

Lather Up!

ANNETTE SWAN SCHIFF

STRUCTURE

Doubleweave and waffle weave with color-and-weave.

EQUIPMENT

8-shaft loom, 8" weaving width; 12-dent reed; 2 shuttles; 4 bobbins.

YARNS

Warp: 22/2 cottolin (60% cotton/40% linen; 3,270 yd/lb; Bockens; Eugene Textile Company), #2080 rust red, 264 yd. 22/2 cottolin (60% cotton/40% linen; 2,980 yd/lb; Bockens), #2002 unbleached, 270 yd.

Weft: 22/2 cottolin, #2080 rust red, 81 yd; #2002 unbleached, 164 yd. 3-ply hemp (165 yd/50 g; Lunatic Fringe Yarns), Classic, 42 yd; Pearl, 140 yd.

OTHER SUPPLIES

Dyed hemp cord used for jewelry making, any size; large-eyed tapestry needle; dye color catchers; Synthrapol; washable school glue.

WARP LENGTH

178 ends 3 yd long (includes floating selvages; allows 7" for take-up, 26" for loom waste; loom waste accounts for cutting off the soap bags and retying on for the washcloths).

SETTS

Warp: soap bags, 48 epi (4/dent in a 12-dent reed); washcloths, 24 epi (2/dent in a 12-dent reed).

Weft: 24 ppi per layer for doubleweave; 24 ppi for waffle weave and color-and-weave.

DIMENSIONS

Width in the reed: soap bags, 3¹⁰/₁₂"; washcloths, 7⁶/₁₂".

Woven length: (measured under tension on the loom) about 75" (five soap bags, 7"-7¹/₂" each; four washcloths, 9"-9¹/₂" each).

Finished size: five soap bags, about 3¹/₂" × 5", and four washcloths, 6¹/₂"-7" × 7".

I needed some gifts—fast! As I lay in bed with ideas circling in my head before sleep, I remembered a gift I had received. It was a bar of soap completely enclosed in felted wool. It was lovely when used to lather up in the shower. What if I made a woven version? I could use cotton, linen, and hemp to weave a doubleweave tube to create a soap bag.

However, I felt this gift needed a bit more to it. Why not resley my warp for washcloths to include with the soap bags? Resleying rather than warping from scratch would make the project go faster, and because the warp was short, I wouldn't have tension problems from resleying.

I did research on hemp, linen, and cotton and discovered that all three are washable, stronger wet than dry, and either hypoallergenic (cotton) or antimicrobial/antibacterial (hemp and linen). In addition, hemp and linen are strong, absorbent, and resistant to mold, mildew, and rot. Although these fabrics were initially stiff right off the loom, an added benefit of using hemp and linen is that they are notable for softening the more they are used. The slight roughness is also great for exfoliating in the shower. Soap bags are also a way to save soap. If you hang them up between uses, the soap doesn't stay wet and dissolve.

I had fun changing the wefts and treadling for each soap bag and washcloth. Sometimes I used hemp, sometimes cottolin, and, in some cases, I wove color-and-weave patterns.

For the drawstrings on the soap bags, I purchased small amounts of colored hemp used for making jewelry to add a bright bit of color.

Weaving tip

Weave the first bags in simple doubleweave, either a twill or plain weave, if you have never woven doubleweave before. When you understand the concept of doubleweave, it is fun to play with color. There are many possibilities, and the bags are small so you'll never get bored!

1 Wind a warp of 176 ends 3 yd long following the warp color order, Figure 1. Wind 2 additional ends of unbleached cottolin to be used as floating selvages and set them aside. Warp the loom using your preferred method following the draft in Figure 2. Centering for a weaving width of 3¹⁰/₁₂", sley 4 per dent in a 12-dent reed. Sley the floating selvages through empty dents on each side of the warp and weight them over the back beam.



2 Wind bobbins with each of the weft colors. Spread the warp with scrap yarn.

3 The soap bags are woven in tubular doubleweave, bottom to top, inside out. You'll begin by weaving both layers together to seal the tube, then weave tubular doubleweave for the bag bodies, including fabric for the top cord channels. Using unbleached cottolin, weave 8 picks of hem to seal the bottom of the bag. You will do this at the beginning of each bag.

4 Weave the bags for 7"–7½" following your choice of treading. Annette wove three bags in twill, followed by two bags in color-and-weave. Weave 2 picks of scrap yarn between bags to separate them.

5 Apply diluted washable school glue to the edge of the last bag and allow it to dry. Advance your warp so that the ends are well past the heddles and stabilize your warp beam so that it won't roll backwards. Leaving the heddles threaded, cut off the soap bags.

