AS THE WHEEL TURNS

Continued from last month

FLOOR SPINDLE SPINNING

Begin with a 2 yard piece of yarn. Wrap all but approx. 2 feet of the yarn around the spindle shaft just above the whorl by turning the spindle clockwise. (fig.1) Hold the rest of the yarn in your left hand. Use your right hand (held open) to hold the shaft against the side of your thigh.

fig 1

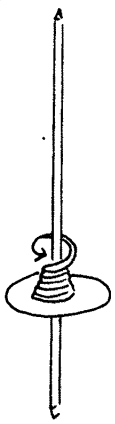
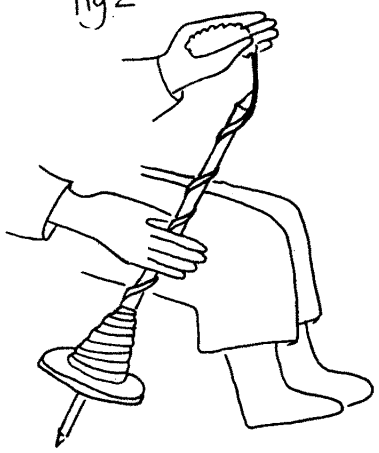
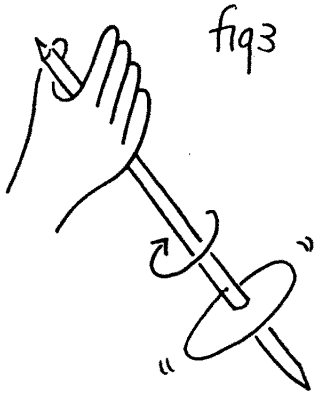


fig 2



(fig.2) Starting near your knee, roll the shaft along the side of your leg up towards your hip. (You need not roll it the full length of your thigh. Rolling it for approx. 6" works well.) Hold your left hand above the tip of the spindle. Roll the spindle somewhat rapidly and allow it to continue to spin by resting the twirling shaft between thumb and first finger. Do not grab the shaft as this will stop the twirling. (fig.3) When the spindle stops, repeat the rolling process. You may want to set the bottom of the spindle on a piece of carpet to keep it from sliding.

fig 3

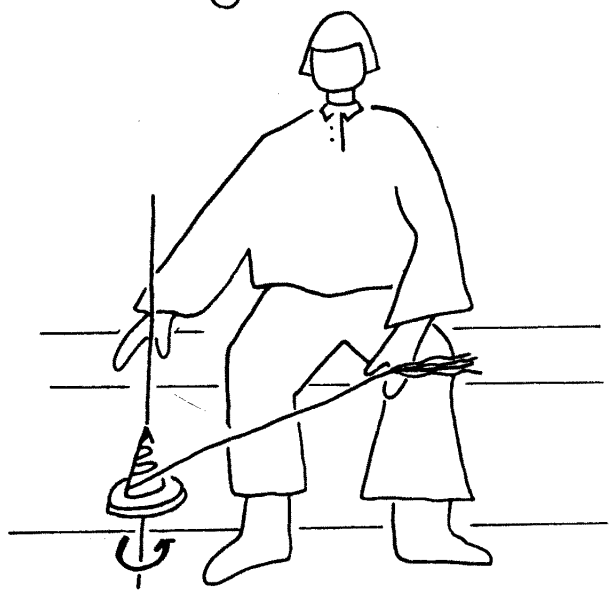


As the spindle revolves, the left hand drafts the fiber out with short gentle pulls. (When first learning, you may want to stop the spindle and rest it against your leg, freeing both hands to use for drafting.)

When you have spun a length of yarn so that your arm is fully extended, making it difficult to draft more fiber roll the spindle counter clockwise. This will unwind the yarn spiraling up the shaft. (You may have to tilt the spindle away from you to use up this extra length, or collect the extra yarn in a butterfly on your left hand.)

Wrap the yarn around the shaft above the whorl by holding your left hand horizontal to the area you wish to wrap and turning the spindle clockwise. (fig.4) When approx. 2 feet of spun yarn remains unwrapped, raise your left hand up causing the yarn to spiral up the shaft ready to begin drafting again.

