted and fell apart. When I plied the same singles from three bobbins though, the yarn plied beautifully.

I noticed there was a difference when I spun from one end of the top as opposed to the other. If you are getting a lot of slubs, flip the fiber over (similar to spinning from the butt or tip end of a staple), and you should end up with a smoother yarn.

SAMPLE 1

I weighed out an ounce of top and divided it evenly into thirds (one for each ply). I held 3 inches of top in my left hand and spun on a supported spindle with the right (my dominant hand). I would stop and pull back the fiber with the left hand for a semilong draw, add more twist with the right hand, and wind on. After I finished spinning each third, I wound the yarn onto a bobbin using a bobbin winder. I plied the yarn on my spinning wheel. The singles measured 35 wraps per inch, and the three-ply yarn measured 19 wraps per inch.

I wove the Corduroy pattern (from Licia Conforti's *Modular Textures: Patterns for the Weavette & Weave-It*

Sample 1: Woven swatches, 3-ply (19 wpi; 1,900 ypp). **Sample 2:** Crocheted flower medallion from the chain-plied yarn (24 wpi; 2,400 ypp); crocheted flower medallion from the 2-ply yarn (30 wpi; 3,000 ypp); and mercerized wool.

Looms, Volume 1, 2006) on a 4-by-4-inch pin loom and was pleased with how the yarn filled in.

SAMPLE 2

I wanted to see the difference between crocheting with a two-ply yarn and a three-ply yarn. I also wanted to spin a fine singles for crochet lace. For the singles, I split the fiber lengthwise into ¼-inch-wide strips. Using the smallest whorl on my lace flyer (35:1 ratio), I spun long draw in the Z direction, concentrating on not drafting too far apart (to prevent the singles from drifting apart). I added an extra treadle of twist before winding onto the bobbin.

With a single bobbin of singles, I thought I would chain-ply instead of separating the yarn onto three bobbins. I had a lot of breaks before I realized why the yarn was falling apart—I hadn't inserted enough twist to spin a chain-plied yarn from the mercerized wool that has had all the scales chemically removed from the fiber. The twist in the opposite direction travels up into the singles and can rapidly pull it apart. I plied about half an ounce before I threw in the towel. The result was a three-ply yarn that measured 24 wraps per inch.

I spun the remaining singles, split the yarn between two bobbins, and plied from my lazy kate. I had no trouble with breakage and soon had a lovely two-ply yarn that measured 30 wraps per inch.

I finished both yarns with a hot soak in water, squeezed out the excess water by wrapping the yarn in a towel, and then hung the skeins to dry with weight.

I crocheted flower medallions to embellish a headband for my daughter. I found the perfect flower: Blossom in *The Harmony Guides: 101 Stitches to Crochet* (Interweave, 2008). I used a size 4 crochet hook for the two-ply and a size 1 hook for the three-ply.

I love the feel of mercerized wool and the pieces I made from the spun yarn. It was a joy to spin, and the resulting yarns were true luxury.

Joy Selby Cain of Pickerington, Ohio, is a graphic designer by day, and by night she spins, weaves, dyes, and handles fiber. Her passion is working from archaeological textile finds and re-creating historic textiles. She has an enabling husband, an artistic daughter, three cats, a dog, and a bunny.

RESOURCES

Conforti, Licia. *Modular Textures: Patterns for the Weavette & Weave-It Looms*, Volume 1. Williamstown, Massachusetts: Buxton Brook Looms, 2006.

Knight, Erika. *The Harmony Guides: 101 Stitches to Crochet*. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2008.

www.woolmark.com/learn-about-wool/treatment-methods.

Most weavers are familiar with mercerized cotton, but mercerized wool is a new product on the market available to spinners. Mercerized wool is Merino fiber that has been chemically altered to enhance the luster and hand of the yarn.

Shrug it off!

A Mercerized Wool Shrug

BY JOY SELBY CAIN

Mercerized wool is very soft and smooth—making it perfect for a garment that will touch your skin.

It was love at first touch. The mercerized wool glowed with a subtle luster. It was almost as soft as cashmere. My mind raced with the possibilities: What to make? Mittens? Socks? Hat? Those would all work, but I am not a knitter and only barely a crocheter. I am a weaver, and that means whatever I spin is destined for the loom. I let the fiber languish in my stash while I thought about what to make from it.

A few months later, my daughter dyed her hair in bright turquoise, purple, green, and blue. I was jealous—I work in an office, so there was no way my hair could be those colors. I had to find a way to incorporate them into something I could wear. I decided a shrug would be warm for the office and that it could use the colors she used on her hair.

My rigid-heddle loom was sitting sad and dejected in the corner. It would be perfect for the simple garment I wanted to make. Because of its narrow width (16"), I needed to weave two long strips.

I love this shrug. It is the perfect weight for an air-conditioned office or school and has a fantastic drape. More importantly, it makes me think of my daughter and her artistic personality. I may have to share the shrug. After all, it goes with her hair!

Fiber 10 oz mercerized wool from Lucky Cat Craft, www.luckycatcraft.etsy.com: 8 oz immersion-dyed purple, 2 oz space-dyed turquoise, purple, and green.
Yarn 2-ply; 900 yd purple; 300 yd variegated; 1,400 ypp; 16 wpi.
Warp 328 yd purple; 152 yd variegated; 120 ends 4 yd long following the warp color order in Figure 1 (allows 6" for take-up, 18" for loom waste).
Weft 422 yd purple; 18 yd variegated.
Setts Warp: 8 ends/inch (1/slot and hole in an 8-dent rigid heddle); weft: 8 picks/inch.
Weave structure Plain weave.
Equipment Rigid-heddle loom, 15" minimum weaving width; 8-dent rigid heddle; 2 stick shuttles.
Woven length (measured under tension on the loom) 120" (60" each panel).
Finished size (after washing) 2 panels 12" × 48".
Sewing equipment and supplies Sewing machine; matching sewing thread.
Dyeing equipment and supplies Dharma Acid Dyes (Dharma Trading Company, www.dharmatrading.com), 2 oz each intense iris #459, true turquoise #424, Caribbean blue #407, and brilliant yellow #401; vinegar; 12 qt nonreactive dyepot; steaming rack; foam brushes; plastic wrap; measuring spoons.

Dyeing

I dyed the wool in two batches using acid dyes. I wanted a multicolored yarn as an accent for the main yarn in the shrug. My favorite color is purple and there was purple in my daughter's hair, so that was my choice for my solid color. For the solid purple, I divided the wool into two 4-ounce bundles and immersion-dyed two at a time. The fiber was soaked in a vinegar and water solution. Mercerized wool top is a very dense preparation, and time is needed for it to become completely soaked. Because the wool has had its scales removed during the mercerization process, it is also very slippery. It is a good idea to handle it as little as possible. Kim Semler of Lucky Cat Craft taught me the trick of using a colander to support the fiber as it is moved in and out of the liquid so it stays in top form. I added a teaspoon of Dharma's intense iris acid dye in a 12-quart pot of water, added the wet fibers (which had soaked for 4 hours), and simmered them for an hour. I let the fibers soak in the dyebath overnight. I discovered I had not waited long enough for the water to fully penetrate the fiber and had some white areas as a result. I rinsed and washed the fibers using Synthrapol and spun out the water using a salad spinner (used only for dyeing, not for food preparation).

Using a modified long draw, Joy spun the very soft and smooth mercerized wool fiber that she had vat-dyed as well as handpainted. She spun warp and weft yarns that measured 20 wraps per inch in the Z-spun singles and 14 wraps per inch when they were plied S.

For the remaining wool that was to be space-dyed, I soaked the fibers overnight. I covered my work area with plastic wrap and used a sponge brush to apply the dyes: true turquoise, intense iris, Caribbean blue, and a mix of brilliant yellow and Caribbean blue for the green. After dyeing it, I wrapped the fiber in plastic wrap, placed it in the dyepot with the steaming rack in place, and steamed it for 15 minutes. I let the fiber cool, rinsed and washed it, and spun out the water as for the other fiber.

Spinning

I split the solid purple fiber into 1-ounce bundles. When I have a lot of fiber to spin for a project, I feel I am accomplishing more if I can see I am making progress. I did the same with the space-dyed fiber. Spinning went faster than I expected. (For mercerized wool, test each end of the top: one will give you a smoother yarn and be easier to draft.) I used a modified long draw, drawing only 6" at a time and holding the yarn for a few extra treadles to make sure it had enough twist to hold the smooth fibers together. I used my wheel to spin the fiber using a 9:1 ratio for both warp and weft. The yarn was spun at 20 wraps per inch in the singles and 14 wraps per inch plied. The singles were spun Z and plied S. I spun a total of 8 ounces of purple and 2 ounces of space-dyed wool. The fiber was so soft I didn't want to finish spinning.

Weaving

I learned from Judith MacKenzie not to finish handspun yarns before warping or weaving, so I warped the yarn straight off the bobbins.

1. Use the warping method you prefer to wind a warp for a rigid-heddle loom of 120 ends 4 yards long, following the warp color order in Figure 1 for the placement of the solid purple and space-dyed yarns. Read the warp color order from right to left and place the wide solid purple stripe on the right side of the heddle. Center the warp in the heddle for a weaving width of 15" and thread a warp thread through each slot and each hole in an 8-dent heddle.

2. Wind two stick shuttles, one with solid purple yarn and one with the space-dyed yarn.

3. After tying on and spacing the warp with waste yarn, weave 3" (24 picks) using the solid purple and then switched to the space-dyed yarn to weave the weft in the same color order used in the warp (see fig. 2). Repeat the warp sequence in the weft starting with 16 picks of space-dyed with 8 picks of solid purple between stripes to make a plaid at one end. As you weave, be careful to maintain 8 weft picks per inch.

When changing colors on a rigid-heddle loom, I prefer to put the shuttle I am not using behind the heddle area. I bring the shuttle with the yarn I am using out of the shed over the unused yarn and take it under the unused yarn as I put the active shuttle back into the next shed. This encases the unused yarn and carries it up the selvedge instead of requiring cutting and working in the different colors on each row. After weaving the plaid, weave the rest of the cloth using solid purple for the weft, for a total woven length (measured under tension on the loom) of 120".

4. When weaving is complete, cut the fabric off leaving 6" tails to be knotted in groups of four. Put the fabric in the washer for a full cycle using a mild detergent and toss it in the dryer. Spritz the fabric with water and press it on the wool setting of your iron three times on each side. Sampling taught me to expect 20% shrinkage in length and width so the warp width was 15" wide. After finishing, the width had shrunk to 12" and the length to about 96".

Sewing

1. Cut off the knots at the ends and cut the fabric in half crosswise into two panels 12" wide × 48" long and zigzagged the cut edges.

2. Lay out the panels so that the wide solid purple stripes are in the center and stitch them together ½" inside the selvedges with a machine straight stitch. The cut ends are folded over twice and hemmed.

3. Finally, fold the shrug with right sides together along the seam and sewn from the sleeve hems along the long open side for 5" to make the sleeve openings.

Joy Selby Cain of Pickerington, Ohio, is a graphic designer by day, and by night she spins, weaves, dyes, and handles fiber. Her passion is working from archaeological textile finds and re-creating historic textiles. She has an enabling husband, an artistic daughter, three cats, a dog, and a bunny.

Resources

Dharma Trading Company, www.dharmatrading.com/information/dharma-acid-dye.html?lnav=information.html.

Figure 1. Warp Color Order

38	2	4	6	10	16		space-dyed
82	10	8	8	8	8	40	solid purple

120 ends

Wind the number of ends of each color in the order indicated. For example, beginning at right, wind 40 ends solid purple, then 16 ends space-dyed. Continue in order across with 8 solid purple, 10 spaced-dyed, and so on, until the last 10 ends of solid purple.

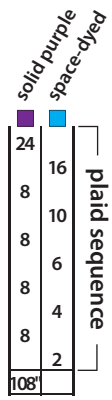


Figure 2. Weft Color Order

Read the weft color order from top down, beginning the plaid sequence with 24 picks (3") solid purple, followed by 16 picks space-dyed, 8 solid purple, 6 space-dyed, etc. At the end of the plaid sequence, weave 108" (3 yd) using solid purple only.

Winter 2014

Natural Fiber

A Spin·Off Directory!

Sponsored by

COURTESY OF REBECCA HIGHLANDER

Five years ago when we were all celebrating the International Year of Natural Fiber, we thought what could be more natural to include in *Spin·Off* magazine than natural fiber? But since nearly every issue deals with the amazing, magical qualities of natural fiber—we had to stretch a bit to figure out how to celebrate it *even more*. The Natural Fiber Directory was born and here it is in its fifth year in the middle of another issue chock full of natural fiber.

This is a one-stop, easy-to-take-with-you listings of fiber resources from around the world. These listings are important, not only for you, as you're searching for the perfect fleece for your next project, but also, for the spinning community as a whole. Supporting the shepherds, farmers, and horticulturists who preserve the rare breeds of sheep, cultivate shades of natural colored cotton, and nurture the silk worms means that we will continue to have choices when it comes time to select a fiber for a project—and that is what spinning is all about, isn't it? Choices. We choose the fiber we want for the texture of the yarn, we choose how we prepare it, what color it will be, and when it will be done. So, enjoy your ability to choose your fiber, enjoy poring over these listings and fantasizing about your next foray into the land of natural fiber.

Amy

—Amy Clarke Moore
Editor of *Spin·Off* magazine

Arizona

Cotton Clouds—Safford
www.cottonclouds.com
info@cottonclouds.com
(800) 322-7888
Bamboo, cotton, Soysilk
Quality Sea Island, Pima, Acala, brown, green, brown Pima, combed/carded Supima cotton slivers; Learn to Spin Cotton kits, cotton bolls, takli spindles, DVD's, Handspinning Cotton book (reprint), and more!

Brookmoore Creations LLC—Tucson
www.brookmoorecreations.com
brookmoorecreations@earthlink.net
(520) 744-1926
Wholesale Easy to Spin® earth friendly cotton
Acala, Natural Green, Pima, Pima Brown and Sea Island Cotton Slivers, Shopkeeper's Starter Boxes and Takli Spindles. Your cotton spinning customers deserve the best—Easy to Spin® earth friendly cotton slivers.

Grandma's Spinning Wheel—Tucson
www.grandmasspinningwheel.com
spinningramma@aol.com
(520) 290-3738
Various wools, wool blends, alpaca/blends, silk, silk/wool blends, silk/alpaca blends, cotton, flax, hemp, bamboo
Grandma's Spinning Wheel, where the creative come to play. We carry the unusual in tools, fibers, and equipment for spinners, weavers, felters, knitters, and crocheters.

California

Royal Fibers/Columbine Spinning Wheels—Dixon
www.columbinespinningwheels.com; www.royalfibers.co
danafoss@r-e-solutions.org
(707) 249-3276
Guanaco, alpaca, mohair, CVM, Merino, Karakul
Royal Fibers offers white collar fibers at blue collar prices! Guanaco, alpaca, Merino, Karakul and CVM wool. Fleeces, rovings, yarns grown in the U.S.! Also Columbine Spinning Wheels.

Lisa Souza Dyeworks—Placerville
www.lisaknit.com
lisa@lisaknit.com
(530) 647-1183
Bluefaced Leicester, Merino, Polwarth, Wensleydale, alpaca, angora, cashmere, silk, yak, baby camel
We specialize in luxury fibers and wools with the finest hand, dyed in fabulous colors to stir your imagination.

Carolina Homespun—San Francisco
www.carolinahomespun.com
info@carolinahomespun.com
(800) 450-SPUN (7786)
Various wools, Guanaco, Vicuña, silk, soysilk, bamboo, corn silk, cotton, hemp, Ecospun
We have natural fibers from around the globe as well as several lines of beautifully dyed fiber and local Bay area fleeces.

Dharma Trading Co.—San Rafael
www.dharmatrading.com
service@dharmatrading.com
(800) 542-5227 mail order
(415) 456-1211 showroom
Wools, silk, bamboo, seacell, flax, camel, llama, yak, Tencel, hemp
The dye specialists! Choose from hundreds of colors in acid and fiber reactive dyes. Go natural with new natural dye extracts. Indigo too! 1604 4th St, downtown San Rafael, CA.

Royale Hare—Santa Rosa
www.royalehare.com
karen@royalehare.com
(707) 579-2344
Bluefaced Leicester, Corriedale, Merino, Romney, wool locks, mohair, silk, silk cocoons, silk carrier rods, silk mawata hankies
Hand-painted and natural color fibers and yarn. Over 60 original Colorways plus semi-solids. Dyeing natural fibers and yarn for over 20 years.

EvenTyrGaard Alpacas—Sonora
www.ealpaca.com
grenygaard@sonnet.com
(209) 928-5959
Suri alpaca
Lustrous, fine fleeces in natural white, fawn, brown or black come raw or washed and picked. Also available are rovings and yarn blended with Merino, silk, bamboo, Tencel, or Huacaya.

Macedo's Mini Acre—Stevinson
www.macedosminiacre.com
macedosminiacre@gmail.com
(209) 648-2384
Huacaya alpaca, Suri alpaca, llama
Fleeces, rovings, batts, and yarn. Alpaca colors include white, brown, black, gray and patterns. Natural dye sources also used for colorful combinations.

Meridian Jacobs—Vacaville
www.meridianjacobs.com
robin@meridianjacobs.com
(707) 688-3493
Jacob wool, local fibers

Quality Jacob sheep, fiber and yarn; friendly fiber arts classes, spinning and weaving equipment, retail yarn sales, books, custom weaving, lambskins, gifts, farm tours.

MoonLight Alpacas—Wallace
www.calalpacas.com
janis@calalpacas.com
(209) 786-5060
Suri alpaca
Skirted suri fleeces available; blankets and neck/leg fiber. Many colors, micron & lengths to choose from.

Colorado

Gypsy Wools—Boulder
www.gypsywools.com
info@gypsywools.com
(303) 442-1884
Various wools, alpaca, llama, mohair, silk
Gypsy Wools carries hand-dyed, hand-painted, natural color fibers and a variety of breeds including some rare and heritage breeds. We purchase high-quality fiber from breeders and artisan mills.

Jefferson Farms Alpacas and Paco-Vicuñas—Denver
www.jeffersonfarmsnaturalfibers.com
jlevene@comcast.net
(303) 870-3056; (719) 539-4752
Huacaya alpaca, Suri alpaca, Paco-vicuña, Suri Paco-vicuñas
We focus on high quality, uniformity and cleanliness to produce our finest fibers. Raw fleeces, roving, and yarns in 13-23 micron with 3-5" staples. With over 350 animals we have what you want!

Bijou Basin Ranch—Elbert
www.BijouBasinRanch.com
sales@BijouBasinRanch.com
(303) 601-7544
Yak
Drop spindle or wheel, yak fiber draws easily to yield beautiful yarns for all skill levels from beginner to expert. Micron counts are 14–16 to make a truly soft yarn.

Suri Network—Estes Park
www.surinetwork.org
office@surinetwork.org
(970) 586-5876
Suri alpaca
"Suri Network—Rarest of Breeds, Ultimate Natural Fiber." See fiber and yarn for sale at http://surimarket.surinetwork.org/store.

