

BASKET

Basket weave is a logical development of tabby, but historically it may be even older. Anybody who ever tried to make a basket must have realised that tabby is of little use in basketry, because twigs are comparatively rigid and do not bend too easily. Thus basket weave which requires less bending preceded tabby in cultures where basketry preceded weaving.

Tabby is the strongest weave, but the tabby fabrics are also the stiffest and coolest. Therefore when need arose for warmer and softer fabrics, basket weave was the obvious answer.

There are three basket weaves: 2:2, 3:3, and 4:4. All of them can be woven on two shafts, but usually they are woven on four as in fig.1. A is 2:2, B - 3:3, and C - 4:4 basket.

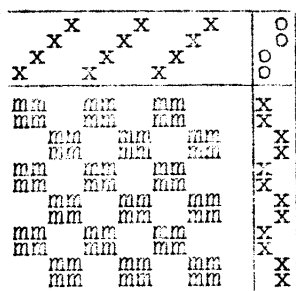


Fig.1 A

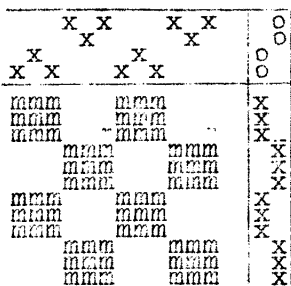


Fig.1 B

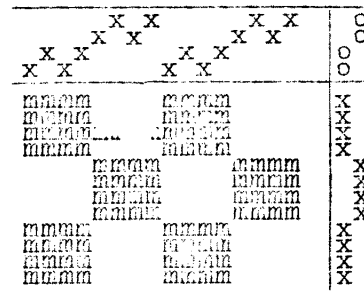


Fig.1 C

Drafting of basket weave does not present any problems, but the weaving does. The first is the sett of warp. In theory it should be the same as of the corresponding twill: 2:2, 3:3, or 4:4. But since the floats are parallel, the sett for a firm fabric should be still closer. On the other hand basket is not supposed to produce a firm fabric. Then what?

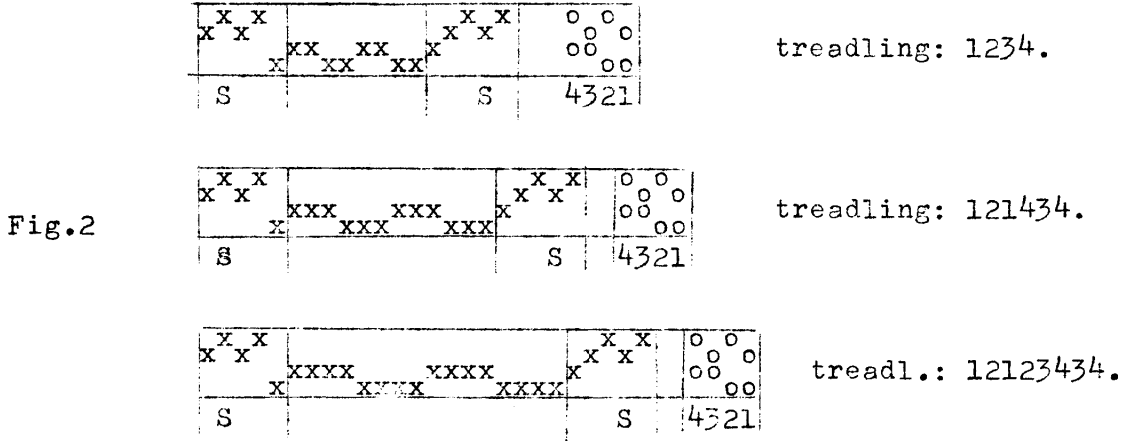
The answer is that the lowest sett for basket is the same as for the corresponding twill, but we can use higher set to reach the desired degree of firmness.

Another problem is the rhythm of weaving. We must throw in one shed 2, 3, or 4 wefts, and they must be parallel, not twisted. There are three ways of doing this:

1.) For small samples we use one shuttle (with a single yarn), and throw it in the same shed as many times as necessary. To prevent the weft from being pulled out we pass the shuttle over one or two yarns at the edge.

2.) If the amount of basket is considerable, it is better to use 2 shuttles for 2:2 basket; 3 for 3:3, and 4 for 4:4. The shuttles should be marked with numbers so as to be used always in the same order; this will give better edges.

3.) Finally if the project is yardage in basket, we should change the threading draft so as to have tabby edges. This can be done on 4 shafts, as in fig.2. Only one shuttle is used.



In all three cases the rhythm of weaving is completely changed. First of all the beating is much lighter than with most weaves. The first pick in each shed is thrown as usual, but the shed is not changed. After beating the first pick, we throw the second. Now we close the shed in case of 3:3 or 4:4 basket, or change it in case of 2:2 basket, and only then beat the second pick. The third or fourth pick will be made in the same way. After the last pick in the same shed the shed is always changed before beating. This prevents the picks of weft in the same shed from twisting.

In basket weave it is extremely important to make the fabric exactly 50:50 and the beating must be adjusted so as to achieve this proportion. The weft must be of the same weight as the warp, but it may be of a different colour.