Fig. 4



QUESTIONS

My antique doubled band colonial wheel will not let me spin yarn with low twist. Do I need a bigger diameter flyer pulley?

Not necessarily. Check your bobbin to be sure it turns freely on the flyer shaft; then loop both loops of your drive band onto your bobbin pulley groove, tighten the tension a little and spin "bobbin driven". If the doubled band will not stay on then tie a one-loop drive band using cotton mason's line or a fine high-count cotton cord. Although you will probably not be able to spin thicker yarn, you should be able to reduce the twist in your yarn. This bobbin driven technique may not work for orifices under 5/16 inch diameter or if the flyer hooks are closer than ¼ inch.

The bobbin on my spinning wheel seems to bind on the flyer shaft and not turn freely. What can I do about it?

If you have a fairly modern spinning wheel, it is quite likely that the hole through the bobbin is ¼ inch. So for this sized bobbin hole, take your bobbin and go to a large hardware store and ask for a "¼-20 threaded rod". It will be 36 inches long usually, and will cost less than $1.00. Take the threaded rod and work it through the bobbin until it slides freely. Now try the bobbin on the flyer shaft. Only ream out the bobbin enough to allow the bobbin to turn freely.

Be sure that the bobbin hole is quite close to ¼ inch before reaming it out. If the rod starts into the bobbin from each end, you can be sure the hole is ¼ inch. Do not use this technique if your bobbin has bushings.

— Tonv Glaski

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FROM WOODS & FIELDS

by Connie Magoffin

A recent call from Marge Manthei resulted in her sending me some samples of wool she had dyed using both avocado pits and peels. Marge used the peels of 4 avocados, blended them in the blender and then followed the directions I mentioned in the March, 1979 issue of the *Minnesota Weaver.* She had used the 5 common mordants plus unmordanted wool; she dyed both fleece and yarn. Her results were similar to the colors Nancy Brown obtained, although a bit deeper, most likely due to Marge's use of more dyestuff and less wool (½ oz.). The colors tended to be in the muted wine-red range. She also dyed with 4 avocado pits. The colors were similar although each was just slightly richer than its partner dyed with the peels. Baking soda turned the colors brown and vinegar turned them a "blah" beige, according to Marge.

Four other interesting sample cards were also included.
1. Two whole artichokes and 2 oz. of wool resulted in a range of beiges with green overtones; the iron mordanted yarn was a gray.
2. From 6 tangelo peels and 2 oz. of wool she obtained a soft, warm golden beige color range. She added that she had also tried navel orange peels which yielded a more yellow color.
3. The results of dyeing with 18 tangerine peels and 2½ oz. of wool were exquisitely beautiful soft yellow-greens. The peels were blended, simmered about 1 hour and strained out before dyeing. Although a fleece sample was not included on this card, Marge said it was a green with even more yellow in it.
4. The final samples that Marge sent were from an experiment using brass. She soaked 10 lb. of brass in (white) vinegar water (½ & ½) for about 1 week. On tin it was supposed to produce a green, but the range of 5 mordants and the unmordanted sample of yarn offered only brown-beiges. Her fleece sample did, however, have a soft green color to it. She intends to try this experiment again.

In all of her dye samples where fleece was dyed along with yarn, the fleece resulted in a more "alive" color. This has often been my experience, too, and it is only one of many reasons, if you are lucky enough to be a spinner, that I feel it is to great advantage to dye in the fleece. Thanks, Marge, for giving us some ideas for dyeing at a time when fresh plant material is not as yet readily available.

There are several persons signed up at the Weavers Guild office to order Fred Gerber's dye book, *Cochineal and the Insect Dyes.* If you are interested in ordering it at the 40% discount price, send a check made out to Fred Gerber for $4.25 (this includes postage to the Guild). Mail the check to Suzette Bernard at the Weavers Guild before May 15. When the books arrive they will be held for you at the office. If you do any dyeing with cochineal, this is a book you should have.