La Plata Farms—Hesperus
www.laplatafarms.com
sales@laplatafarms.com
laplatafarms@gobrainstorm.net
(970) 749-5485
Navajo Churro, Merino/silk blends, Rambouilett, exotic blends, alpaca, alpaca/silk
In business for over 29 years, dealers for Louet, Schacht, Ashford, Ashland Bay, Clemes and Clemes, Navajo spinning and weaving supplies, Navajo looms, spindles, warp, weft.

Desert Weyr LLC—Paonia
www.desertweyr.com
sales@desertweyr.com
(970) 527-3573
Wool
Black Welsh Mountain Sheep coated raw fleeces, roving, combed top, yarn and quilt batts all available at our farm store or via mail order.

Idaho

A Child's Dream Come True—Sandpoint
www.achildsdream.com
info@achildsdream.com
(800) 359-2906
(208) 255-1664
Corriedale, Merino, English Leicester, Wilde Wool, Organic Fairy Wool, Potluck Roving, Ashford's Merino/Silk, Bluefaced Leicester, silk, alpaca.
An extensive selection of dyed and undyed fibers for spinning, felting and magic wool creations. Low per ounce prices. Wool felt and silk yardage/scarves also available. Free shipping at $85+.

Indiana

The Island Weaver —Winona Lake
www.theislandweaver.com
theislandweaver@gmail.com
(574) 268-YARN (9276)
Cotswold, Corriedale, Merino, buffalo/llama, alpaca, Shetland, mohair, Rambouillet, Shetland/mohair, Cotswold/mohair
The Island Weaver is your source for all things fiber related, carrying supplies and classes for children and adults in spinning, weaving, crochet, knitting, needle felting, dyeing, and more.

Sunshine Daydream Farm & Gardens—Brownfield
www.sunshinedaydreamgardens.com
sunshinedaydreamfarm@gmail.com
(207) 935-4075
Merino, Corriedale, Merino/Corriedale, Merino/Corriedale/Columbia/Finn, Merino/Romney/Finn, Romney/Finn, CVM Romeldale, English Angoras
Keeper of organically raised Merino, Corriedale & CVM Romeldale sheep. Natural roving, yarn & hand felted items all dyed with plants, roots, barks, and mushrooms. Felting supplies, plant dyes, workshops & books. *Wool samples available.*


COURTESY OF RUBY WELLER

Maine

Halcyon Yarn—Bath
www.halcyonyarn.com
halcyon@halcyonyarn.com
(800) 341-0282
Bluefaced Leicester, Jacob, Merino, Shetland, alpaca, bamboo, camel, cashmere, cotton, silk
Fibers from *A–Y* (zebra not available yet). Natural fibers ready to spin and to felt. Natural colors, commercially dyed, hand-dyed and blends. Sample cards available.

Springtide Farm—Bremen
www.springtidefarm.com
wpieh@lincoln.midcoast.com
(207) 529-5747
Cashmere
Specializing in producing some of the finest cashmere from our North American cashmere goats. Yarn and roving available in natural and dyed shades, patterns, and handknit products.

Maryland

Fuzzy Farmers Market —Leonardtown
www.FuzzyFarmersMarket.com
info@fuzzyfarmersmarket.com
(301) 475-FUZZ (3899)
Border Leicester, Corriedale, Romney, BL/Romney/Clun Forrest, Suri alpaca, angora, cotton
Fuzzy Farmers Market offers a variety of naturally colored and hand dyed fibers produced at local farms. *We* teach spinning, weaving, knitting, and felting, too.

Cranberry Creek Fibers —Westminster
www.cranberrycreekfibers.com
cranberrycreekfibers@gmail.com
(410) 596-4916
English Leicester
Fibers of rare breed sheep: fleece, roving, yarns, rug yarns of our own lustrous English Leicester and of local flocks. As available, Jacob, Shetland, Lincoln, and Navajo Churro fibers.

Massachusetts

New England Felting Supply—Easthampton
www.feltingsupply.com
sales@feltingsupply.com
(413) 527-1188
Merino batts, Norwegian C-1, Pelsull, Wensleydale, Karakul, local wools, locks, art batts, Merino top, silk
Quantity discount program. Trusted resource and national destination for in-depth felting knowledge and unmatched inventory. Renown workshops in debuting international techniques, local & international instructors.

The Fiber Loft—Harvard
www.thefiberloft.com
yarn@thefiberloft.com
(978) 456-8669
Bluefaced Leister, Corriedale, Coopworth, Icelandic, Merino, New Zealand, Romney, alpaca, camel, silk
Along with a full line of natural fibers, we stock colored and hand-painted rovings, natural and chemical dyes, spinning wheels and accessories. Classes available.

Michigan

Jehovah Jireh Woolmill —Paw Paw
www.woolmill.com
amy@woolmill.com
(269) 366-7952
(269) 366-5345
Alpaca, BFL, Tunis, Corriedale
All fibers from the Midwest U.S.! 50% alpaca/50% wool, hand-dyed rovings in about 100 colors, felting kits and supplies, hand-dyed locks, hand-dyed, handspun yarns, original knitting patterns.

Lazy Dog Fiber Arts —Portland
www.lazydogfiberart.com
lazydogfiberart@gmail.com
(616) 755-3014
Various wools, Huacaya alpaca, Suri alpaca, llama
Warm Huacya and silky Suri, we have many lovely llama and alpaca colors for you! Some wool and limited baby alpaca may also be available. Raw or hand-processed batts.

Ewe-nique Knits—Royal Oak
www.ewe-niqueKnits.com
marilyn@ewe-niqueKnits.com
(248) 584-3001
Bluefaced Leicester, Jacob, Longwool, Merino, Shetland, Targhee, Huacaya alpaca, angora, mohair, silk
Featuring Michigan Fibers and so much more!

Minnesota

Saga Hill Designs—Crystal Bay
www.sagahill.com
mail@sagahill.com
(800) 586-9054
(952) 472-4155
Silk/silk blends, Bluefaced Leicester, Corriedale, Merino, Polwarth, various other wools, bast bamboo, hemp
Saga Hill is the home of author W. J. Johnson and her Minnesota Series Colorway™ Dyes—hand-whipped, low-impact dyes; unique silk & silk blends; and undyed/dyed fine fibers & yarns.

Missouri

The North American Suri Company—St. Louis
www.nasurico.com
info@nasurico.com
(314) 440-1627
Suri alpaca
Specializing in fine Suri and Suri blends. Offering raw fiber, roving, knitting and needlepoint yarns in natural and dyed colors.

Montana

Serenity Sheep Farm Stay —Belgrade
www.serenitysheepfarmstay.com
knefla@aol.com
(406) 388-4500
Romney, Shetland, llama
Stay a night or a week in our antique Shepherder's wagons. Spin amongst the sheep in the field & knit against the Big Sky!

Montana Wool—Wolf Point
mt.wool@yahoo.com
(520) 335-4113
Cormo, Debouillet, Polwarth, Targhee
Soft, white, range grown fleeces skirted for handspinners. Also natural colored Cormo wool and roving.

New Hampshire

Harrisville Designs—Harrisville
www.harrisville.com
info@harrisville.com
(603) 827-3996
Various wools
Manufacturers of 64 colors of fine Australian and New Zealand wool fleece and yarns, including Brooklyn Tweed, books, classes. Handweaving looms and accessories, and award-winning friendly loom products for children. 3–5 day fiber workshops!

Natural Fiber
A Spin·Off Directory!

White and natural color high luster, curly, raw Cotswold fleece. Dyed and natural colored roving. Medium and long wool crossbred fleeces. Black, white, gray, moorit.

Hudson Valley Sheep & Wool Co.—Red Hook
www.hudsonvalleysheepandwoolco.com
husdonvalleysheepandwoolco@gmail.com
(845) 758-3130
Icelandic, Shetland
Raw and washed fleeces, roving, batts, fiber by the ounce, natural colors.

Fiber Kingdom—Salem
www.fiberkingdom.com
sfgraham@verizon.net
(518) 854-7225
Bluefaced Leicester, Icelandic, Merino, various wools, Huacaya alpaca, angora, camel, cashmere, flax, silk
Housed in a renovated early nineteenth century barn is a selection of natural fibers, dyed and undyed. An angora rabbit "flock" is attached along with spinning and carding equipment and supplies.

North Carolina

New World Textiles—Black Mountain
www.NewWorldTextiles.com
cotton@charkha.biz
(828) 669-1870
Organic cotton, cotton blends, pre-mordanted Dye-Lishus™ cotton
Cotton, charkha, khadi! Make friends with your charkha, weave with your handspun singles. Spinning Cotton on the Charkha DVD. Sliver, yarn, fabric, charkhas and accessories, instruction.

Empty Pockets Alpaca Farm—Climax
www.emptypocketsalpacas.com
adam3334@bellsouth.net
(336) 674-3334
Huacaya alpaca, Suri alpaca
We offer award-winning fleece, yarn in natural and hand-dyed colors, and animals for sale. Fiber available raw, roving, and various-weight yarn. We also have finished alpaca socks and other wearable items. Nationwide shipping—call us for your alpaca needs!

Hippie Chix Fiber Art—Cullowhee
www.hippiechixfiber.etsy.com
gailjohnston@frontier.com
(828) 293-2420
Longwool, Merino, Polwarth, Wensleydale, angora, camel, cashmere, llama, mohair, silk, yak


COURTESY OF MARGIT KORSAK

I carry many more fibers like angora locks and luxury fiber blends. Many types of sari and silk natural and hand-dyed available.

Beach Run Farm—Oxford
www.beachrunalpacas.com
beachrunalpacas@gmail.com
(727) 772-3856
Huacaya alpaca, Suri alpaca
Raw fleeces from Suri and Huacaya alpacas for handspinning. We have alpaca available for fleece and/or breeding. You can find us on Facebook and OpenHerd.

Oklahoma

Heaven Sent Food & Fiber—Tahlequah
www.HeavenSentFoodandFiber.com
HeavenSentFoodandFiber@gmail.com
(918) 431-4774
White & Natural Colored Merino and Alpaca
Sustainable family farm. COATED raw fleeces. Hand-dyed mill and hand-spun yarn including bamboo & silk blends and roving.

Oregon

Wings and A Prayer Alpacas—Amity
www.wingsandaprayeralpacas.com
wapalpacas@frontier.com
(503) 263-6944
Huacaya alpaca, Suri alpaca
Alpaca fiber—primarily fine, silky Suri—all colors & quality available. Inquire for specific fiber color or sample. $1.50-$3.00 per ounce. See website for additional farm products and information.

Eugene Textile Center—Eugene
www.eugenetextilecenter.com
info@eugenetextilecenter.com
(541) 688-1565
ETC Signature Colorways in both Merino/Silk 50/50 and Polwarth. Solid-colored Merino, multi-colored Merino, dyed Fleece from Harrisville, and many undyed carded rovings. Alpaca and Shetland from local farms. All our fibers are carded or combed ready to spin.

Blue Moon Fiber Arts—Scappoose
www.bluemoonfiberarts.com
info@bluemoonfiberarts.com
(503) 922-3431; (866) 802-9687
Bluefaced Leicester, Merino, Polwarth, Camel/Silk/Merino, and so much more
Tina Newton of Blue Moon Fiber Arts is an inspired colorist working in the Pacific Northwest. She infuses luscious color on exquisite fibers. Check out her Rockin' Whorl Spinning Club!

Pennsylvania

Over Home Alpacas—Bethel
www.overhomealpacas.com
overhomealpaca@hotmail.com
(717) 673-2541
Suri alpaca, Huacaya alpaca, baby alpaca, alpaca blends
Specializing in quality high luster Suri fiber for spinning and felting in natural colors. Also offering a wide selection of natural colored yarns including pure Suri and diverse blends.

Marushka Farms—Danville
www.marushkafarms.com
mem@marushkafarms.com
(507) 490-4759
CVM, CVM/Romeldale, Icelandic, Icelandic/CVM/Romeldale cross
Raw fleeces, roving, and combed top available at all times. Full range of natural colors.

Cedarland Farm—Delta
www.cedarlandfarm.com
cedarlandfarm@verizon.net
(717) 862-3244
Icelandic, Huacaya alpaca, camel, cotton, mohair
Purebred Icelandic sheep, breeding stock, skins, fleeces, natural and dyed roving, yarns, knitting kits, blended yarns with mohair, alpaca, cotton, camel, angora, hand crafted note cards, farm tours.

Natural Dyes

Washington

Earthues, A Natural Dye Company
Seattle, WA
www.earthues.com
info@earthues.com
(206) 789-1065
Your source for natural dye extracts, raw materials and how-to's since 1994. View our website for the latest news, and to add your contact information to receive updates via email.

The Fiber Studio—Henniker
www.fiberstudio.com
sales@fiberstudio.com
(603) 428-7830
Bluefaced Leicester, Cormo, Merino, Romney, Suri alpaca, bamboo, angora, camel, cashmere, mohair, silk
Incredible selection of fibers, spinning wheels, books and supplies. Natural dyes, felting supplies, as well as knitting and weaving yarns and equipment.

Long Ridge Farm —Westmoreland
www.longridgefarm.com
longridge@myfairpoint.net
(603) 313-8393
CVM/Romeldale
CVM/Romeldale sheep, the rarest breed in North America today with next-to-skin softness. Raw fleece, yarns, spinning fibers, and specialty textiles in a variety of natural and organically dyed hues.

New Jersey

Dancing Waters Farm —Hampton
www.mohair-fiber.com
mostlymohair@gmail.com
(908) 989-0393
Bluefaced Leicester, Icelandic, Jacob, Shetland, various other wools, llama, mohair
Buy direct from a small animal friendly U.S.A. farm: naturally colored/hand-dyed mohair & wools, roving, custom batts, fiber CSAs and handspun/U.S.A. millspun yarns.

New Mexico

Maple Winds Farm —Stanley
www.victorias-mountain-yarns.com
MapleWindsFarm@yahoo.com
(505) 204-6127
Tunis, Rambouillet, alpaca, angora


COURTESY OF SARITA COFFMAN

Events

California

Vista Fiber Arts Fiesta
October 11–12, 2014
Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum
Vista, CA
www.vistafiberartsfiesta.com
fiberartsfiesta@gmail.com
(760) 533-5857
A gathering of fiber artists: weavers, spinners, felters, knitters. Yarn and fiber, including raw wool, roving, exotic fibers, handspun yarn, hand dyed and hand painted yarns. Admission & parking free.

Colorado

Felter's Rendezvous
March 1–4, 2014
In the Colorado Rockies
Estes Park, CO
www.thefeltingsource.com
info@thefeltingsource.com
(866) 484-8625
Cool mountain breezes and sparkling sunshine create the perfect environment for refreshing our spirits, enjoying the beauty of the Rockies, and making fabulous felt!

Salida Fiber Festival
September 6–7, 2014
Riverside Park
Salida, CO
www.salidafiberfestival.org
salidafiberfestival@gmail.com
(719) 221-9179 (Penny Wilken)
Get your fiber fix here! Wonderful array of vendors, demonstrations, activities for adults and children, spin-in, food vendors. Join us for a wonderful weekend!

Illinois

Midwest Fiber & Folk Art Fair
June 20–22, 2014
Lake County Fairgrounds
Grayslake, IL
www.fiberandfolk.com
Carol@FiberAndFolk.com
(815) 276-2537
Come Celebrate the Work of Your Hands! Treat yourself to a workshop, wander through the Marketplace, experience the demonstrations, be inspired by exhibits, enjoy music, and relax and work on your projects with us.

The Fiber Event
April 18–19, 2014
Putnam County Fairgrounds
Greencastle, IN
www.thefiberevent.com
greyside@geetel.net
(765) 379-2578
Shop 100+ booths for raw and processed fibers. Event features Indiana producers and fiber artists. Spinning, weaving, knitting supplies, and workshops are available both days.

Fiber Fest & Spin-In
March 7–8, 2014
Jay County Fairgrounds
Portland, IN
www.visitjaycounty.com
infojc@visitjaycounty.com
(877) 726-4481
Crafters demonstrate processing fibers into yarn, teach hands-on classes in spinning, needlefelting, rigid-heddle weaving, wool braiding, knitting, sheep shearing, petting zoo, Collie demonstrations, lamb judging, vendors, and food.

Kentucky

5th Annual Kentucky Sheep and Fiber Festival
May 17–18, 2014
Masterson Station Park
Lexington, KY
www.kentuckysheepandfiber.com
sharon@kysheepandgoat.org
(502) 682-4173
A natural, all things fiber, local food event. In cooperation with Lexington Parks and Recreation and The Bluegrass Classic Stockdog Trials. Visit our website to see details of workshops with world class fiber artists!

Maine

Fiber College of Maine
September 3–7, 2014
Searsport Shores Campground
Searsport, ME
www.fibercollege.org
create@fibercollege.org
(207) 548-6059
Classes for spinning, dyeing, knit/crochet/weave, surface design & weaving. Free demonstrations, shopping, animals, evening events. Located on 40 oceanfront acres amongst organic gardens. On-site and local lodging available.

The 14th Annual Maine Fiber Frolic 2014
June 7–8, 2014
Windsor Fairgrounds
Windsor, ME
www.fiberfrolic.com
ssddfarm@fairpoint.net
(207) 935-4075
Celebrating fiber, fiber animals and fiber arts every June at the Windsor Fairgrounds. Maine's largest fiber event showcasing natural fiber, spinning fibers, yarn, accessories, fiber processors, fiber animals, workshops & local fare.

Mississippi

Magnolia State Fiber Festival
May 30–31, 2014
Lady Luck Casino
Vicksburg, MS
www.msff.net
Brenda@msff.net
(601) 415-7679
Come join us for our second celebration! We have fun down here! 25+ vendors and nearly 30 classes. Enjoy the history that is Vicksburg ... Sponsored by the Mississippi Development Agency.

Missouri

Fiber Daze of SW MO
September 19–20, 2014
The MARC Center
Mt. Vernon, MO
www.fiberfolksofswmo.com/fiber-daze-2013.html
4th Annual Fiber Daze — Classes galore (taught by the mid-west's finest fiber artists), including spinning, weaving, knitting, felting, crochet, more. Shop yarn, roving, and goodies in the Vendor's Market!

New Jersey

Garden State Sheep Breeders Sheep & Fiber Festival
September 6–7, 2014
Hunterdon County Fairgrounds
Lambertville, NJ
www.njsheep.org
gardenstatesheepbreeders@gmail.com
Fiber vendors • Workshops (spinning, knitting) • Border Collie Herding demonstrations • Breed exhibit • Fleece show/sale. Come join us for a day in the country!

Tunis & Rambouillet fiber. I produce handspun yarns of wool, wool blends of alpaca & angora. Natural & dyed yarns. Wheels & findings by Majacraft & Louet. Wool socks, caps & hats.

New York

Spinners Hill—Bainbridge
www.spinnershill.com
lisa@spinnershill.com
(607) 967-8325
Bluefaced Leicester, Corriedale, Cotswold, Finnsheep, Merino, Rambouillet, Huacaya alpaca, mohair, silk
Fibers available in top or carded batts, hand-dyed and blended on our farm.

Caribbean Alpacas—Geneva
www.caribbeanalpacas.com
doann2748@yahoo.com
(315) 789-5408
Suri alpaca, Huacaya alpaca, Merino, bamboo, angora, silk, Tencel
Offering superb Suri fiber from our farm. Our yarn has been processed to include a variety of natural fibers and spun into weights from fingering to bulky. Also clean, raw fiber in natural & dyed colors.