6 Cut the bags apart between the scrap yarn picks. Apply diluted glue to all the raw edges of the bags to prevent raveling.

7 Resley the warp at 24 epi (2 percent in a 12-dent reed), centering in the reed for 7½". Spread the warp with scrap yarn.

8 Weave a ¼" plain-weave hem in unbleached cottolin. Weave the body of the washcloth for about 8" following the drafts in Figure 2, ending with a ¼" plain-weave

HEDDLER COUNT

Shaft 8	22
Shaft 7	22
Shaft 6	22
Shaft 5	22
Shaft 4	22
Shaft 3	22
Shaft 2	22
Shaft 1	22
Total	176

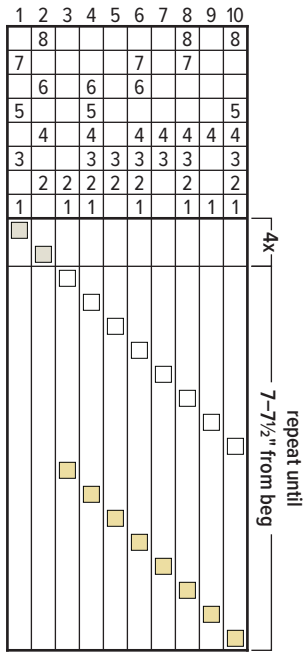
1. WARP COLOR ORDER

21x			
88	4	4	#2002 unbleached
88	2	4	2 #2080 rust red
176 ends total			

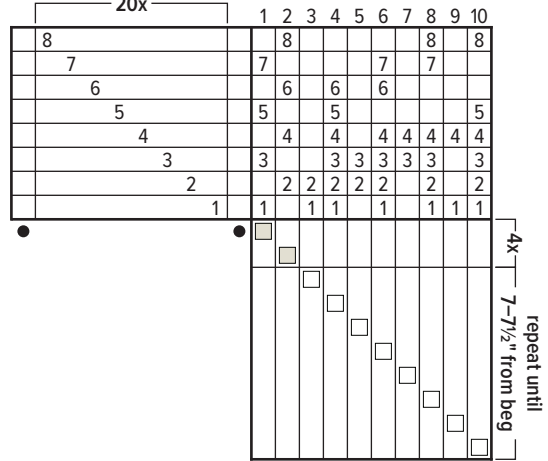
2. DRAFT

- floating selvedge
- unbleached cottolin
- rust red cottolin
- Pearl hemp
- Classic hemp

