

Daylily Mat

MELISSA SCHUBERT



STRUCTURE

Plain weave.

EQUIPMENT

2- or 4-shaft loom,
17" weaving width;
10-dent reed; 1 shuttle.

YARNS

Warp: 8/2 cottolin (60% organic cotton, 40% linen;
3,360 yd/lb; Maurice Brassard), C100 Naturel lavé,
264 yd.

Weft: Daylily leaves from one large plant or as needed.
8/2 cottolin, C100 Naturel lavé, 8 yd.

OTHER SUPPLIES

Sharp, clean scissors or pruning shears for harvesting;
large sink or tub for soaking leaves; towel; spray bottle.

Note: Plants and leaves vary in size, thickness, and
moisture content. Flexibility is a must with this project!

WARP LENGTH

88 ends 3 yd long
(allows 2" for take-up,
24" for loom waste;
loom waste includes
fringe on the ends).

SETTS

Warp: 5 epi (1-0/dent in
a 10-dent reed).

Weft: about 10 ppi;
varies with leaves.

DIMENSIONS

Width in the reed: 16 $\frac{1}{10}$ ".

Woven length: (mea-
sured under tension on
the loom) about 82" in-
cluding fringe between
mats.

Finished size: (after wet-
finishing) 2 mats,
14 $\frac{1}{2}$ " × 18" plus 1" fringe,
and 1 runner, 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ " × 36"
plus 1" fringe.

The daylily is an amazingly low-maintenance perennial. It's virtually disease-free, pest-free, and drought resistant; it's also not picky about soil quality. The daylily was brought to North America by early settlers and can be invasive if left unchecked. However, every part of the plant is edible, and the leaves can be used for weaving. So, let's do our part and bring those leaves to our looms!

1 Wind a warp of 88 ends 3 yd long. Warp the loom for plain weave using your preferred method. Centering for a weaving width of 16 $\frac{1}{10}$ ", sley 8 ends at the selvedge 1 per dent in a 10-dent reed, sley 72 center ends in every other dent, then sley 8 ends on the other selvedge 1 per dent.

2 Wind a bobbin with cottolin. Leaving at least 2" of unwoven warp for fringe, spread the warp with scrap yarn.

3 Leaving a tail 1 yd long for hemstitching, weave 4 picks of plain weave. Use the tail to hemstitch in groups of 4 warp ends. Cut weft and tuck in the tail.

4 Begin weaving with the prepared daylily leaves in plain weave (see sidebar). Insert each leaf base first and overlap its tip with the next leaf base. Continue for about 19" or to desired length such as about 38" for a runner. End with 4 picks of plain weave in

Preparing and using leaves for weft

Melissa recommends weaving one mat to see how much you can weave with your leaves. Then use this information for future projects. Experiment and have fun!

1. Leaves can be harvested throughout the year. Trim back overgrown plants, cut leaves before harvesting roots, or collect all the leaves at the end of the growing season. Using sharp, clean scissors or pruning shears, cut the stems about an inch from the ground.
2. Allow the leaves to dry. Spreading them out on a slatted surface works well. Drying may take several days, depending on the moisture in the leaves and your climate. Store dry leaves in a cool, dry place until you are ready to weave.
3. In a large sink or tub, soak some of the leaves in warm water for about 10 minutes. Wrap the leaves in a towel and have a spray bottle ready to moisten leaves as needed. Melissa recommends soaking only as many leaves as you can weave during one session. Repeated or extended soaking will cause the leaves to break down.
4. When weaving, always insert the leaf base first, allowing the tip of one leaf to overlap the base of the next. If the base is hard, trim it away. If it is wide, trim it on a diagonal to reduce bulk. Mix wide and narrow leaves for an overall balance.

Note: If you weave with fresh leaves, they will shrink as they dry, creating unpredictable results.






cottolin and hemstitch as you did at the beginning.

5 To weave a second piece, leave at least 3" for fringe and weave as for the first. **Note:** There is enough warp length to weave two 19" mats and a 38" runner or two 38" runners. If you would like to weave four mats, add $\frac{1}{4}$ yd to your warp length.

6 Leaving at least 2" for fringe on both ends, cut the fabric from the loom. Cut the mats apart within the unwoven fringe sections. Trim the fringe ends to 1".

7 Wet-finish by hand in warm water. Lay flat to dry. 

MELISSA SCHUBERT is a fiber artist from the Land of Living Skies (Saskatchewan) whose work focuses on local fiber, plants, and dyes.



Photos by Matt Graves