Blackberry Hill Farm—Hudson
www.blackberryhillfarm.org
www.blackberryhillfarm.etsy.com
blackberryhillfarm@gmail.com
(518) 851-7661
Cormo, Cormo cross, Romney, llama, alpaca, angora rabbit
We offer fiber grown on our small family farm in all forms, raw to finished, pure or blended. Take advantage of our 30 years of raising these beautiful animals.

Yarn Cupboard—Jamesville
www.yarncupboard.com
info@yarncupboard.com
(315) 399-5148
Bluefaced Leicester, Merino, various wools, silk
Yarn Cupboard is a distributor of fine spinning wheels—Kromski and Ashford. We also sell hand-dyed rovings and batts from local dyers and spindles.

Alpacatrax, LLC—Pound Ridge
www.alpacatrax.com
arnow@optonline.net
(914) 764-4778
Cormo wool, Huacaya alpaca
Alpacatrax is a family-owned farm in the NY Hudson Valley. We specialize in quality alpaca fleece, roving, alpaca/custom yarns, felts and finished product for inspiration.

Nistock Farms—Prattsburgh
www.nistockfarms.com
sheepmom@empacc.net
(607) 522-4374
Pure Cotswold; crossbreds of Border Leicester, CVM, Rambouillet, Finn, Romney

New Mexico

Heart of New Mexico Fiber Gathering
September 27–28, 2014
City Park
Moriarty, NM
www.heartofnmfibergathering.com
gogobone59@copper.net
(505) 384-2293
Please join us for the second annual Heart of NM Fiber Gathering! Benefiting the Santa Fe and Torrance Counties 4-H fiber groups. Vendors, competitions, hands-on booth, shearing demonstrations, raffle plus more!

New York

CNY Fiber Artists & Producers: Annual Fiber Festival
June 14–15, 2014
Butternut Hill
Bouckville, NY
www.cnyfiber.org
pamela.haendle@bnymellon.com
(315) 899-7792
Over 100 booths: vendors, demonstrations, fiber animals, exhibits, and children's activities in a rural setting only 35 miles from Syracuse.

Finger Lakes Fiber Festival
September 20–21, 2014
Hemlock Fairgrounds
Hemlock, NY
www.gvhg.org/fiber-fest
fest@gvhg.org
(607) 522-4374
It's our 20th anniversary!! Join us for a jam-packed weekend of classes, demos, competitions, fleece show and sale, and vendors of every fiber related item you can imagine!

Oregon

Columbia Gorge Fiber Festival
April 18–20, 2014
The Hood River Inn—Best Western
Hoodriver, OR
http://cgff.lavendersheep.com
customerservice@knotanotherhat.com
(541) 308-0002
The 4th annual CGFF offers workshops and an outstanding marketplace with over 20 Pacific Northwest vendors featuring products for knitting, crocheting, spinning, weaving and more!

Fiber in the Forest
May 16–18, 2014
Camp Myrtlewood
Myrtle Point, OR
www.eugenetextilecenter.com
info@eugenetextilecenter.com
Fiber in the Forest is a scenic rustic retreat located in the Coast Range of Oregon. Three-day workshops will be taught by Sarah Anderson, Barbara Pickett, Madelyn van der Hoogt, and Mary Hettsmansperger.

Northwest Regional Spinners Association 2014 Conference "Waves of Color"
May 29–June 1, 2014
Willamette University
www.nwregionalspinners.org
Fiber Vendors' Workshops on spinning, knitting, dyeing, felting and more. Gallery Exhibits & Contests. Fiber Marketplace & Spin-In open to the public on Friday & Saturday, May 30–31st, 9:00am–5:00pm.

Pennsylvania

10th Annual Pittsburgh Knit & Crochet Festival
March 14–16, 2014
Four Points Sheraton, North
Mars, PA
www.pghknitandcrochet.com
(412) 963-7030
Market and classes in spinning, weaving, wet and needle felting. Demo and free craft with the Felt Loom. Celebrate our 10 year anniversary with Special Guest: #1 New York Times Best Selling Author Debbie Macomber, Lily Chin, Nicky Epstein and more.

AOBA National Conference and World Fleece Show
March 14–16, 2014
Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex & Expo Center
Harrisburg, PA
www.alpacainfo.com
conference@aobamail.com
(615) 834-4195
Join us for the Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association's National Conference featuring the WORLD FLEECE SHOW. Some of the finest fleeces in the world will be on display. Also featuring the National Halter Show, National Alpaca Auction, fiber arts and spin off competitions.

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Wool and Fiber Festival
May 17, 2014
Coggeshall Farm Museum
Bristol, Rhode Island
www.coggeshallfarm.org
info@coggeshallfarm.org
(401) 253-9062
Sheep shearing, workshops, kid's craft tent, vendors, fleece to shawl, local fleece, demonstrations by local guilds, Gulf Coast fleece, Rhody Warm Blankets, fiber animals. Eighteenth century farmhouse, hearth cooking, weaving, spinning, dyeing.

South Dakota

Black Hills Fiber Arts Fair
April 25–26
Dahl Arts Center
Rapid City, SD
www.BlackHillsFiberArtsFair.org
CLASSES: Jacey Boggs, Kathleen Taylor, Robbin Firth and others. Juried VENDORS: Something for spinners, knitters, weavers and felters. Also plan to visit the beautiful, historic, family-friendly Black Hills and our vibrant downtown.

Vermont

26th Annual Vermont Sheep & Wool Festival
October 4–5, 2014
Tunbridge Fairgrounds
Tunbridge, Vermont
vtsheepandwoolfest.org
vtsheepandwoolfest@gmail.com
(802) 592-3062
Featuring an animal barn with sheep, goats, llamas, alpacas, rabbits. 70+ vendors of fiber crafting supplies, handcrafted wool items, fleeces, sheep equipment/supplies, fencing, meat, cheese. Sheepdog herding demos, contests, fiber arts demos, music, local food.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin Sheep & Wool Festival
September 5–7, 2014
Jefferson County Fair Park
Jefferson, WI
www.wisconsinsheepandwoolfestival.com
wisbc@centurytel.net
(608) 868-2505
The Midwest's premier sheep & fiber event! 70+ classes, sheep shows, shearing demonstrations, stock dog trial, newborn lambs, fleece shows/sales, educational clinics, workshops. Shop in comfort in the Country Store with 130+ vendors.

Mill View Mountain Alpacas —Forksville
www.mvmalpacas.com
humans@mvmalpacas.com
(570) 494-7734
Huacaya alpaca
Organic Alpaca Fleeces, yarns, ¼" felted sheets 3' × 4', finished products, and our own custom knitting kits complete with MVMA yarn, knitting needles, accessories and directions for a hat, headband, or scarf.

Tennessee

Smoky Mountain Spinnery —Gatlinburg
www.smokymountain spinnery.com
nancy@smokymountain spinnery.com
(865) 436-9080
Angora, bamboo, buffalo, camelid family, cashmere, milk, mohair, possum blends, various wools, yak
Come relax and shop in the comfortable surroundings of Smoky Mountain Spinnery. Equipment and supplies for spinning, weaving, knitting, crocheting, and felting. Studio space, classes, demonstrations, antiques and gifts.

Texas

Fancy Fibers—Farmersville
www.fancyfibers.com
mary@fancyfibers.com
(972) 616-FARM (3276)
Shetland wool, Suri alpaca, mohair, silk, bamboo, American bison
Shop our NEW EXPANDED location for natural fibers from U.S. fiber farms; fine silk and bamboo; weaving yarn; Columbine, Schacht, and Glimraka tools and equipment; classes in weaving, spinning, dyeing.

FiberLady.com—Lewisville
www.fiberlady.com
chele@fiberlady.com
(214) 803-1243
Corriedale, Merino, alpaca, bamboo, cotton, flax, hemp
Fiberlady offers handpainted fibers in bamboo, hemp, flax, bamboo/wool, and bamboo/alpaca blends. Custom color orders accepted.

Vermont

Crooked Fence Farm—Putney
www.crookedfencefarm-vt.com
crookedfence@gmail.com
(802) 387-5790
Romeldale/CVM, Merino, cashmere
Raw fleece, roving and yarn from our Merino and rare CVM/Romeldale sheep. Fine, soft wool in natural and naturally dyed colors. Stock available for breeding or handspinner's flock.

Virginia

Misty Mountain Farm —Amissville
www.mistymountainfarm.com
info@mistymountainfarm.com
(540) 937-4707
Finnsheep, Bluefaced Leicester, mohair, Huacaya alpaca, Suri alpaca
Huacaya/Suri raw fleeces, dyed locks, rovings, and tops for spinning in natural and hand-dyed colorways. Farm yarns, natural and handpainted. Fiber equipment and instruction.

Stony Mountain Fibers —Charlottesville
www.StonyMountainFibers.com
Barbara@StonyMountainFibers.com
(434) 295-2008
Cormo, Cormo blends, Corriedale, Merino, bamboo, buffalo, cotton, flax, hemp, silk
We have everything you need to create the perfect yarn or felted project. Lots of colors in rovings and tops.

Solitude Wool —Loudoun County
www.solitudewool.com
suebundy@solitudewool.com
(703) 779-0894
Romney, Corriedale, Karakul, Icelandic, Tunis, Targhee, Coopworth, Clun Forest, Montadale, Leicester Longwool, Border Leicester and more
Breed-specific yarns and spinning fibers from hand-selected fleeces from small flocks in the mid-Atlantic fibershed. Dyed-in-the-wool, kettle dyed and natural sheep colors.

Echo Valley Fiber—Millboro
www.EchoValleyFiber.com
gcoltrin@aol.com
(215) 497-3188
Huacaya alpaca, Suri alpaca
We carry pure natural colors of our own private herd, as well as gorgeous blended rovings. Perfect for spinners!

Mills

Minnesota

Rach Al Paca Fiber Processing
Hastings, MN
www.rachalpacafarm.com
rachalpacafarm@aol.com
(651) 485-7916
10 years processing your fibers into beautiful yarns & rovings. Small lots our specialty. We quickly process alpaca, wool, mohair & angora fibers into batts, felts, roving, or yarns.

Montana

Going to the Sun Fiber Mill
Kalispell, MT
www.gttsfibermill.com
montanamill@gmail.com
(406) 756-6772
Alpaca/llama (suri/huacaya), primitive wools, mohair, canine. GTTS is a full-service mill, with a Fiber Sorting Certificate. Specializing in core-spun yarns, 48" wide needle felting, and garment construction using customer's processed yarns/felts, by knitting, weaving, plus sewing of felts and bed pillows.

North Carolina

Echoview Fiber Mill
Weaverville, NC
www.echoviewfibermill.com
mkummerle@echoviewnc.com
(855) My-Fiber
(855) 693-4237
Echoview Fiber Mill is an energy efficient, full-service fiber mill with the best in custom equipment. Capable of processing wool, mohair, alpaca and many other exotic fibers.

North Dakota

Dakota Fiber Mill
Kindred, ND
www.dakotafibermill.com
dakotafibermill@gmail.com
(701) 238-4002
Teamed with quality, affordability, short turnaround, and customer service that will exceed your expectations, it would be our honor to process what the Good Lord has grown for you! All fiber types and blends welcome.

Ohio

Ohio Valley Natural Fibers
Sardinia, OH
www.OVNF.com
Info@ovnf.com
(937) 446-3045
Custom processing mill specializing in unique blends in lofty rovings, Pin-drafting, batting, and yarn using full-size mill equipment.

Pennsylvania

Sweitzer's Countryside Fiber Mill LLC
Seven Valleys, PA
www.sweitzersfibermill.com
info@sweitzersfibermill.com
(717) 428-1364
Our full-service fiber mill has state of the art equipment for processing your fleeces into quality rovings and yarns. Your fibers returned to you.

Utah

Spinderella's Creations Fiber Mill
Salt Lake City, UT
www.spinderellas.com
info@spinderellas.com
(801) 668-0563
Family owned and operated since 1995. Custom Processing of all fibers. We love working with you to turn your fibers into works of art. Services: washing, carding, dyeing, de-hairing, spinning, rug yarn, felting, weaving, ropes.

Vermont

Green Mountain Spinnery
Putney, VT
www.spinnery.com
spinnery@spinnery.com
(800) 321-9665
GMS is committed to small scale farms and to bringing out the best in your fibers. We can card and spin a minimum of 35 lbs. of raw or 20 lbs. scoured fleece.

Washington

Evergreen Fleece Processing, LLC
Woodinville, WA
www.evergreenfleece processing.com
info@nofiberleftbehind.com
(425) 248-8967
We provide carding and felt fabric on our 66" FeltLOOM. Our "no fiber left behind" philosophy means even your seconds and thirds can be transformed into beautiful fabric.

Washington

Foxglove Fiberarts Supply —Bainbridge Island
www.foxglovefiber.com
sales@foxglovefiber.com
(206) 780-2747
Corriedale, Merino, silk, English Leicester, alpaca, camel, cashmere
Foxglove Fiberarts Supply offers the full line of Ashford dyed and natural fibers as well as scrumptious silks and exotics.

NW Handspun Yarns —Bellingham
www.nwhandspunyarns.com
info@nwhandspunyarns.com
(360) 738-0167
Polwarth, Merino, angora, silk, local blends, painted rovings, various luxury fibers
From buttons to wheels, skeins to roving, weaving equipment to inspiration, we offer a wonderful selection to help you with your next projects.

ME2 Custom Fiber Processing Farm—Colville
www.me2farm.com
jayne@me2farm.com
(509) 684-5623
Registered Montadale sheep, CVM/Romeldale, cashmere fibers
In NE Washington, we own and operate a custom fiber processing mill and we now dehair. We enjoy blending your fiber for those special needs.

Woolgatherings—Duvall
www.woolgatheringsfibers.com
info@woolgatheringsfibers.com
BFL, Merino, Polwarth, Cormo, silk blends, alpaca, angora
Woolgatherings carries a wide variety of premium natural fibers, including our popular 24-breed fiber samplers. We specialize in colorful handpainted tops.

Paradise Fibers—Spokane
www.paradisefibers.com
info@paradisefibers.com
(888) 320-7746
Merino, Bluefaced Leicester, hemp, silks, organic cotton, buffalo, yak
Our fibers come ready to spin into yarn. We have hundreds of natural fibers and spinning wheels, fast and free shipping on large orders over $100+.

Las Flores del Altiplano Alpacas—Yacolt
www.altiplano-alpacas.com
lasflores1@aol.com
(360) 686-0910
Huacaya alpaca
We specialize in gray!!! Also offering other gorgeous colored and white fleeces, roving, yarn and rug yarns in 100% alpaca and alpaca blends.

RowanTree Woolery—Yakima
www.rowantreewoolery.com
lhargrov@charter.net
(509) 388-5619
Various wools, Suri & Huacaya alpaca, alpaca/wool blends, bamboo, angora, camel, silk, yak, Soysilk
Distributor of Majacraft, Louet, Baynes wheels/accessories, Howard Brush, Brother and Louet carders. Lots of color! Natural animal/plant fiber and blends. Knitting needles, commercial and handspun yarn!

Sheeping Beauty Fiber Arts —Hartford
www.sheepingbeautyfibrearts.com
luci@sheepingbeautyfibrearts.com
(262) 623-0244
Corriedale, Icelandic, Merino, Romney, angora, camel, flax, mohair, silk
This is a fiber art school offering classes in all spinning/weaving, knitting, crochet, felting levels. Our supplies come from Ashford, Cascade and local breeders and farmers.


COURTESY OF BLOOMTOWN ACRES

Wisconsin

Susan's Fiber Shop —Columbus
www.susansfibershop.com
susan@susansfibershop.com
(888) 603-4237
Merino, Polwarth, Teeswater, camel, cashmere, cotton, flax, hemp, mohair, silk, yak
Susan's is filled with a variety of blends from Merino, Polwarth, Teeswater, silk, cotton, and more. Come visit and see the Teeswater sheep through the shop's windows.

Magic Willows Alpacas —Hartford
www.magicwillowsalpacas.com
btkk@magicwillowsalpacas.com
(414) 217-5836
Suri alpaca
Suri alpaca fiber available in natural colors from white to black. Raw fiber, twisted locks, roving, yarns (lace to light sport weight), felts and cotton-cored rug yarn.

Bleating Heart Haven —New Holstein
www.bleatinghearthaven.com
bhavenfiberarts@yahoo.com
(920) 286-0971
Bluefaced Leicester, Cormo, Corriedale, Cotswold, CVM/Romeldale, Merino, Shetland, Huacaya alpaca, angora, mohair
We sell the fiber raised on the farm by our ever-so-sweet animals. Shop for fleeces, roving, yarn, and handmade products including yarn end tables and willow furniture!

Wyoming

The Fiber House—Sheridan
www.thefiberhouse.com
info@thefiberhouse.com
(307) 673-0383
Various wools, alpaca, llama
Offering local Wyoming produced wool, alpaca, and llama roving and yarns. Shop our online store for a full line of fiber arts supplies, including Schacht, Kromski, and Ashford.

United States

National CVM Conservancy Inc.
www.nationalcvmconservancy.com
cvmtreas@yahoo.com
(570) 490-4759
CVM/Romeldales
Critically endangered, CVM/Romeldale sheep offer fine fleece in a range of colors and patterns. Visit our website to learn more and find a local breeder.

Canada

British Columbia

Harmonique Fibre Arts Supply Inc.—Victoria
www.harmonique.ca
info@harmonique.ca
(877) 294-4411
Merino, silk-Merino blends, alpaca-Merino blends, Corriedale, Polwarth, Perendale, Romney, English Leicester, silk, other luxurious fibers
Canadian distributors of everything Ashford including their beautiful range of dyed and natural fiber.

Ontario

Gemini Fibres—Mt. Albert
www.geminifibres.com
geminifibres@interhop.net
(800) 564-9665
Various wools, alpaca, camel, cashmere, silk, cotton, flax, bamboo, mohair, yak
Supplying all your fiber arts needs for over 30 years. The home of Forrester spindles—we stock a wide range of styles. Mail order available.

France

Tricotin.com
www.tricotin.com
boutique@tricotin.com
Various wools, alpaca, bamboo, cashmere, cotton, flax, hemp, mohair, ramie, silk
Vast selection of spinning, carding, weaving equipment and fibers including extra fine Merino dyed in Italy by amazing artists at unbeatable prices. We ship worldwide.

Online

The Felting Source
www.thefeltingsource.com
info@thefeltingsource.com
(866) 484-8625
Natural-dyed Tencel wool, Merino and wool
Your source for needle and wet-felting supplies: dense foam work surfaces, felting needles sold in bulk, FeltCrafts kits, fiber, and embellishments. Wholesale inquiries welcome.

Wool 2 Dye 4
www.wool2dye4.com
Yarnie@wool2dye4.com
Bluefaced Leicester, Merino, bamboo, camel, cashmere, silk
Distributor of exclusive line of undyed handknitting yarns. Base yarns of fine Merino and 100% Bluefaced Leicester. Internet sales only.

Alpaca - A New Spin On Natural Fiber

Alpacas have been domesticated livestock in South America for thousands of years. This treasure which the Incas harvested from the back of the mystical alpaca, has been in the United States gaining success and growth through the alpaca livestock industry since the 1980's. As a discerning fleece enthusiast, you can spin the "fiber of the Gods." Please visit our marketplace today to purchase alpaca fiber products. You will find them located in the fiber section of the marketplace at: http://www.alpacainfo.com/MarketFiberProduct.asp

Annually many breeders show their alpacas in Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association (AOBA) certified shows. Breeders offer award-winning alpaca breeding stock for sale from their ranches or through specialty auctions throughout the year. The terms "luxury" and "alpaca" are becoming synonymous as AOBA works to promote the many facets of our beautiful animals.