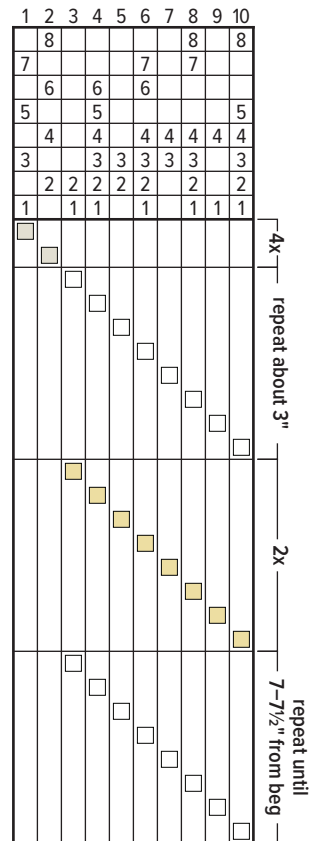
Soap bag #3



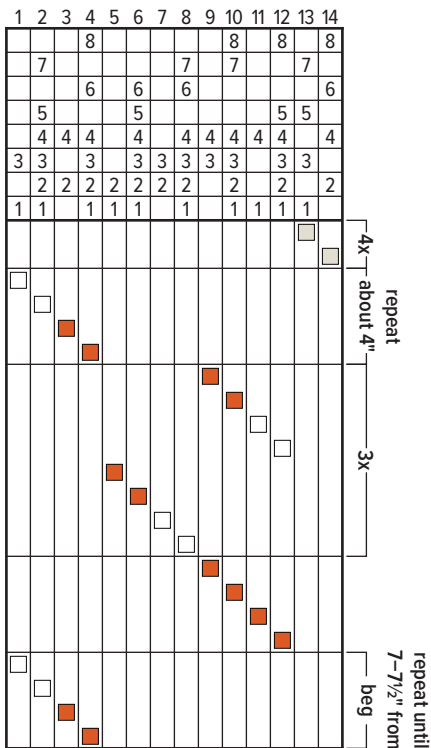
Soap bag #1



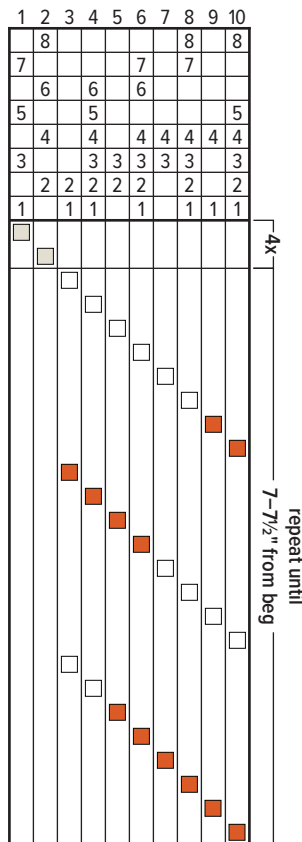
Soap bag #2

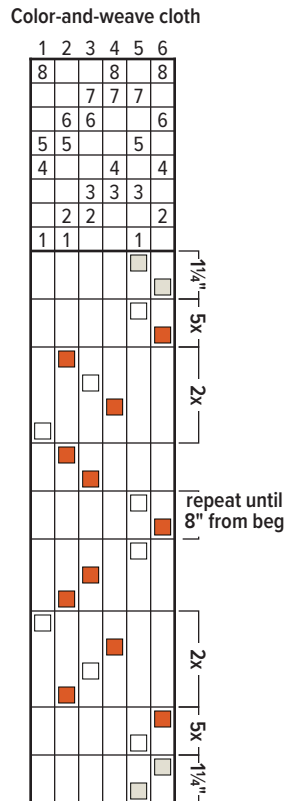
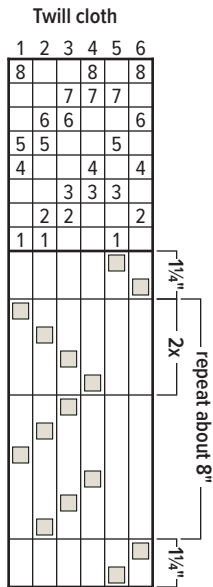
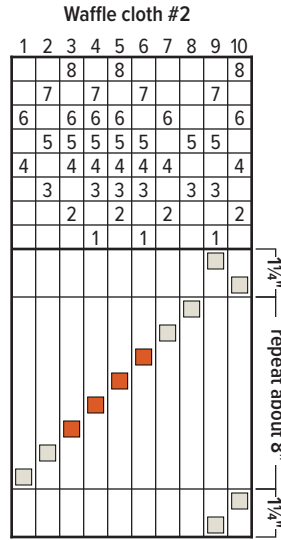
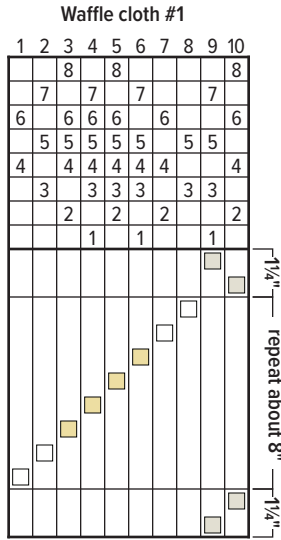


Soap bag #5



Soap bag #4





hem in unbleached cottolin. Annette wove two waffle-weave cloths in two colors, one in color-and-weave and another in twill. Weave 2 picks of scrap yarn between washcloths to separate them.

9 Apply diluted glue to the end of the last washcloth. When dry, cut the fabric from the loom. Cut the washcloths apart between the scrap-yarn picks and apply diluted glue to the raw ends.

10 Machine stitch each end of the bags and washcloths to prevent raveling. The tubes should be open at one end and closed at the other end.

11 Wet-finish in warm water using Synthrapol and dye color catchers (Annette's rust red cottolin ran). Dry in the dryer or lay flat until damp dry and then press to dry and set the dye, being careful not to flatten the waffle weave.


12 Turn the bags inside out so that the hem section is on the inside. Turn under the fabric at the top of the soap bags twice to create a 1/2" channel and machine stitch around the tube along the channel fold. Turn the hems under twice on the washcloths and machine stitch.

13 Test the colored jewelry hemp cord for colorfastness. Cut two 9"-10" lengths of hemp cord. Anchor one end of both cords and twist them together as if twisting





fringe. Tie an overhand knot at both ends. Thread the twisted cord through the channel of a soap tube with a blunt tapestry needle. **Note:** You will have to pull the needle and cord through the fabric to get into and back out of the channel. Repeat for the other soap tubes.

14 Insert a bar of soap in each bag and use the twisted cord to secure the soap by cinching up the end. 

ANNETTE SWAN SCHIFF has taught weaving for many years. She weaves with beautiful views of the mountains and plains of Montana. She can be found on Instagram as [annettesloomwithaview](#).

