



TRADITIONAL BASKETRY

Basket making is one of the oldest handicrafts that have long been going on for generations without any drastic changes

Watching a basket weaver working today, we can turn our minds hundreds of years back and we can discover that our ancestors were creating then, in an exactly same manner as they do now. Baskets were man's legacy to national culture from ancient times, even since the Neolithic epoch. Some of the methods used, are till in use today in various counties.

Cyprus' natural resources always provide in abundance suitable raw materials. There are only very few tools used by the craftsmen to make the wide variety of baskets in different shapes and sizes suitable for many uses.

The variety of materials used, gives the natural colour to the items that vary according to the mood of the maker. In some cases the raw materials is dyed with bright colors. The colours used in the paste were natural but nowadays-chemical colours are used.

The need for gathering and carrying goods such as potatoes, grapes, olives and fruit led man to create with these natural materials items to be used for this purpose.

Soft baskets from plaited strips of rushes and reeds were also used to transport crops, to cover the roofs of the sheds or for domestic use. Soft baskets were also made from the

Until recently basket making in rural areas was a technique known by almost everybody, men, women and children. Knowing how to make baskets was a must. The baskets were unusually made for practical use. Each basket was designed having a specific job in mind, with different size shapes and plaits.

In Cyprus, we find that the variety of raw material that is used is the same as in the past. Most of the raw material grows next to the streams of the island. Out of all the raw material used the easiest one to find is the hard reed. It is also the easiest one to use because when it is soaked in water it becomes very flexible. It comes in different sizes and lengths.

Different types of baskets made out of hard reed are found in various villages in Cyprus such as Liopetri, Troulli and Mesoyi. These items are used mainly for transporting potatoes and other cultivated products.

Today the Cyprus Handicraft Centre has taken the responsibility of reviving, maintaining and continuing these handicrafts with the creation of new functional items, using the raw materials that nature has to offer thus keeping a part of Cyprus' cultural heritage.