ALPACA • OWNERS • AND • BREEDERS
ALPACAS
ASSOCIATION

Alpaca fiber comes in 22 distinct color groups which can also be blended to produce an infinite array of natural colors. Alpaca fiber in lighter color categories also takes dye well, leading to many bright, true colors and diverse hues. The fiber is considered a luxury fiber due to its properties of being very fine and lightweight and does not have the allergens of other natural fibers. It felts very easily and with wide micron count available, ranging from Royal Baby Alpaca (less than 20 microns) through Coarse or strong Alpaca (from 29–35 microns); there is a perfect fleece available to every spinner whether you want the finest yarn to put next to a baby's skin or a coarse, sturdy fleece to spin your next rug.

Alpaca breeders in the United States reap several benefits from their alpaca herds. With selective breeding techniques, better animal husbandry and nutritional wellness; we are breeding annually to improve conformation, fiber density and fineness. New crias (baby alpacas) are born annually, being a great benefit and joy to alpaca breeders as we increase the size and quality of our national herd. Our shorn fleeces are either sold raw or produced as bats, roving, yarn and clothing which is made available for sale to the public.

Join us for the AOBA National Conference featuring the WORLD FLEECE SHOW in Harrisburg, PA March 14 –16, 2014 www.alpacaowners.com

2014 AOBA NATIONAL CONFERENCE Featuring:
2014 World FLEECE SHOW

Saving Rare Breeds of Sheep, One Bobbin at a Time

BY DEBORAH ROBSON

Fibers are the materials of our craft. We think of them in terms of their tactile, sensual, and (I hope) practical qualities, but we may not often consider the bigger picture surrounding our spinning choices. It's tempting to think that as individuals—and what's more, as individuals engaged in activities that others may consider anachronistic—our behavior has little potential to have long-lasting and profound impacts on, for example, the diversity of global genetic resources. If we think that the decision to buy a particular fleece and spin it has no implications beyond the reach of our own hands, how limited we are in our vision!

Spinners already have made a difference in the survival of sheep breeds, and we can do more. The fact is, if you're spinning wool (or any natural fibers, although my focus is wool because I've only got twenty-four hours in a day), you're doing a lot for the good of the planet and of future generations. Let's take a look at how and why that's true with regard to just one aspect: support for rare breeds of sheep and the resulting conservation of genetic resources that humans may in the future either want or desperately need.

ON THE HOOF AND IN THE FARMYARD

As the word *livestock* indicates, domesticated animals are *living* resources. Humans and sheep have walked the earth in close association for about 11,000 years. (Imagine that.) Since the industrial revolution and then the discovery and increasing use of synthetics, domesticated animals have become endangered, just as wildlife has. In the domestic arena, those breeds that grow wools suitable for large-scale processing have seen their gene pools eroded in the name of higher productivity: more meat, and more consistent midgrade and high-dollar fine wools—all white. Those breeds that grow wools that are not suitable for mechanical approaches have become perilously rare.

One effort to safeguard against the total loss of genetic diversity involves the harvesting and storage of embryos and semen. This valuable high-tech operation requires sophisticated and energy-intensive equipment. It's easier and far less expensive to engage in *in situ* conservation: to keep live animals in productive flocks. Yet for *in situ* conservation to be practical, shepherds and farmers must be able to make a living from the commodities their farms generate.

Handspinners buying fleeces can contribute to the bottom line in a big way. Many of the fleeces grown by rare sheep breeds can't be sold to anyone other than fiber artisans. They're composed of colored fibers, vary in texture and type, or are too long or too coarse to make woolen goods for mass consumption. If we don't step in, those fleeces will likely be stashed in an attic or used for compost and will contribute nothing to the animals' well-being or support. Even where white fibers are concerned, we'll pay a lot more for a nice fleece than the commercial markets will. While machines gobble fiber at a fast clip and need to turn out goods that can be sold for competitive prices, we can tease hours of enjoyment, and years of practical use, out of every pound of wool.

I'm going to give you just three examples of breeds we've had a role in keeping going, highlighting one longwool, one medium wool, and one fine wool. There are many more breeds I could have included.

COTSWOLD

"In the last twenty years . . . the breed has experienced a revival . . . , due primarily to the rediscovery of its wool by fiber crafters."

—Livestock Conservancy

Cotswold

Cotswold sheep have been in the British Isles for so long that no one remembers, and no records indicate, when or how they got there. They may have arrived before the Romans did. They grow long, lustrous, silky locks that take dye brilliantly. Worsted-spun fabrics make the most of these qualities, along with the fibers' durability. During medieval times, Cotswold wool generated a lot of wealth for the British economy. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when an increasing human population required more meat, the slow-growing Cotswolds were outpaced both by the down breeds and by the longwools that agriculturalist Robert Bakewell bred to grow more quickly, with less weight in bone and more in muscle. By 1949, Cotswolds neared extinction in Britain, with one remaining purebred flock. In 1974, it was listed by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) and at about the same time (1970), there were only twenty-three Cotswolds registered in North America. The breed is still classified as "at risk" with the RBST and as "threatened" by the Livestock Conservancy.

While white Cotswolds benefit greatly from handcrafters' purchases of their wool, the breed's genes contain the appealing option of a range of grays to blacks. Our interest, and fleece-buying dollars, make it worthwhile for shepherds to maintain the sheep that grow these colors. Without spinners' support, those possibilities would have had greatly diminished opportunities to express themselves (and stick around) in the gene pool. Because genes that appear to humans to be completely unrelated can be linked together, there's no telling yet what other attributes might have been driven into the far reaches of that gene pool, or eliminated entirely, by culling out the colored sheep and just keeping the white.


DEBORAH ROBSON

Jacob

JACOB

"The breed has enjoyed widespread popularity among small flock holders as well as hand spinners and weavers."

—Livestock Conservancy

Ah, Jacobs: those charming sheep with the piebald coats! Piebald means that they have irregular patches of colors, typically black and white (that is to say, dramatically defined), although Jacobs can be black and white, or brown and white and may have shades that are called lilac, which can be any lighter color. Jacobs' origins, like those of the Cotswold, haven't been firmly traced yet. They acquired their name, a reference to the Biblical story of Jacob, in the British Isles sometime in the last two hundred years. Sheep of a similar type have been known and identified in Britain since the seventeenth century. However, recent DNA studies indicate that they are not closely related to any other British breeds.

While American Jacobs and British Jacobs differ in size and conformation, with the British sheep having been selected for greater commercial meat production while the American ones more closely represent the old style of the breed, both the Livestock Conservancy and the RBST acknowledge the added value for

COURTESY OF YELLOW CREEK COTTAGE, MEDINA, OHIO.

Romeldale

shepherds that comes from handspinners' appreciation of Jacob fleeces and the important roles we play in this breed's continuing to be economically viable. While the wool falls into the broad and less-than-usefully-descriptive "medium" category, variation in fleece texture from one sheep (or flock) to another covers a wide range. Spinners can seek out either soft or sturdy Jacob wools, depending on their needs, and in the process provide incentives for farmers to maintain their flocks.

North American Jacobs are currently both a bit more vulnerable than they were and a bit more obviously important as a genetic resource. This has stunning implications for the further value of support from individual wool purchasers. Within the fairly small gene pool of North American Jacobs (although its source is with a British line) lies a genetic defect that is identical to the defect that causes a fatal neurological condition in human children (yes, it's fatal to the lambs, too). Jacob breeders have been participating in studies that intend both to conserve the unique genetics of the breed and to prevent the heartbreaking condition from claiming lives in both species. This defect has no detrimental effect at all on the sheep's fleeces, which provide one of the most entertaining wheel or spindle experiences on the planet. And spinning one may just help put gene therapy in place to eliminate the source of a lot of heartache.

COLORED ROMELDALES AND CALIFORNIA VARIEGATED MUTANTS

"The breed's fleece quality and performance characteristics . . . make [the sheep] . . . valuable to handspinners and other fiber artists."

—Livestock Conservancy

That comment from the Livestock Conservancy's website is a bit of an understatement. Colored Romeldale sheep overall, including the badger-face type called California Variegated Mutant (or CVM), owe their existence to the appreciation of their wool by handspinners.

The Romeldale breed was developed in California beginning in 1915. A. T. Spencer bought some exceptional New Zealand Romney rams at the Pan-American Exposition in San Francisco and bred them to his Rambouillet ewes. He wanted to increase both the staple length of the wool and the value of his flock for the meat market. For our purposes, his accomplishments in the fleece department warrant special attention. While there are a lot of breeds out there that have been produced through longwool/fine-wool crosses of this type, the Romeldale holds a unique place not only for its North American origins but for the remarkable retention of fine-wool characteristics as the staple length increased.

Romeldales grow unusually fine, long, soft, and consistent fiber. For years, Pendleton Woolen Mills purchased the clip in its entirety. For commercial purposes, all those fleeces had to be strictly white. The J. K. Sexton family, in partnership with sheepman Glen Eidman, nurtured a high-quality flock of Romeldales. In the 1960s, a colored ewe lamb was born and Eidman kept her instead of culling her, which would have been the normal practice. Two years later, a ram lamb with similar patterning arrived in the flock. Eidman called these sheep California Variegated Mutants and began breeding for color. The value of their fleeces was not for industrial production of high-quality wool fabrics but for handspinners. At the time, California happened to be the home of a number of gifted spinners whose skills had

advanced beyond the funky, lumpy levels of incipient rediscovery of the craft and who were in a position to appreciate the very fine, natural-colored wool.

For a time, CVMs were considered to be a separate breed from the Romeldales. They are currently included as a badgerfaced subset of the overall breed. Spinners can now obtain white Romeldale, colored Romeldale, and CVM-pattern fleeces. Although spinners who live near the relatively few flocks of these sheep may find this hard to believe, the Romeldale (including CVM) is one of the most critically endangered breeds listed by the Livestock Conservancy. The colored strains owe their existence to handspinners, and handspinners can also act to support the survival of the breed as a whole by buying and using its fleeces in any color.

SPINNING MAKES THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

When I think of the things I'd like to change in the world, preferably by midnight tonight, I get completely overwhelmed. Stopping wars. Magically diverting the food wasted in affluent countries to the plates and spoons of those who are hungry. Recycling everything that can possibly be repurposed. Letting wildlife have its space back, safe from human encroachment and interference. It's enough to send me back to bed with the covers pulled over my head. What can a single person do, in the course of a day, to make life better for all of us?

One thing that a spinner can do is buy wool from a shepherd. All the better if it's a rare-breed fleece and the spinner knows something about that breed's place in history and its importance for the future, but knowledge of that type is just enhancement. We're still doing the good work if we pay the shepherd and stuff the fleece in the back of the car and take it home and enjoy the heck out of it. Or even just add it to the stash. But then we miss out on the fun.

Make some yarn. Make that yarn into a sweater, a blanket, a hat, a rug—for yourself or for someone you care about. In all sorts of ways, some known to you and some not, you'll be making the world a better place. One bobbin at a time.

Deborah Robson, a former editor of *Spin·Off*, is the fiber author of *The Fleece and Fiber Sourcebook* and of *The Field Guide to Fleece*. She is currently engaged in an intensive study of Shetland sheep, one of the most complex breeds on the planet (www.dreamingofshetland.com), and she blogs intermittently at http://independentstitch.typepad.com.

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A Handspinner's Notes on Sampling a Mystery Fiber: Île de France

BY ELIZABETH PROSE

One of the joys of traveling to attend spinning classes or fiber festivals is the opportunity to collect spinning fiber from different breeds of sheep, other animals, and plants (or fibers dyed by local independent dyers that are not available in your area). In the spring of 2011, I made a trip to the Spinning Loft in Howell, Michigan, to attend a class with master spinner and weaver Anne Field, author of *Spinning Wool: Beyond the Basics*. Sadly, Anne Field died this year in May.

I will never forget that memorable weekend. I arrived in Howell a little early. I made it to Beth Smith's shop just before closing on Friday evening and was lucky enough to be invited to join her, her family, and Anne Field for dinner. I enjoyed learning about Anne's method of spinning wool fibers to match their crimps per inch during her workshop. We spent the day sampling several different kinds of fleece and learning why sampling is so very important. Inspired, I purchased a few ounces of several different new-to-me fleeces from Beth's impressive Wall of Wool to experiment with and add to my collection.

TRYING NEW FLEECES

Purchasing just a few ounces of raw fleece, either in person or online, has its pros and cons. On the plus side, a spinner can try a whole world of wool beyond Merino or Bluefaced Leicester and other readily available handspinning fibers. Usually, to sample a raw fleece, a spinner must purchase the whole thing, which can be several pounds, or go in with friends and divide it up. However, a few shops such as the Spinning Loft sell raw fleece by the ounce, which is a great way to try a breed without the commitment of storage space for an entire fleece. For community support and inspiration, there are many groups on Ravelry, some inspired by Deborah Robson and Carol Ekarius's *The Fleece and Fiber Sourcebook*, dedicated to exploring the rare and unusual fleeces and fibers available to handspinners. In addition, over the last few years, more and more independent dyers have been offering up unique blends and rare fibers to their club members, on their websites, or at local festivals and shops.

On the other hand, when purchasing a few ounces of raw fleece, handspinners don't always know which section of the fleece they are purchasing. Some breeds' fleeces, such as Shetland, can vary in staple, quality, and color over the entire fleece. Also, breeds that are raised mainly for food production may not have the cleanest fleece compared to those raised for sale to spinners. These fleeces may have weathered tips, second cuts which can lead to neps when carding, or an abundance of vegetable matter, and they may be poorly skirted. A spinner must be willing to put forth a little more effort in the cleaning and preparation of the fibers before introducing twist with a spinning wheel or handspindle. Fleece from sheep raised with handspinners in mind may have been jacketed and will have less vegetable matter; it is sheared more carefully to avoid second cuts, and it may be well skirted.

SAMPLING

Sampling is an important part of the spinning experience. Taking an ounce of fleece or fiber and dividing it for several preparation and spinning methods just to see what happens is a useful learning tool and exercise that has helped me grow as a handspinner. Finding out how a fiber behaves when spun woolen versus worsted or when spun from the lock, flick carded, or combed, gives me a greater appreciation for the diversity of the different breeds and a more enjoyable spinning experience at the wheel because I am not fighting the nature of the fiber. I am relaxing into it and discovering what kind of preparation the fiber wants to receive so that I can accentuate its best attributes and it becomes a yarn I want to knit. Sampling lays the groundwork to build familiarity.

One of the fleece samples I purchased on that trip to Michigan was 4 ounces of Île de France. The Île de France breed was developed in France during the 1830s by crossing Dishley Leicesters with French Rambouillet Merinos.


Sample 1
Singles
2-ply
3-ply
Sample 2
Singles
2-ply
3-ply
Sample 3
Singles
2-ply
3-ply
Sample 4
Singles
2-ply
3-ply
RIDGID
LOUNGE
Secret Passage to CONSERVATORY
START
MISS SCARLET
START
COL MUSTARD
HALL

Swatch 1: Carded
Fiber 0.35 oz Île de France from the Spinning Loft.
Yarn 2-ply; 20 yd; 914 ypp; 12 wpi.
Needles U.S. size 8.
Gauge 19 sts = 4".
Finished size 5¼" × 5¼".

Swatch 2: Combed
Fiber 0.3 oz Île de France from the Spinning Loft.
Yarn 2-ply; 30 yd; 1,600 ypp; 13 wpi.
Needles U.S. size 8.
Gauge 22 sts = 4".
Finished size 4½" × 4¾".

ÎLE DE FRANCE

I began my exploration of Île de France by washing my sample with Orvus W A Paste. I took care not to disturb the lock structure and washed the fiber carefully in mesh bags with no agitation in the hottest water my tap could produce. Due to the rather greasy state of the fleece sample and the abundance of vegetable matter, I ran the fiber through a couple more washes than my usual two to three soaks and two rinses; the final rinse included a glug of white vinegar to neutralize the paste. I then gently rolled the wet fiber in towels to remove excess water and set the locks out to dry on mesh drying racks.

Once dry, I proceeded to examine the fiber more closely. Île de France is usually white; mine went from a dingy light gray to creamy white with yellowish tips and had a low luster after its bath. Île de France is a soft, springy fiber having 2½" to 3-inch defined locks with a flat tip of the lock (rather than tapered) and an even crimp distribution. In feel, it reminded me more of Polypay fleece (another breed raised primarily for meat and commercial wool production but not readily available in the handspinning market) than of Merino. Although quite soft, it is not as fine as Merino and has a crisper feel. A lock pulled from the fleece sample was 3 inches with 11 crimps per inch when measured using a magnifying loupe. The lock was sound and produced an audible ping when snapped, with no breakage. I weighed out 1½ ounces of fiber to use for my experiments. For all preparations in this study, I made a singles, a two-ply, and a three-ply sample yarn.

SAMPLE 1

I oiled my spinning wheel and set it up in double drive and chose a medium-speed whorl, 11:1 ratio, as a starting point for my experiments. First, to get a feel for the natural state of the fiber, I spun directly from the tip end of the locks. Using a short forward draw, I found the matted tips made for a rough start. The embedded vegetable matter mostly near the tip end also caused the spinning to be slow going at first. However, once I got things going, the remaining drafting of the natural locks was smooth and mostly enjoyable without any further preparation to open up the fibers.

SAMPLE 2

My second sample was made by flick carding a few locks to open up the fibers. This solved my two initial issues with the matted tips and vegetable matter, as most

of that fell away onto my lap. Although much easier to spin, the locks were still a bit on the sticky side, and the singles were uneven when drafting with a short forward draw. I would not want to spin the entire fleece this way. I also noticed right away that a softer-spun singles plied with more twist than I use normally (21-degree twist angle) into a two-ply or three-ply yarn made a nice springy yarn.

SAMPLE 3

For the third sample, I weighed out ½ ounce of fiber and used my handcards to make ten rolags. Handcarding really demonstrated just how much Île de France locks bloom when opened up. I changed my drafting to long draw and found the yarn produced to be springy but uneven, and I was plagued by neps due to second cuts and vegetable matter that did not fall away in the carding process.

SAMPLE 4

Finally, for the fourth sample, I weighed out ½ ounce of fiber and used my handcombs. Combing produced about 35 percent waste, but all of the vegetable matter and second cuts were gone. I attenuated the combed fiber and spun it using a short forward draw. This preparation spun like a dream, and although a lot of work, the resulting yarn was worth it. It retained its loft and spring.

I knitted two sample swatches using the Crest of the Wave stitch pattern from *A Treasury of Knitting Patterns* with the carded and combed yarns and washed and blocked them. Based on my samples, I found that combing the Île de France fibers first, then spinning a softly spun singles, and next making a high-twist two-ply yarn made for a pleasurable knitting experience.

Elizabeth Prose lives in Madison, Wisconsin, and is a master of fine arts degree candidate in the Textile Art and Design Studies program at the University of Wisconsin. She knows that she is not the only one with an unwashed sheep's fleece stored in her basement.

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A picturesque landscape (looking back over Knighton, Wales) that yields all a feral spinner needs: fiber, sticks, and dyestuff.

The Feral Spinner

Evolving back to the basics of making yarn

BY DEBBIE ZAWINSKI

At heart I have always been a feral spinner.

I started spinning as many others have done by purchasing a spindle, a fistful of fleece, and a meager page of instructions. I was captivated by the idea of producing something useful from next to nothing. I could make my own yarn for knitting! For several years thereafter, I knitted hats and scarves for my children's teddy bears from the lumpy singles I had lovingly spun out of fleece gathered around our holiday cottage in the hills. Then I joined a spinning group, and my mother bought me a spinning wheel. Now I could produce skeins of yarn, ply them, too, and knit jerseys for the entire family.

Over the next few years, my spinning wheel collection grew in an inverse ratio to the diameter of my yarn. I produced yarn of increasing delicacy and acquired half a dozen wheels in the process. I have never forgotten my humble introduction to spinning, though, and my collection of spindles has also grown. The spindle was always my tool of choice for teaching spinning to newcomers and, for this purpose, I have made spindles from sticks and potatoes, slices of roundwood, CDs, triangles of plywood, cardboard, even modeling clay and pencils. I have always maintained that one can spin beautiful yarn on the simplest of devices.

One day, many moons ago, I was left unattended in a field full of black Bluefaced Leicester sheep. I was supposed to be

Debbie at the start of her walking tour of Wales in Knighton

PHOTOS BY DEBBIE ZAWINSKI

minding the belongings of a group of primary school children who were on an outdoor education trip. The field was strewn with dark curls of fleece: caught on the whin (or gorse) bushes, lying on the ground, wrapped around the fence wire. The temptation was irresistible. While the children climbed the hill, I gathered fleece. Soon I had amassed a sizeable pile of *henty leggits* as the Shetlanders call the bits of fleece left in a field. I was impatient to try spinning them and turned my attention to engineering a spindle; thus was born the "twiggy spindle."

Welsh Mountain sheep

TWIGGY SPINDLE

The twiggy spindle is a spindle made from five straight sticks. The first stick forms the shaft of the spindle and should be about 12 inches long; the other four sticks need to be roughly 4 inches long. These four sticks are tied in pairs, at right angles to one another at the bottom end of the spindle shaft. They form the whorl. I use a length of handspun to tie the sticks together. This short length of handspun is easily created using one of the shorter sticks and a length of teased-out fleece. I stand on one end of the "rope" of fleece and fold the other end over the middle of the stick, holding it in place with the finger and thumb of my left hand which pinches the wool just below the stick. With the index finger of my right hand I turn the stick clockwise like the rotor arm of a helicopter. At intervals I relax the left hand to allow the twist to pass through my fingers and down the length of fleece. When the fleece is fairly firm and twisty, I fold it in half to make a strong piece of yarn. So there I was, relaxing in the sunshine with my newly created spindle, twirling away happily until the children returned. Several years later, I have a collection of these twiggy spindles. I have made them from maize stalks and bamboo in Nepal, hazel from Wales, and willow from the banks of Scottish burns. I have come full circle—from a spindle and back again. I joke that I have "regressed to a spindle," but a spinning friend describes it as an evolution.

EVOLVING BACK TO SIMPLICITY

During the time my spinning has been evolving backward, my children have been growing up, and I have had the opportunity to travel more. I have always been a dog walker, and now I enjoy exploring and camping. Once I was tempted to buy a Louet Hatbox spinning wheel to take on my holidays, but I decided to pack my penknife instead because I like to walk, and I like to travel light. I always take my sock needles, but I rely on finding everything else I need from the countryside around me as I travel. And, yes, I am a convert to sock knitting, too. Socks are so portable and seem to be fitting projects for a spinner on the move. My socks tell the tales of my travels. They are spun from what I find en route.

Last year, I walked across Wales—the land of my birth. It is not far as the crow flies, but the terrain is surprisingly rugged and sparsely populated. It is thus ideal country for sheep, and there are sheep and *henty leggits* in abundance—Clun, Welsh Mules, Welsh Mountain, Welsh Hill Speckle Faced, Beulah Speckle Faced, Kerry Hills, and so on. I wanted to make a pair of socks from the journey by gathering, dyeing, and spinning the wool I found as I walked and camped my way from the eastern borderlands to the sea. I took a poncho, which doubled as a tarp, in place of a tent as a lighter option. I also left my camping stove behind and cooked my food and dyed my wool on a tiny campfire each evening. It was a very satisfying trip, and the stripy multicolored socks I created from the adventure are my enduring reminder of all those nights under the stars, miles of hilltop moorlands, and flocks of hardy and endearing sheep.

A STORY TOLD IN COLORS

Natural dyeing is almost a natural consequence of walking, spinning journeys. I gathered what I found along the way (bramble leaves, birch leaves, lichen, oak galls), added a few rusty nails or fence wire, and created half a dozen different colors with the aid of a pinch of alum and an old tin can of water heated over a campfire. I have always loved the idea that a story can be told in colors. The phrase "spinning a yarn" can mean two things—telling a story and creating a thread. If one creates a multicolored thread using different colors to represent different events in a story, then the two meanings become one. The thread is the story. My stripy socks were similarly the story of my walk.

By a stroke of serendipity, the kind of serendipity that often accompanies my life, I found a lost, abandoned pair of child's socks on my way. I used these as the basis for the design of my own socks—my vagrant socks. In truth, for a short while, I felt as though I had become part of an ancient tradition of travelers, migrating across the land, gathering my needs

from the wild. I confess to being very fortunate with the weather, else it might not have been so much fun!

GATHERING *HENTY LEGGITS*

It is worth noting here that whilst there may be plenty of fleece lying around the countryside, not all of it will be suitable for spinning. Some fleece may look greeny-gray and if tugged sharply, the fibers will break. This has been out in the elements too long. Freshly shed fleece is the best, and this is distinguishable by its greasiness. Fresh fleece still contains plenty of lanolin and often has a slight sheen. A century ago, wool was a precious commodity and farm laborers' wives had to ask permission of the landowner to gather fleece from the fields and fences. Nowadays, sadly, wool has little value to many of the farmers, and gathering the stray tufts of fleece is welcomed by the bird-watching fraternity. All too often, the moorland birds become entangled in strands of wool and die as a consequence, manacled by the felted fibers around their legs.

SPINNING STICK

Since my walk across Wales, I have discovered the spinning stick and have edged even closer to one of the most ancient methods of creating yarn.

The stick I use is an old pirn from a boat-style weaving shuttle. It has a slightly weighted head with a hole through the middle and a smooth handle about 8 inches long. Any straight stick of similar dimensions would work as well. Spinning on this tool is so simple one can do it on the move, not just in buses and trains, but while walking too. The teased fleece is held in the right hand, and an attenuated tuft of fleece is wrapped clockwise around the stick a couple of times so that it will grip the stick. Now the stick is allowed to rotate freely in the left hand as the right hand performs the motion of winding on. Nothing is actually being wound on as the stick is also rotating. What is happening is that twist is building up between the stick and the fleece in one's right hand. After this section of wool has become quite twisty, a little more fleece is teased from the fiber in the right hand and the twist allowed to travel along this fiber forming a length of yarn. This yarn is now wound onto the stick, then the whole process is repeated. This is a slow way to make yarn, but because it is so eminently portable, it is amazing how much can be spun in odd moments. The discovery of the spinning stick has transformed the way I spin. Now I can spin as I walk: wonderful. When my spinning stick becomes too full and heavy, I wind the yarn off onto a nøstepinne (another modest stick) and form a center-pull ball from which I ply my yarn—turning the pirn in the opposite direction.

Last summer, I traveled all over Scotland in search of the native sheep breeds. I wanted to spin them all in the places from which they originated and knit myself a pair of socks. This time, I packed my tent, two sticks, and my sock needles. It was an amazing journey. Many of the native Scottish sheep are primitive sheep that have taken refuge and evolved their unique characteristics on stunningly beautiful far-flung islands. My quest took me from Shetland to the Borders, the wild west coast to the St Kilda Isles, and Cape Wrath to North Ronaldsay in the Orkneys. I was delighted with my socks, all spun on my pirn from natural-colored, gathered wool.

There are primitive sheep in Iceland and throughout Scandinavia; there are many breeds of sheep in that land of sheep—Wales. There are sheep all over the globe. I am not sure where I shall explore with my few sticks and twigs next year, but I'll be heading off somewhere. My spinning is as easy to pack as a toothbrush.

Debbie Zawinski has been a keen knitter and generally woolly-headed all her life. She learned to spin over a quarter-century ago and now runs Haddington Spinners and Weavers, an eclectic and enthusiastic group in East Lothian, Scotland. When she is not wandering in search of sheep and socks, she lives with her husband, dog, and various grown-up children in an old farmhouse near the sea which is in a state of everlasting renovation. The stories of her travels are growing into a book—*In the Footsteps of Sheep*.

Using a pirn as a spinning tool

Twiggy spindle

Debbie's vagrant socks

Baa, Baa, Black Sheep

Zwartbles fleece

BY MARILYN WRIGHT

A few years ago at a meeting of my spinning group, a member brought in a bundle of fleece tied up in sacking and placed it on the floor in the middle of the group. She untied it, and there was the most beautiful black fleece that I had ever seen. I love black wool and wear black clothing most of the time. We were invited to help ourselves as she preferred to spin her old favorite, Jacob. A few other members of the group approached it tentatively and took small handfuls of the fleece, while I plunged my hands into the lustrous mass and examined the defined, soft, well-crimped locks. I was in love, and my first Zwartbles fleece came home with me, to be followed by several more when next shearing time came round. I am lucky enough to know the farmer who shears the local flocks and asked him to look for some fleeces for me, and I had a surprisingly large selection to choose from.

HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

Zwartbles are attractive black/brown sheep with white faces, a pink or black nose, some white socks, and white tail tips. In the summer, they have a ginger appearance as the sun bleaches the tips of the fleece. They have no horns, and their tails are left undocked. They are large sheep with ewes averaging 190 pounds and rams, 220 pounds. Their fleece is dense and classed as medium to fine with excellent crimp and fiber length. The average micron count is 27 (Bradford count 54s–56s).

MARILYN WRIGHT

Zwartbles are attractive black/brown sheep who originated in the Friesland region of the Netherlands. They have white faces, a pink or black nose, some white socks, and white tail tips.

These sheep are striking in appearance and are popular with commercial farmers and smallholders, and as hobby sheep. They are docile and easily handled. They are prolific, lamb easily, and are excellent mothers.

The breed originated in the Friesland region of the Netherlands. They were traditionally used for meat and milk, but their use declined significantly until they were listed as critically rare by the Dutch Rare Breed Survival Trust in the mid-1970s. Being from a wet, windy area, they have adapted well to the climate in the United Kingdom. They cope well with a variety of altitudes. In June 2011, there were over 750 flocks registered in the United Kingdom.

SELECTING A FLEECE

When shearing was completed, I went to the farm. All the wool was in a stone barn, in large open sacks, and we spinners were allowed to browse as much as we liked. The only separation of fleece type was that some sacks were from down sheep and some were longwool. We took out fleeces one by one and put them to one side, ready to have staples pulled out for closer examination, or we delved into the bottoms of sacks—it was a bit like children let loose in a candy factory. We didn't know what we might find. I had eight Zwartbles fleeces to choose from. Some had a very tight crimp and others were very open. The fleece came from animals bred for meat, not wool, and so the fleece was not well cared for, but some were fairly clean and free of vegetable matter. They did need a rigorous tagging and skirting, but I selected two that were dense with a nice crimp, lustrous, long staples, and bleached tips that were not tender. I paid £3 for each fleece (about $4.86 each). Back at home, I laid them out in the garden and removed the soiled areas and the very coarse areas, and then I packed them tightly into plastic bins and stored them in my loft until I was ready to work with them.

Marilyn Wright loves the color black—she recently fell in love with the deep black fleece of the Zwartbles sheep.

Marilyn combed and spun 12 ounces of Zwartbles fleece with the weathered tips cut off using a short backward draw. She plied the yarn at 24 wraps per inch and made a total of 1,735 yards to knit her shawl.

WASHING

My preferred fleece preparation is handcombed top, so when I wash my fleece, I select an area with well-defined locks and carefully separate out portions about the size of the plastic bin that I use for washing. I then wrap each of these portions into a parcel with netting (old curtains) to preserve the lock formation. I wash the parcels in very hot water and enough dishwashing liquid to make the water slippery. I drop the parcels in two or three deep and leave them submerged until the water has cooled enough that I can put my hand in but is still very warm. The parcels are then lifted out and squeezed, the dirty water emptied away, and the bin refilled with very warm water for rinsing. After one or two rinses, I put the parcels into the spin dryer on the fastest spin cycle. Then I put the parcels in the sun or on a rack above my AGA (range) cooker to dry. When I unwrap them, the locks are still all nicely defined and ready for the next step.

COMBING

I sit, often with the television on, and separate out locks of fleece, laying them out on a cloth with the tips all facing in the same direction until I have a pile and all the defined locks are taken out of the fleece. I select all of the longest locks for combing; the rest is put aside for drumcarding. I comb the locks with my double-row Viking combs. This keeps all of the fiber aligned and facing in the same direction. Before I comb the fleece, I need to decide what I am going to use the yarn for. If it is for everyday socks or something plain, then I just go ahead and comb the wool. If it is for something special or it is important to me that it is as black as possible, I will sit and snip off the weathered tip of each lock. (If I do not remove the bleached tips, the garment may develop a slight ginger halo with wear.) I load the comb with the butt ends lashed in the tines and the tips facing outward. Two passes are usually all I need to get a lovely top ready to spin. To control any static, I spritz the wool with water mixed with one or two drops of lavender oil. This is a mild fragrance oil that is very kind to skin and wool. While the amount of lavender oil isn't significant enough to affect the static, it smells lovely and is calming.

Occasionally, there will be a white strand of fiber in the top. If it is for a special project, as I am drawing the top off the comb, I will take these out, one at a time, with a pair of pointed tweezers. If I am combing more than half an ounce or so, I clamp the stationary comb to my kitchen counter with an inexpensive hobby vice available from a tool company. It makes the work go much faster. I heat the movable comb on the kitchen stove. The AGA stove has two hot plates with lid covers, so I tuck the tines of the comb under the lid of the simmering plate while I load the other comb. The comb gets about as hot as a cool iron. The heated tines warm the lanolin in the wool and make a smooth top that is a joy to spin. The waste from the combing may get used to make felted mats to put hot pots on in the kitchen or sometimes just to clean the ashes from the hearth in front of the woodstove.

Marilyn sampled some of the Zwartbles fleece for drumcarding. She has been experimenting with adding in Firestar—a shiny nylon fiber that adds sparkle and strength to the yarn—in the Heather colorway. From the drumcarded batts, she spun a soft 2-ply yarn using a long-draw technique.

CARDING

Some of the fleece was selected for drumcarding, which I do on a Louet Junior. This year I have been experimenting with adding in Firestar—a shiny nylon fiber that adds sparkle and strength to the yarn. After two passes of the teased fleece, I add varying amounts of Firestar in the colorway Heather and blend these with another two passes through the carder. Heather produces a very nice sparkly mix that remindes me of fireworks in the winter sky. When I am playing like this I am not exact, so I don't know how much I added. It was just "some." The resulting two-ply yarn was spun long draw on my wheel and was a lovely, soft, lofty yarn that I used to knit fingerless mitts for Christmas presents. For the lace shawl, I selected the softest fleece staples, combed them, and then spun a fine, two-ply worsted yarn. For socks and a tunic-style sweater, I also used the combed top, two-ply for the sweater and three-ply for the socks.

ZWARTBLES SHAWL

Taking a lace knitting class with Nancy Bush opened up an unexpected new world to me. I learned to read charts and to understand the magic of knitting holes on purpose. I became a voracious reader of all the lace knitting books I could find. That's how I discovered Shetland lace knitting. It appealed to me for several reasons. It was all done in garter stitch so there was no right or wrong side and no purling, and there were very few stitches used to make the pattern, mostly knit two together and yarnovers. A shawl could be knitted in stages so it wouldn't get tiresome doing the same thing over and over again too many times. The size of the shawl could be altered at several stages in the knitting process, and there would be no sewing or assembling at the end of the knitting. There is almost no casting on or binding off. I love all of these things, so I decided I must have a go at a Shetland shawl, in black, of course.

SPINNING

I combed and spun 12 ounces (335 grams) of Zwartbles fleece with the weathered tips cut off. I spun combed top with a short backward draw, smoothing the singles as I spun on my Saxony-style wheel. I plied it, getting 24 wraps per inch and a total of 1,735 yards.

KNITTING

Shetland shawls are always made of a center, a border, and an edging. Traditionally, they were knitted from the edging inward, but most are now knitted from the center outward.

I scoured all of my books and decided that the center would be a daisy pattern from *Knits from the North Sea* by Carol Rasmussen Noble and Margaret Leask Peterson (Martingale & Co., 2009). The daisy lace in their book was knitted as a square, and I wanted to work the shawl from corner to corner, not bottom edge to top edge. I also like the ease of picking up the yarnover loops at the beginning of every row when

picking up the stitches for the border. I sat and worked out how to work the daisy pattern from corner to corner so that it would show the right way up when the shawl was worn. I charted and knitted several samples before I was satisfied with the placing of the daisies and had figured out how to work the decreases in the second half of the diamond. Next I decided that the border would be the Rose Lace pattern from *Heirloom Knitting* by Sharon Miller (Shetland Times, 2002), but I adapted it slightly as I was only doing one repeat of the pattern. Finally, the edging was to be the Rippled Diamond edging, also from *Heirloom Knitting* and slightly altered.

FIBER 12 oz of Zwartbles fiber.
YARN 2-ply; 1,735 yd; 2,300 ypp; 24 wpi.
NEEDLES U.S. size 4 (3.5 mm): 36" circular (cir) and 1 straight for edging. Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.
GAUGE 21 sts and 42 rows = 4" in Center chart patt.
NOTIONS Markers (m); stitch holders; waste yarn for provisional CO; tapestry needle.
FINISHED SIZE 46" × 46".

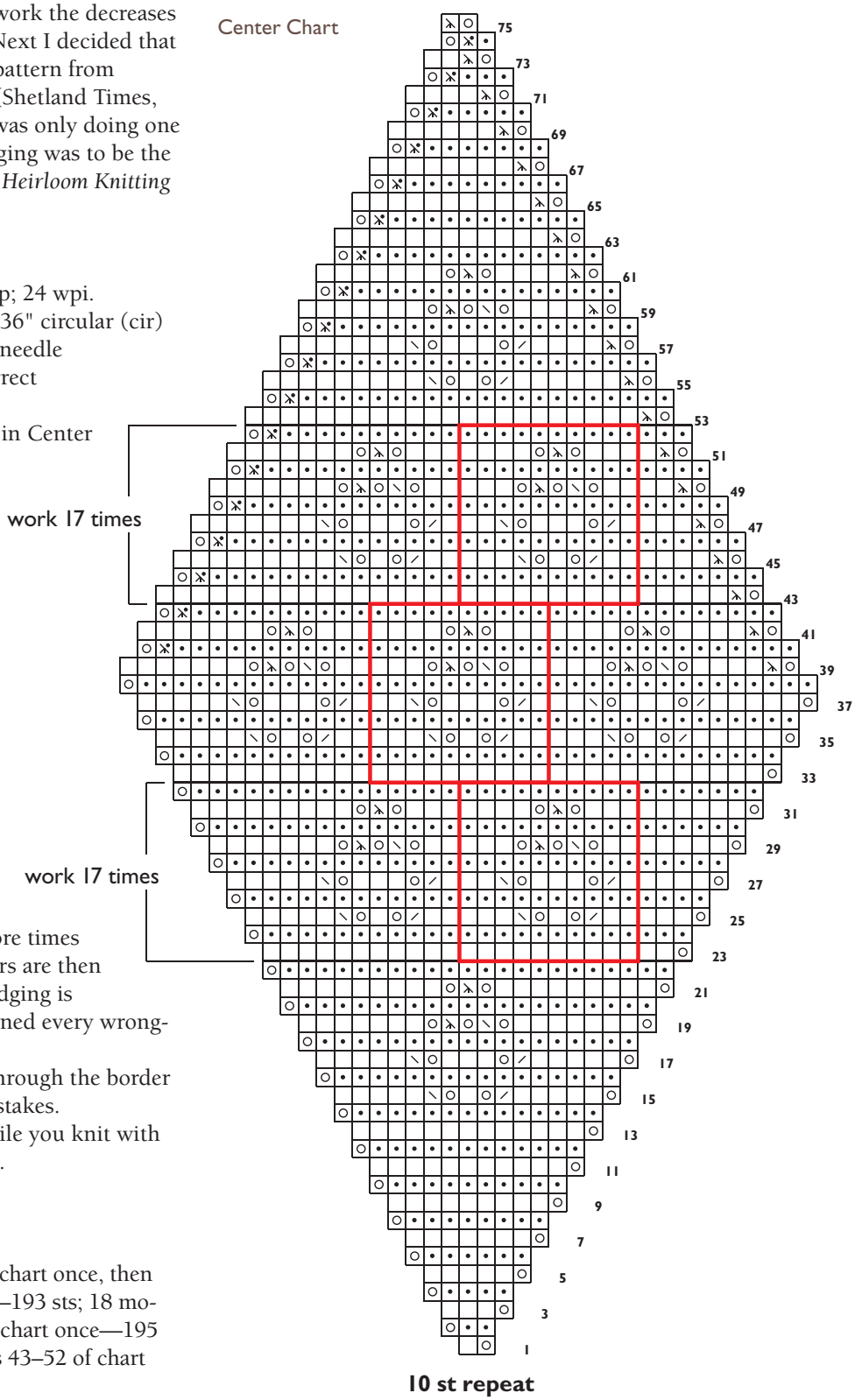
See knittingdaily.com/glossary for terms you don't know.

NOTES

- This shawl begins with a center square which is worked on the diagonal. Stitches are picked up along one edge of the square and a border is worked; this is repeated three more times to create four borders. The borders are then sewn together. A sideways-knit edging is worked around the perimeter, joined every wrong-side row to a border stitch.
- Use a fine fishing line threaded through the border stitches as a lifeline in case of mistakes.
- Lay a white cloth on your lap while you knit with dark yarn to make it easier to see.

SHAWL

Center square:
CO 1 st. Work Rows 1–22 of Center chart once, then work Rows 23–32 of chart 17 times—193 sts; 18 motifs across row. Work Rows 33–42 of chart once—195 sts; 19 motifs across row. Work Rows 43–52 of chart



17 times—25 sts rem; 2 motifs across row. Work Rows 53–75 of chart once—2 sts rem. Do not BO.

First border:

With RS facing, pick up and knit 1 st in each of next 5 yo, (k1, p1) in next yo, pick up and knit 1 st in each of next 2 yo, *pick up and knit 1 st in each of next 3 yo, (k1, p1) in next yo, pick up and knit 1 st in each of next 4 yo, (k1, p1) in next yo; rep from * 9 more times—121 sts. *Next row:* (WS) Yo, knit to end—122 sts. Work Rows 1–36 of Border chart once—160 sts. Cut yarn, leaving a 24" tail. Place sts on holder.

Second, third, and fourth borders:

With RS facing and beg at a corner of center square, *pick up and knit 1 st in each of next 3 yo, (k1, p1) in next yo, pick up and knit 1 st in each of next 4 yo, (k1, p1) in next yo; rep from * 10 more times—121 sts. Work as for first border. With tail threaded on a tapestry needle, sew selvedge edges of adjacent borders tog, sewing through yo.

Edging:

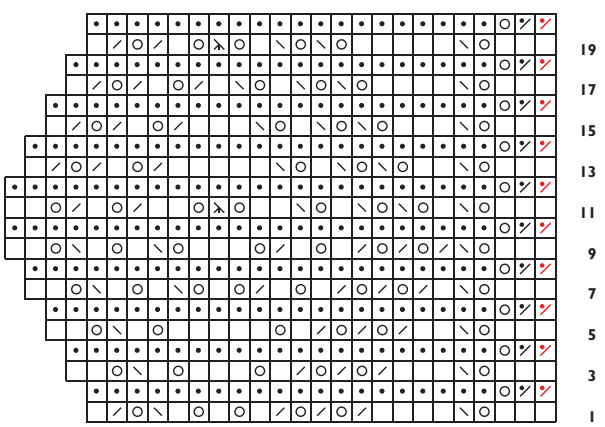
Using a provisional method, CO 23 sts. Rep Rows 1–20 of Edging chart 64 times, joining to 1 held border st at end of every WS row as shown on chart. Remove provisional CO and place 23 sts onto needle. Graft ends of edging tog.

FINISHING

Weave in loose ends. Block to about 52" × 52"; piece will relax to finished measurements after being unpinned.

Marilyn Wright lives in an English village where she spins, knits, and quilts. She loves to teach and share everything spinning.

Edging Chart

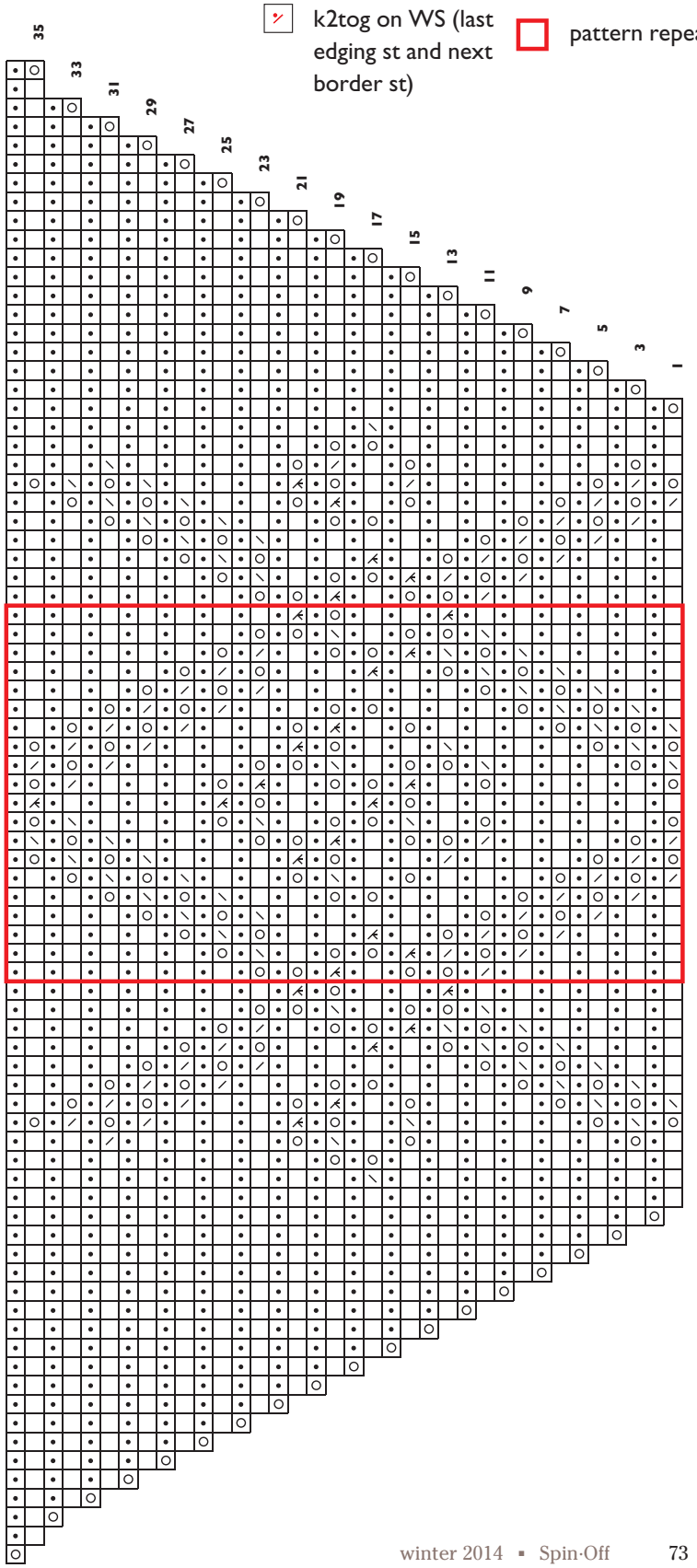


23 sts to 27 sts to 23 sts

Key

- k on RS; p on WS
- p on RS; k on WS
- yo
- k2tog on RS
- ssk
- k2tog on WS
- k2tog on WS (last edging st and next border st)
- sl 1, k2tog, psso on RS
- sl 1, k2tog, psso on WS
- pattern repeat

Border Chart



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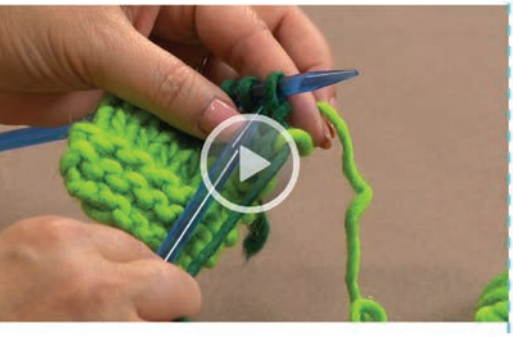

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Ella Baker

Think Cotton

BY JUDITH TOWERS

Ten of us moved closer so as not to miss one word that Ella Baker spoke. In 1994, Priscilla Blosser-Rainey hosted a spinning workshop at her home, River Farm, in Timberville, Virginia. We were there to learn all we could about cotton. Ella Baker's quiet voice drew us in as she began. "Workshops have changed so much over the years. There used to be so few resources . . . There are many different ways to spin . . . There is no right and wrong . . . *I know you'll find your way.*"

"Tackling the takli," Ella explained, "is an exercise in using undeveloped muscles. As the takli twirls cradled in your hand, supported in a bowl or resting on your knee, this small spindle can spin the finest thread faster than any spinning wheel." The book charkha, an ingenious Indian spinning wheel in a box, became our next challenge. Several were available to us for practice, either standing with the charkha secured to a table surface or in the traditional manner while sitting on the floor.

Later in the two-day workshop, we graduated to the great wheel. Priscilla provided several for us to use. The high drive ratio—large wheel, smallest pulley—allows for lots of twist, perfect for spinning short, fine cotton fibers. For storing our yarn, we used corn husks, which allow the cop to be easily slipped from the spindle when the spinning is done. The husks need not be dry—simply spiral wrap the husk around the spindle in the same direction that twist is going to go, and secure it with sewing thread before you start to spin.

SCOURING COTTON YARN

As we gathered around a large table spread with Ella's handspun cotton treasures, we took notes on Ella's technique for scouring her cotton yarn. Using a method similar to the one described by Olive and Harry Linder in their book, *Hand Spinning Cotton*, she advised us to "wind the yarn from the spindle to a

Ella's notebook.

Judith's hand-dyed cotton spun from the seed.

Judith's green cotton skein spun from Ella's green cotton.

section of PVC pipe. Weigh the fiber, subtracting the weight of the core. Use 1 tablespoon of washing soda per ounce of fiber. Fill the pot; add washing soda dissolved in hot water and enough liquid soap to make it feel slippery. Simmer 45 minutes. Rinse, squeeze in a towel, skein for drying."

When the workshop was over, we decided that words like patience, persistence, practice, and meditation best described our encounter with cotton. Many an evening afterwards, my takli kept me company. Practice became pleasure as the cone of thread as well as my cotton-spinning confidence grew.

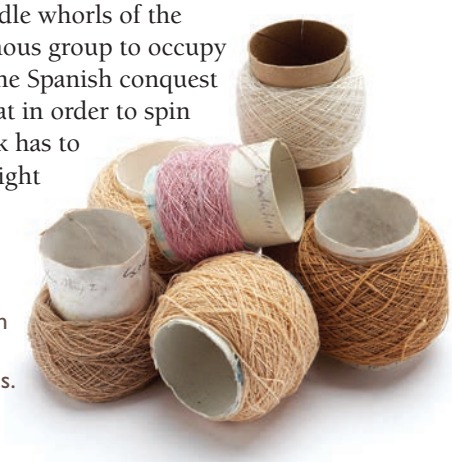
ESTATE SALE

Following Ella Baker's death at age 94 in 2009, her daughter notified a number of fiber guilds of an estate sale to be held in Ella's home in Lexington, Virginia. As generous as her mother, Sally Hughes encouraged us to "come and gaze at, exclaim and puzzle over, and take, take, take what you will. Pay what you feel it is worth or what you can afford." Several of my spinning friends and I decided to go. As we stood in Ella's studio, it felt as if she were there still teaching us to "find our way" with cotton.

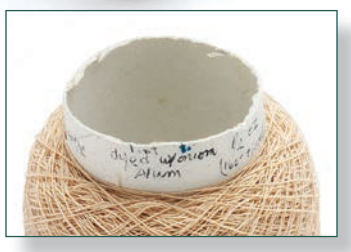
A treasure chest has come to my home for safekeeping. Beside Ella's sample notebook is *Georgian College Spinning and Dyeing, Level 1, Vol. 2*, a very large notebook filled with photographs, magazine articles, pressed plants, a woven sampler that Ella named *In 47 Dyepots*, followed by pages of dye recipes, braiding samples, a booklist from Ontario Spinning Seminar, and a glossary. Next there is a thick file folder stuffed with articles all about cotton, pamphlets, class notes, booklets, and even a newsletter article that Ella wrote called "Growing Cotton in Michigan," which she did successfully. There were several copies of the *Textile Artists' Newsletter* including Vol. III, No. 2 which includes "Cotton—Thread of History" by Bette Hochberg. A nondescript box holds a complete xeroxed copy of Frederick Wilkinson's *The Story of the Cotton Plant*. There I found a lively discussion about *The Vegetable Lamb of Tartary* as well as Joannes Zahn's drawing of the cotton plant as he imagined it. Wilkinson quotes author Henry Lee, "The stem or stalk on which the lamb was suspended above the ground, was sufficiently flexible to allow the animal to bend downward, and browse on the herbage within its reach."

ANCIENT WHORL

Ella had a special interest in ancient spinning methods. On a nearby table, one of my friends spied a small clay-bead whorl on a wooden shaft. I held it in my hand, and it came home with me. It wasn't until two years later that the first version of the video documentary, *The Ancient Cotton Fiber Art of Manabí Province, Coastal Ecuador*, was presented to our guild by cultural anthropologist Kathleen M. Klumpp. According to Klumpp, "Ella's bead whorl is identical in design and execution to those shown in Frederick W. Shaffer's book on *Indian Designs from Ancient Ecuador*. His entire book is based on the spindle whorls of the Manteño (the last indigenous group to occupy Manabí Province before the Spanish conquest in 1534) . . . We know that in order to spin fine thread, a spindle stick has to be proportional to the weight of the bead whorl—light and not too long so that



Ella's handspun cotton stored on paper tubes.



Written in Ella's tiny hand, all of this information is on the paper tube: CC Pima, handcarded, charkha + gwheel/castle, 20 grams (.70 oz), dyed in lint, bleached, onion/Alum, boiled after spinning, knots, complete draw—8 turns, 1,141, ½" = 2 treadles.

Ella Baker plying cotton at a workshop, 1994.

the bead whorl itself can serve as a counterbalance and provide a flywheel effect. If the stick is too long and heavy, the bead whorl cannot function effectively as a counterbalance and the stick bounces about. . . . Ella probably fashioned the stick, and if so, she did a good job as evidenced by her being able to produce a fine spinning thread using it," says Klumpp.

SEEDS

Next I turned to the shelves lining Ella's studio to see bags of homegrown green cotton as well as white and brown on the seed and old film canisters labeled and filled with cotton seeds. My eyes wandered to the array of Ella's handspun cotton threads, carefully wrapped on toilet paper cores that reminded me of Ella's resourceful ways of measuring, controlling twist, and labeling her spun cotton. Using a charkha, she calculated yardage per puni by counting how many yard-long draws were completed per puni. If you know how many punis equal one ounce, then you can figure how many yards per ounce and can estimate yards per pound.

Counting makes for consistency also. Count rotations of the wheel per draw for uniform twist, and with practice, a rhythm will develop, she explained in her *Spin·Off* article "Why Spin Cotton?" Ella quotes mentor Ted Carson, "To spin cotton, we need to think cotton." I must admit that I "think cotton" a lot. I prefer the short draw. Most often, I use lightweight suspended spindles, 0.75 ounce or less, or my Canadian production wheel. Although I love my takli, I find that with a suspended spindle, I can make very fine but stronger, more consistent thread.

I love spinning directly from the seed. Simply fluff out the fibers around the seed. You'll find that they are arranged perfectly, and the little bit of tension created by drawing the fibers off the seed as you spin aligns the fibers and helps you select a steady amount for each short draw. You can dye cotton while it is still on the seed by sprinkling the fibers with different colors of liquid fiber-reactive dyes. After you rinse and dry the seeds, spin them by choosing seeds with related colors. Use a bobbin winder to fill weaving-shuttle bobbins to ply later on your wheel.

Whether spinning singles with a wheel or a suspended spindle, from sliver, puni, or seed, here's the one bit of magic that revolutionized cotton spinning for me: the tiny backward twist just before the draw. As you prepare to draft, roll your thumb against your first finger counterclockwise (left to right) just the tiniest amount. This will straighten the fibers enough to allow them to slide past each other. Soon you'll be thinking cotton, too. Ella Baker would be so pleased to see you're on your way.

Judith Towers is a retired art teacher who finds time for handspinning, weaving, knitting, and volunteering at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, Virginia, where she also studies botanical illustration. Judith reports that though it is not legal to grow cotton in Virginia without a permit, with the help of one of Clotho's Handspinners' members, she and several handspinners in the area have obtained a waiver through the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services allowing each of them to grow a few cotton plants for handspinning purposes.

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DVD

The Ancient Cotton Fiber Art of Manabí Province, Coastal Ecuador, version 1.0. A video documentary in DVD format presented by Kathleen M. Klumpp at Clotho's Handspinners guild meeting October 20, 2012, Richmond, Virginia.

Enduring Color

Sally Fox, natural-color cotton, and the politics of diversity

BY KATE LARSON

Sometimes a life's work can begin in an instant. For spinner, entomologist, and Peace Corps veteran Sally Fox, inspiration arrived in a bag of brown cotton, full of seeds, which would launch her on an amazing journey. While her science background allowed her to see the genetic possibilities of each seed, she had a spinner's joy at encountering a new fiber. Her efforts to create sustainable, modern, natural-color cotton since that time have revived a unique piece of textile heritage and have given it a new niche in our present day.

As those who create cloth by hand well know, there have been many casualties along the road to our modern industrial age. Technologies and adaptations that were used and perfected by humans for thousands of years were displaced sometimes in mere decades if they failed to keep pace with new innovations. Of course, such progress yields benefits as well as costs: today, the world produces some of the highest-quality fibers imaginable. From long, brilliantly white cotton fibers to creamy, soft Merino fleeces, scientists and farmers have successfully developed improved varieties and breeds that meet the needs of a modern global textile industry. However, as some desirable genetic attributes are brought forward in any type of breeding program, other attributes—both good and bad—are inevitably left behind. Recovering some of this lost genetic diversity—bridging the gap between what is brought forward and what is left behind—has become the project to which Sally Fox has devoted herself.

A BAG OF SEEDS

In the early 1980s, Sally was working with a cotton breeder in California trying to develop commercial varieties with better parasite resistance. Cotton breeders, in pursuing productivity first and foremost, have over time sacrificed some of the natural pest resistance that was present in older cotton varieties. Modern commercial varieties therefore rely heavily on pesticides. The USDA and other groups now warn of increasing pesticide resistance despite the reduction in pesticide use resulting from the introduction of genetically modified crops. But Sally's bag of brown cotton showed promise in addressing more than just pesticide use; she saw in the natural color the potential to eliminate some of the pollution caused by industrial processing and dyeing.

Holistic farming

A holistic approach to farming takes an impressive breadth of skills and knowledge to manage well. Sally uses Sonora wheat, which has a strong root system, to help build organic matter, increase water infiltration, and feed soil microbes. Sheep graze marginal areas and cropland, keeping invasive weeds in check while producing fine wool and valuable fertilizer. The diversity she has incorporated on her farm allows her to grow cotton and other farm products organically, sustainably, and responsibly.

Sally Fox had to relocate her cotton crops several times before she found a beautiful space for her farm in the Capay Valley, near Brooks, California.

This natural-color cotton was the first Sally had encountered. "[The seeds] were supposed to be pest resistant and were from the Cajun people in Louisiana, who had gotten them from former slaves who had grown them in their gardens," Sally recalls. "The lint was short and coarse, and a luscious color of brown." Commercial cotton at that point implied white cotton, but cotton has been grown in a range of natural colors in the Americas and elsewhere in the world since antiquity. These beautiful fibers occur in a spectrum of brown, tan, and green, and tend to be weaker and shorter, making them difficult to process by machine. Sally set out to develop cotton varieties that could not only produce strong, natural-color lint, but a cotton plant that could be grown organically.

Sally began handspinning her bag of brown cotton. Bolls with longer and stronger lint were more easily spun, and from these she saved the seeds. These seeds were then grown in pots and cross-pollinated with longer-staple white cotton by hand. She continued growing and spinning her cotton, saving seeds and planting anew, working ever closer to her goal until she had enough seed to sow a field. In 1989, Sally sold her first crop of California-grown, natural-color, organic cotton to a mill in Japan. Suddenly, Sally was getting orders for her cotton from all over the world, and she began working with designers in the United States and abroad to create textiles for the fashion industry. "The market grew too quickly and within five years, it peaked and then painfully collapsed," Sally remembers. "This coincided with the decline of the United States textile industry. The textile industries in the countries that had environmental regulations were decimated by products that came from countries where regulations on textile waste were either nonexistent or not enforced."

"Knowing that you are all there with me in getting this very special cotton growing again has given me the encouragement that I did not even know I needed."

—Sally Fox on her very successful crowd-funding campaign.

CONTROVERSIAL COLORED COTTON

In addition to economic pressures, growing a crop of natural-color cotton is also controversial. Sally's cotton must be grown, processed, and stored well away from white cotton crops. Pressures from other cotton growers forced Sally to relocate several times. Throughout the rise and fall of commercial-scale, natural-color cotton, Sally continued to be acknowledged for having made great strides in genetic diversity and sustainability issues, even being included in the Smithsonian Institution's inventor series and receiving a United Nations Environment Programme Award.

Sally's flock of Merino sheep in the bucolic setting of the Capay Valley in California.

Since that time, Sally has been building and caring for her farm in the Capay Valley, near Brooks, California, surrounded by breathtaking beauty. She farms organically and biodynamically, relying on crop rotations and genetic diversity to produce a small amount of her own cotton varieties, Merino sheep (colored, of course), and Sonora wheat. Sally continues to market her wool and Foxfibre Colorganic cotton fibers, yarns, and fabrics through her company, Vreseis Ltd.

THE NEXT CHAPTER

In some ways, social perceptions about textiles and the role they play in our lives are finally catching up to Sally's vision. Most of us are now familiar with terms like sustainable fashion and slow cloth, and others are developing their own understanding of what environmental sustainability offers our future. A nonprofit organization called Fibershed was established in the California Bay Area in 2011. This energized group of artisans and sustainable-lifestyle supporters encouraged Sally to get her cotton breeding program up and going again. She was reluctant but decided that if she wanted to move forward and impart the important vision of her life's work in agriculture, she needed to, as she put it, ". . . get a crop in the ground and be actually doing it again, rather than just talking about it."

Unfortunately, as sometimes happens in agriculture, the 2013 crop of Foxfibre Colorganic cotton has been challenging from the start. Sally had expensive tractor repairs on top of planter issues, which then led to a weedy crop. "And then there I was, totally overwhelmed by the weeds with only very expensive equipment needing repair and professional farmworkers on the organic farms around me requiring overtime pay to help. I was in a panic," Sally said. The turning point was when Sally received a check from a Fibershed designer to help cover the costs of expensive hand-weeding. Other people in the community were also offering to help weed and to provide financial support.

She then turned to Indiegogo, a crowd-funding site that allows people like Sally, who have projects that need a boost, to connect with those who want to lend a hand, sharing the economic burden as a community. The $20,000 goal would help Sally deal with the weeds and start funding a new cotton gin she still needs this year. When the spinning community got word that Sally needed help, social media, Ravelry, and guild newsletters were buzzing with the news. During the thirty-day campaign, over $24,000 was raised by nearly four hundred donors. Sally was amazed. "I feel truly supported, something I have not felt in a really long time. And I feel that people really do want me to continue this work."

The politics of cotton, coupled with the pressures of a vast global textile industry, have frustrated Sally Fox's dreams for sustainable cotton production for more than twenty years. But with new energy, she is looking to the future: "My goal is that by next year, the cotton breeding program will be funded—not just by me selling socks and yarn, but by foundations. I will

Stay in touch

To keep up with developments in Sally's ongoing adventure in cotton, follow her on Facebook as Foxfibre Colorganic or visit her website at **www.vreseis.com** and her retail site at **www.foxfibre.com**. To see what California designers are creating with Foxfibre, visit **www.fibershed.com**.

have help and be able to teach what I know, passing on the knowledge and the seeds to the next generation. Five to ten years from now, I hope to have trained great people who have gone on to breeding naturally colored organic cottons in their own climates and countries. I want my farm to be this place of beauty and ecological balance. . . ."

Kate Larson loves using fiber arts as a bridge between her passions for art and agriculture. When she isn't teaching spinning and knitting, she can be found in the barn with her ever-growing flock of Border Leicester sheep. She keeps a blog at http://katelarsontextiles.com.

Deborah Behm of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada: Handspun, handknitted sweater in 2-ply, 3-ply, and 4-ply yarns in a variety of Foxfibre colors, with a little silk in the bottom edge. "My initial experience with Sally's fibers came through *Spin·Off*. I was intrigued with the colors available in Sally's cotton, as well as her goals, so I sent her an order via snail mail, ordered a takli, and patiently waited the arrival of my treasures. No one I knew spun cotton; we live in a wool climate here, so I ordered what I believed to be a sufficient quantity to spin a cotton sweater—several pounds' worth. Once the cotton arrived, I figured out rather quickly that several pounds of cotton goes further than several pounds of wool, especially if one intends to use a takli! That plan shifted quickly, and I sorted out cotton spinning on a castle wheel. Decades later, I still have a bit of that original order in my stash, and I still enjoy spinning it. Sally's cotton marked the beginning of my love of cotton spinning."

Stephenie Gaustad of Jackson, California: Handspun, handknitted scarf from Foxfibre brown cotton. "This scarf was knitted from some of the first brown cotton sliver that I got from Sally. When I first saw her sliver at a conference, I was speechless. Sally actually had pounds and pounds of colored cotton in an easy-to-spin form. No longer did I have to card and make punis—thank you, Sally!"

Susan Sullivan Maynard of Brisbane, California: Towels with green and white warp from commercially spun Foxfibre cotton, with handspun green Foxfibre cotton weft. "A group of us cotton spinners from the San Francisco area teamed up for the Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture (CUESA) Harvest Festival to weave dish towels on-site using mostly charkha-spun organic green cotton fiber grown by Sally Fox. Expert weaver Nancy Alegria set up her loom and wove the towels. She wanted to experiment with waffle weave so there were two treadlings: a smooth towel at my request and waffle weave for her to try. Nancy can weave about an inch a minute, so many spinners had to work hard to keep up with her. Even the bobbin-winding person found it hard to keep up—we attracted quite a crowd."

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COTTON ILLUSTRATION ©VECTORSTOCK.COM/MORPHART

Cotton Boll and Flax Flower Reticules

BY STEPHENIE GAUSTAD

The Regency era brought dramatic change to women's fashion and dress. Ladies who had once worn voluminous skirts instead dressed in slim high-waisted gowns made from diaphanous materials. Gone were sumptuous velvets, stiff silks, cinched waists, and "panniers" or basketlike under slips that held skirts far away from the body. Because these new slender, soft gowns offered no place to hide a pocket or keep small necessities, women of the era began to carry reticules. These small bags were often tiny gems of the needlewoman's art.

Spinning the yarn for these two reticules was fairly straightforward. The cotton was spun from a Sally Fox colored sliver on a treadled wheel, at a grist of about 2,500 yards per pound. Two singles were then plied to achieve a 2-ply yarn that measured 1,250 yards per

pound. The plied yarn was wound into a skein and boiled in a solution of 1 tablespoon washing soda and 2 tablespoons of household laundry detergent in a large soup pot full of water for 30 to 40 minutes. The yarn was rinsed, dried, and ready to knit.

A handspun version of the commercial bamboo yarn could be spun from any bast fiber (hemp, ramie or flax) to a grist of 5,175 yards per pound and then three of these yarns plied together. The resulting yarn at 1,725 yards per pound should be boiled in the mild soap and washing soda solution as above, rinsed, and dried. If the yarn remains stiff and not comfortable to knit then wet the yarn and put it in the freezer until frozen stiff. Defrost the yarn, boil it again in another soap/washing soda solution, and refreeze it. It should now be considerably softer and nicer to knit.

The Cotton Boll and Flax Flower Reticules are knitted in garter eyelet, an homage to knit patterns of the era. Each reticule is worked flat as a series of panels. The reticule is worked sideways with the garter rows running up and down in the finished piece. Shaping at the bottom is accomplished with short-rows. The ties are threaded through eyelets at the fold line, and eyelets along the top edges suggest leaf and flower petals.

The patterns here are for panels composed of a garter-stitch "lobe" and a reverse-stockinette "welt." Three rows of reverse stockinette form the welt and give contrast and definition. The Cotton Boll Reticule has three panels, and the welt is in stockinette. The Flax Flower Reticule has five panels with the welt in reverse stockinette.

Cotton Boll Reticule

Fiber 1¼ oz natural brown cotton.
Yarn 2-ply; 90 yd; 1,250 ypp; 15 wpi.
Needles U.S. size 3 (3.25 mm). Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.
Gauge 24 sts and 50 rows = 4" in garter st.
Notions Tapestry needles (large and small); waste yarn for provisional CO (optional); spare needle in same size or smaller (optional); 2 round beads or shank buttons for reticule opening; at least 2 "somethings" for ends of drawstrings (sample shown has pewter jewelry cone end caps and beads).
Finished size 6¾" tall, 3½" wide.

Flax Flower Reticule

Yarn Aunt Lydia's bamboo crochet thread, size 10 (100% bamboo viscose; 300 yd): #810 still pool, 1 ball.
Needles U.S. size 1 (2.25 mm). Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.
Gauge 30 sts and 66 rows = 4" in garter st.
Notions Tapestry needles (large and small); waste yarn for provisional CO (optional); spare needle in same size or smaller (optional); 2 round beads or shank buttons for reticule opening; at least 2 "somethings" for ends of drawstrings (sample shown has sterling silver branches).
Finished size 6¼" tall, 4¼" wide.

See knittingdaily.com/glossary for terms you don't know.

Notes

- If your beads have small holes, you will need sewing thread and a fine quilting or beading needle to attach them to the drawstrings.
- If you want to use a different yarn and would like the reticule to be the same dimensions as the sample, substitute a yarn which is the same size or "grist." Different sized yarns may need to be knitted on other needles. Sample first to see if you like the results before committing your time.
- Instructions for the Cotton Boll Reticule are given first, with instructions for the Flax Flower Reticule in parentheses.

Reticule

Using the knitted method or a provisional method and leaving a 30" tail, CO 54 (64) sts.

Lobe:

Shape lobe using short-rows as foll:

Short-row 1 (RS) K1, yo, k14, yo, k2tog, knit to last st, turn—55 (65) sts.

Short-row 2 and all even-numbered short-rows (WS) Knit to end.

Short-row 3 K1, yo, k15, yo, k2tog, knit to last 2 sts, turn—56 (66) sts.

Short-row 5 K1, yo, k16, yo, k2tog, knit to last 3 sts, turn—57 (67) sts.

Short-row 7 K1, yo, k17, yo, k2tog, knit to last 4 sts, turn—58 (68) sts.

Short-row 9 K1, yo, k2tog, yo, k16, yo, k2tog, knit to last 5 sts, turn—59 (69) sts.

Short-row 11 K1, yo, k2tog, yo, k17, yo, k2tog, knit to last 6 sts, turn—60 (70) sts.

Cotton Boll Reticule only:

Short-row 13 K1, yo, k2tog, yo, k18, yo, k2tog, knit to last 7 sts, turn—61 sts.

Flax Flower Reticule only:

Short-row 13 K1, [yo, k2tog] 6 times, yo, k8, yo, k2tog, knit to last 7 sts, turn—71 sts.

Both reticules:

Short-row 15 [K2tog, yo] 2 times, k2tog, k16, yo, k2tog, knit to last 6 sts, turn—60 (70) sts rem.

Short-row 17 [K2tog, yo] 2 times, k2tog, k15, yo, k2tog, knit to last 5 sts, turn—59 (69) sts rem.

Short-row 19 K2tog, yo, k2tog, k16, yo, k2tog, knit to last 4 sts, turn—58 (68) sts rem.
Short-row 21 K2tog, yo, k2tog, k15, yo, k2tog, knit to last 3 sts, turn—57 (67) sts rem.
Short-row 23 K2tog, yo, k2tog, k14, yo, k2tog, knit to last 2 sts, turn—56 (66) sts rem.
Short-row 25 K2tog, yo, k2tog, k13, yo, k2tog, knit to last st, turn—55 (65) sts rem.

Welt:

Row 26 (WS) Knit.
Row 27 P2tog, p14, yo, p2tog, purl to end—54 (64) sts rem.
Row 28 Knit.

[Work lobe, then work welt] 1 (3) more times, then work lobe once more, then work Rows 26 and 27 of welt. Do not BO.

Finishing

If a provisional CO was used, remove CO and place sts on a spare needle. With CO tail threaded on a tapestry needle and St st side of welt facing, join live sts to CO sts using Kitchener st. Turn bag WS out (for Cotton Boll Reticule, welt is St st on RS; for Flax Flower Reticule, welt is rev St st on RS). Close hole at end of welt by running yarn through edge sts around hole and pulling to close hole. Rep for holes at end of rem welts. Weave in loose ends.

Overview of ties:

Two separate ties run through eyelet holes that encircle bag. Imagine the circle of eyelets is the face of a clock. One tie comes in at 9 o'clock, goes around to 12, 3, and 6, and exits at 9. The other tie comes in at 3 o'clock, goes around to 6, 9, and 12, and exits at 3. The ends of each tie are knotted tog. The ties make two loops for carrying the reticule.

Braid ties:

Cut 3 strands of yarn, each 5' long, and tie an overhand knot at one end. Braid strands, then tie an overhand knot at end. Tie an overhand knot at each side of center of braid and cut between knots to create 2 braids, each 20–24" long.

Insert ties:

Thread a large-eyed tapestry needle with one braid.

A Bouquet of Bast Fibers

There are a surprising number of plants, easily hundreds, which supply bast fibers. The thirty-nine fiber sources below were chosen because they supply material for cloth as well as for cordage. This list is intended to be an introduction, not to be encyclopedic. It includes those fibers found in commercial production as well as some which have been traditional sources for indigenous peoples. It is divided into two parts: fibers from plants with smaller stems and fibers from trees.

Fiber	Common Names	Scientific Name
Abroma	devil's cotton	*Abroma augusta*
Abutilon	Indian mallow, velvet leaf	*Abutilon theophrasti*
	hoary abutilon, pelotazo, ma'o	*Abutilon incanum*
Apocynum	Indian hemp, dog bane	*Apocynum cannabinum*
Asclepias	milkweed	*Asclepias syriaca*
Bauhinia	arree, Bun Raj, mountain ebony	*Bauhinia racemosa*
	Patwa	*Bauhinia vahlii*
Flax	linen	*Linum usitatissimum*
Grewia	Kaffir hemp, crossberry, four-corner	*Grewia occidentalis*
		Grewia optiva
Hemp	true hemp	*Cannabis sativa*
Hops		*Humulus lupulus*
Jute	Calcutta hemp, white jute	*Corchorus capsularis*
	tossa jute	*Corchorus olitorius*
Kenaf	Ambari hemp, brown hemp, gombo	*Hibiscus cannabinus*
	roselle hemp, red sorelle	*Hibiscus sabdariffa*
	majagua	*Hibiscus tiliaceus*
Kendir	dogs' bane	*Apocynum venetum*
Kudzu	ko, kudzu hemp	*Pueraria thunbergiana*
Marsdenia	Rajmahal hemp	*Marsdenia tenacissima*

FLAX ILLUSTRATION ©SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/MORPHART CREATION

With needle and beg at 9 o'clock, go over and under through eyelets around bag until you get back to beg eyelet. Come out same hole you first entered. Tie ends of braid tog. Thread large-eyed tapestry needle with 2nd braid. Beg at 3 o'clock, go over and under through eyelets around bag, foll same path as first braid (keep braids on same side of bag as you go through eyelets) until you get back to beg eyelet. Tie ends of braid tog.

Tie pulls:

Sew a round bead or shank button to each braid at its halfway point on inside of bag—this is the point where the other braid exits bag. To open bag, pull on these 2 beads or buttons. To close bag, pull on knotted ends of braid. Embellish knotted ends as desired.

A deep love for historic costuming is a steady undercurrent in **Stephenie Gaustad's** work. A longtime knitter, dyer, and spinner, Stephenie takes inspiration from paintings, literature, and old pattern books to weave together threads of history and snippets of story with dreams of the rustle of silk skirts. Her website is http://pweb.jps.net/~gaustad and her blog is http://gaustad.blogspot.com. She and her husband/partner, Alden Amos, live in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains.

Nettle	Swedish hemp, stinging nettle	*Urtica dioica*
	annual nettle, dwarf nettle	*Urtica uren*
	Roman nettle	*Urtica pilulifera*
Ramie	China grass	*Boehmeria nivea*
Rhea	karamushi, green ramie	*Boehmeria nevia var. tenacissima*
Sesbania	Colorado river hemp, coffee weed	*Sesbania herbacea*
Sida	acuta, wire weed	*Sida acuta*
	sand mallow	*Sidastrum micranthum*
Sterculia	Chitrang	*Sterculia wightii*
Sunn	Bengal hemp, Madras hemp, Indian hemp, San Pat, Conkanee	*Crotalaria juncea*
	Jubbulpore hemp	*Crotalaria tennifolia*
Urena	Caesar weed, cadilla	*Urena lobata*
Yercum	bowstring of India	*Calotropis gigantea*

Trees	*Common Names*	*Scientific Name*
Lace bark	guana	*Lagetta lintearia*
Mulberry	black mulberry	*Morus nigra*
Paper mulberry	tapa cloth, shifu	*Broussonetia papyrifera*
Securidaca	fibre tree, Rhodesian violet, violet tree	*Securidaca longipedunculata*
Tilia	lime tree, linden, basswood	*Tilia cordata, Tilia americana*
	British lime tree, little leaf linden	*Tilia europaea*

Resources

Hamilton, Roy W., B. Lynne Milgram, Sylvia Fraser-Lu, and Fowler Museum at UCLA. *Material Choices: Refashioning Bast and Leaf Fibers in Asia and the Pacific*. Los Angeles: Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2007.

Matthews, J. Merritt. *The Textile Fibres: Their Physical, Microscopical, and Chemical Properties*. New York: J. Wiley & Sons, 1916.

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Handspun Veronica Pullover

From *Blueprint Crochet Sweaters*

SPUN AND CROCHETED
BY ULLA SANDEL
DESIGNED BY
KRISTIN OMDAHL

FIBER 11.8 oz Frabjous Fibers Hand-dyed BFL-silk, 70% oatmeal Bluefaced Leicester, 30% tussah silk, #137 balsam.
YARN 2-ply (semiworsted); 793 yd; 1,072 ypp; 13 wpi.
HOOKS U.S. sizes E-4 for strips, G-6 for wedges, H-8 for waistband and edgings.

For easier handling, the roving was separated into 48-inch lengths and then each length divided into 12 to 14 narrow strips. The yarn was spun at an 11:1 ratio on a scotch-tension wheel, with a short backward draw from the end of a narrow strip of roving. Yarns were plied 11:1 on a double-drive wheel. The entire amount of yarn averaged the same 67 yards per ounce as for the millspun yarn, although the handspun was not absolutely even throughout. Individual skeins ranged from 60 to 73 yards per ounce.

	226 yd	3.4 oz	=	66.47 yd/oz
	208	3.5	=	59.4
	213	2.85	=	75
	146	2.05	=	71
TOTAL	793	11.8		67 yd/oz

Ulla Sandel of Bemidji, Minnesota, moved to the United States from Sweden many years ago when she was a young woman. She brought with her a love of textiles and spinning, and tends a huge vegetable garden complete with dye plants that reminds her of her *farmor's* (grandmother's) garden in the old country. She loves that her name means wool in Swedish.

Ulla Sandel spun 793 yards of a 2-ply semiworsted yarn from a Bluefaced Leicester/tussah silk hand-dyed braid of Frabjous Fibers in the Balsam colorway to crochet the Veronica Pullover designed by Kristin Omdahl and published in *Blueprint Crochet Sweaters* (Interweave, 2013) in size small.

Veronica Pullover

DESIGNED BY KRISTIN OMDAHL

The loveliest quality of crochet is that it can be worked in any direction without fuss. This dolman-sleeved pullover isn't built with classic-construction panels, but rather with wedges. The overall effect creates a stunning top that's as much fun to wear as it is to crochet.

YARN DK weight (#3 Light). Shown: Lion Brand Microspun (100% microfiber acrylic; 168 yd [154 m]/2.5 oz [71 g]): #910-147 Purple, 5 (5, 6, 7) skeins.
HOOK Size G/6 (4.0 mm) or hook needed to obtain gauge.
NOTIONS Tapestry needle for weaving in ends; spray bottle with water; straight pins for blocking.
GAUGE 5 SR by 14 rows = 4" × 4" (10 × 10 cm) in stitch pattern.
FINISHED SIZE Pullover fits 34 (38, 42, 46)" (86.5 [96.5, 106.5, 117] cm). Sized for small (medium, large, X-large). Fit is relaxed through the bust and fitted in the waist. Size shown is medium.
NOTES Pullover is worked in sections. Strips are crocheted first, then the lace wedges are crocheted directly onto a strip. The last row of each wedge joins a new strip to the wedge.

PATTERN

Strips

Make 9 (10, 11, 12).

Row 1 Ch 4 (counts as tr), 3 tr in 4th ch from hook, turn—4 tr.
Row 2 Sl st into sp bet 2nd and 3rd sts, ch 4 (counts as tr), 3 tr in same sp, turn.
Rows 3–32 Rep Row 2. At end of last row, sl st into sp bet 2nd and 3rd sts. Fasten off.

First Wedge

See Lace Wedge Diagram (page 95) for assistance.
Row 1 Working along the side edge of any strip, join with sl st to side of first tr on first row, ch 5, sc in same sp, *ch 5, skip next end of row, sc in next end of row. Rep from * 14 more times, ch 2, dc in last end of row (counts as ch-5 sp), turn—17 ch-5 sps.
Row 2 *Ch 5, sc in next ch-5 sp. Rep from * fifteen more times, turn—16 ch-5 sps.
Row 3 Ch 5, sc in same ch-5 sp, *ch 5, sc in next ch-5 sp. Rep from * to last ch-5 sp, ch 2, dc in last ch-5 sp, turn—16 ch-5 sps.
Row 4 *Ch 5, sc in next ch-5 sp. Rep from * to last ch-5 sp, turn—15 ch-5 sps.
Row 5 Ch 5, sc in same ch-5 sp *ch 5, sc in next ch-5 sp. Rep from * to last ch-5 sp. Ch 2, dc in last ch-5 sp, turn—15 ch-5 sps.
Rows 6–17 Rep Rows 4–5 six more times. At end of Row 17, you will have 9 ch-5 sps.
Row 18 Rep Row 4—8 ch-5 sps.
Row 19 Ch 5, sc in same ch-5 sp, *ch 5, sc in next ch-5 sp. Rep from * to last ch-5 sp. Working along diagonal, *ch 5, skip next end of row, sc in next end of row. Rep from * to last end of row, turn—18 ch-5 sps.

Joining row

***Note:** On this row, each ch-5 sp is replaced with a ch 2, sl st in adjacent strips every other end of row to join.*

Row 20 *Ch 2, sl st into end of first row of next strip, ch 2, sc in next ch-5 sp on prev row (Row 19). Rep from * to last ch-5 sp. Fasten off.

Next Wedge

***Note:** All following wedges will be worked onto the last strip joined to create a seamless fabric.*

Row 1 Working into free side end of rows of strip (currently joined to the prev wedge), join with sl st to the side of the first dc on first row, ch 5, sc in same sp, *ch 5, skip next end of row, sc in next end of row. Rep from * 14 more times, ch 2, dc in last end of row—17 ch-5 sps.

Rows 2–20 Rep Rows 2–20 of first wedge.

Rep directions for 9 (10, 11, 12) wedges total, joining last wedge to first strip.

FINISHING

Blocking

Pin body to schematic size and spray with water. Allow to dry.

Waistband

Row 1 Join yarn with sl st to center of any lower end of strip. Ch 50, hdc in 3rd ch from hook and each ch across—49 hdc, sl st in next ch-5 sp, turn.

Row 2 Hdc blp in each st across, turn—49 hdc.

Row 3 Ch 2 (counts as hdc), hdc blp in each st across, sl st in next ch-5 sp (or strip), turn.

**Rep Rows 2–3 until you have worked across the lower edge for 10 (13, 13, 16)" (25.5 [33, 33, 40.5] cm). End with a Row 3.

Side Seam Rows 1–9 (5, 13, 9) Ch 2, hdc blp in each st across, turn.

Joining Row 10 (6, 14, 10) Repeat Row 3. Skip next 17 (17, 20, 20)" (43 [43, 51, 51] cm) on edge, sl st in next ch-5 sp, turn.**

Rep from ** to ** once more.

Join last row to beg chain as follows to turn lower body into a tube: ch1, insert hook into back loop only of last row and into first of beg ch, yo, pull though all loops (double thickness slip stitch). *Insert hook into back loop only of next st and next beg ch, yo, pull through all loops. Rep from * across. Fasten off.

Sleeve Edging

Join with sl st to underarm, *ch 4, dc2tog in 4th ch from hook, sc in next ch-5 sp along sleeve edging. Rep from * around. Fasten off.

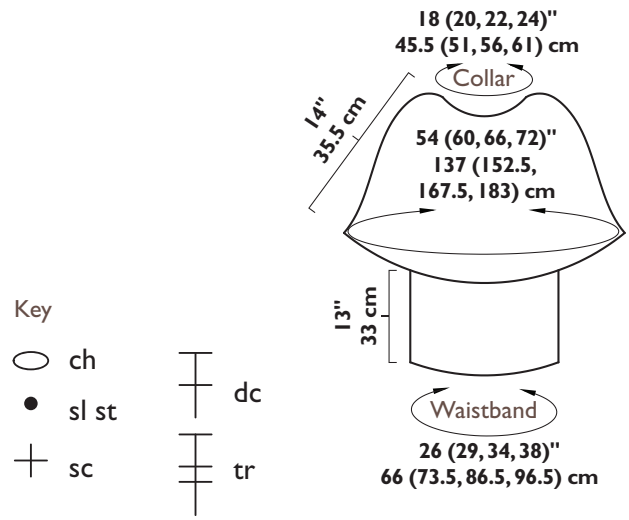
Rep for second sleeve.

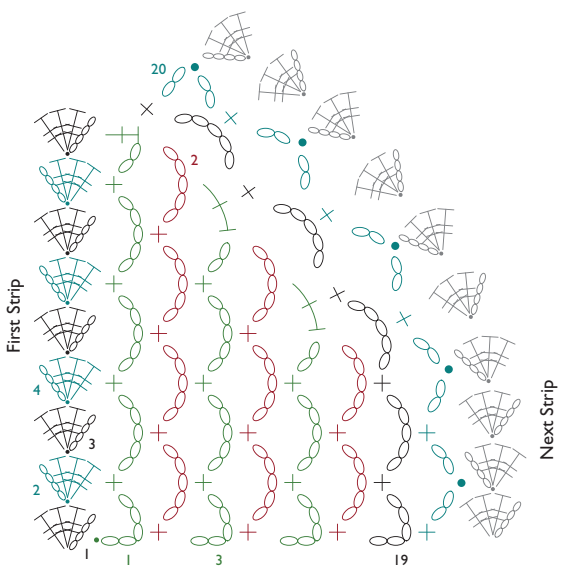
Neck Edging

Join with sl st to any ch-5 sp on neck. *Ch 4, dc2tog in 4th ch from hook, sc in next ch-5 sp of neck opening. Rep from * around. Sl st to first sc at beg of round. Fasten off.

Dazzling Dolmans

Classic dolman or "batwing" sleeves start at the waistline and taper to the cuff. The style was very popular in the 1990s. The trick to elevating dolman sleeves to the current fashion lies in the cape! Circular cape shapes with a cinching waist are extremely popular. They're also great fun to crochet. Working from the top down is an easy choice for a cape, increasing evenly for a circular shape. Or you can combine circular motifs and increase the hook size or quantity on each row for a different cape shape. You can, of course, think outside the box, as Kristin Omdahl did, and work vertically up the cape in wedge shapes. This construction creates a flattering and stylish shape for a skirt, with wedges added at the hemline for flare. Just think of the styles made possible by using the wedges from another skirt design and adding the waistband from this one.





Lace Wedge Diagram

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Ad Index

Knitting Abbreviations

* *—repeat all instructions between
beg—begin(ning)
BO—bind off
CC—contrast color
cn—cable needle
CO—cast on
dec—decrease
dpn—double-pointed needle(s)
inc—increase
k—knit
k1f&b—knit 1 into front and back of stitch
k2tog—knit 2 together
k3tog—knit 3 together
kwise—knitwise
M1—make 1 by picking up running thread between 2 stitches front to back, place on left needle and knit into back of loop
M1L—work same as M1
M1R—make 1 by picking up running thread between 2 stitches back to front, place on left needle and knit into front of loop
MC—main color
p—purl
pm—place marker
p2sso—pass 2 slipped stitches over
p2tog—purl 2 together
pwise—purlwise
rem—remain(ing)
rep—repeat
rnd(s)—round(s)
RS—right side
sl—slip
sl 1, k2tog, psso—slip 1 stitch knitwise, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over the knit 2 together
sl 2, p1, p2sso—with yarn in front, slip 2 stitches purlwise through back loops (insert right needle into back of second and then first stitch on left needle and slip both stitches together to right needle), purl 1 and then pass the 2 slipped stitches over at the same time
s2kp—slip 2 stitches as if to knit 2 together, knit 1, pass 2 slipped stitches over
ssk—[slip 1 knitwise] 2 times, place these 2 stitches onto left needle and knit together through back loops
ssp—[slip 1 knitwise] 2 times, place these 2 stitches onto left needle and purl 2 stitches together through the back loops
sssk—[slip 1 knitwise] 3 times, place these 3 stitches onto left needle and knit together through back loops
st(s)—stitch(es)
tbl—through the back loop
WS—wrong side
wyb—with yarn in back
wyf—with yarn in front
yo—yarnover

Crochet Abbreviations

ch—chain
dc—double crochet
dc2tog—double crochet 2 together
hdc—half double crochet
sc—single crochet
sp—space
SR—stitch repeat
tr—treble crochet

Spinning Abbreviations

tpi—twists per inch
wpi—wraps per inch
ypp—yards per pound

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STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (required by Act of August 12, 1970: Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code). 1. Spin-Off 2. (ISSN: 0680-9500) 3. Filing date: 10/1/2013. 4. Issue frequency: Quarterly. 5. Number of issues published annually: 4. 6. The annual subscription price is $30.00. 7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Interweave, 201 E Fourth St, Loveland, Larimer, CO 80537-5655. Contact person: Kolin Rankin. Telephone: 305-441-7155 ext. 225. 8. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: Interweave, 201 E Fourth St, Loveland, Larimer, CO 80537-5655. 9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor. Publisher, Jamie Bogner, 201 E Fourth St, Loveland, Larimer, CO 80537-5655, Editor, Amy Clarke Moore, 201 E Fourth St, Loveland, Larimer, CO 80537-5655, Managing Editor, Liz Good, 201 E Fourth St, Loveland, Larimer, CO 80537-5655. 10. Owner: F+W Media, Inc., 10151 Carver Road, Suite #200, Blue Ash, OH 45242. 11. Known bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent of more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None. 12. Tax status: Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months. 13. Publisher title: Spin-Off. 14. Issue date for circulation data below: Fall 2013. 15. The extent and nature of circulation: A. Total number of copies printed (Net press run). Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 31,575. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 30,500. B. Paid circulation. 1. Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions. Average number of copies each issue during the preceding 12 months: 16,982. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 16,462. 2. Mailed in-county paid subscriptions. Average number of copies each issue during the preceding 12 months: 0. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 0. 3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales. Average number of copies each issue during the preceding 12 months: 6,324. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 6,140. 4. Paid distribution through other classes mailed through the USPS. Average number of copies each issue during the preceding 12 months: 0. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 0. C. Total paid distribution. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 23,305. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 22,602. D. Free or nominal rate distribution (by mail and outside mail). 1. Free or nominal Outside-County. Average number of copies each issue during the preceding 12 months: 21. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 42. 2. Free or nominal rate in-county copies. Average number of copies each issue during the preceding 12 months: 0. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 0. 3. Free or nominal rate copies mailed at other Classes through the USPS. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months 0. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 0. 4. Free or nominal rate distribution outside the mail. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 1,392. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 1,842. E. Total free or nominal rate distribution. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 1,413. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 1,884. F. Total free distribution (sum of 15c and 15e). Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 24,718. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 24,486. G. Copies not Distributed. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 6,857. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 6,014. H. Total (sum of 15f and 15g). Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 31,575. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing: 30,500. I. Percent paid. Average percent of copies paid for the preceding 12 months: 94.3% Actual percent of copies paid for the preceding 12 months: 92.3% 16. Total circulation includes electronic copies: NONE Report circulation on PS Form 3526-X worksheet 17. Publication of statement of ownership will be printed in the Winter 2013 issue of the publication. 18. Signature and title of editor, publisher, business manager, or owner: Jamie Bogner, Publisher. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanction and civil actions.

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Wish Upon a SOAR

BY AMY CLARKE MOORE

Spinners from around the world gathered in St. Charles, Illinois, at Pheasant Run Resort for our thirty-first *Spin·Off* Autumn Retreat (SOAR) the week of October 20 through 26. See more photos from SOAR 2013 at bit.ly/SOAR2013photos.

The SOAR 2013 Scholars (SS) and Scholarship Committee (SC): Boyeun Kim (SS), Pete Leonard (SC), Bekah Piepergerdes (SS), Maggie Casey (SC), Jeannine Glaves (SC), Amy Clarke Moore, Chris Pappas (SS), Becca Boland (SS), and Kate Larson (SC). Not shown: Carol Leonard (SC) and Judy Gilchrist (SC). The SOAR scholarship auction earned $2,434 this year.

2011 SOAR Scholar Terri Drouin-Guerette with her rainbow silk shawl in the gallery.

Judy Mooers, in a lovely garter-stitch tunic, warping her loom in Sara Lamb's Knotted Cut Pile workshop.

Brilliant top waiting for spinners at the Opulent Fibers booth at the SOAR Market.

2013 SOAR Scholar Bekah Piepergerdes enthusiastically learning about the mechanics of the spinning wheel in Amy Tyler's retreat session.

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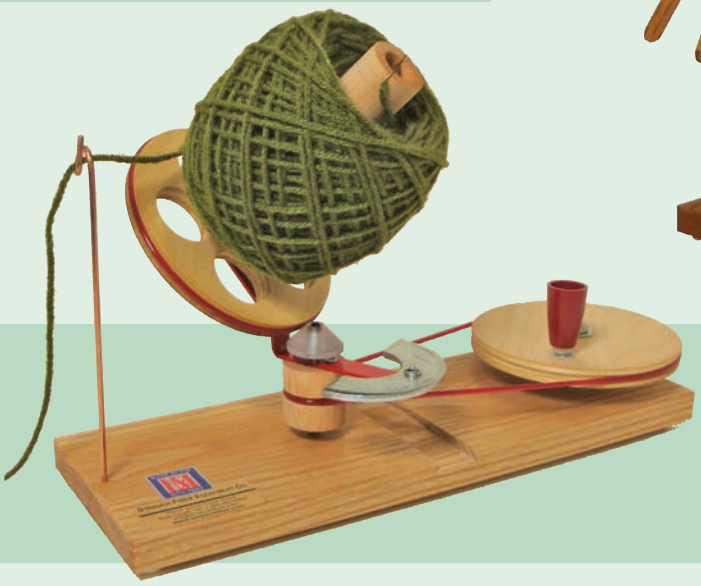

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