

## Rug Braiding

# A useful and attractive hobby

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Are you looking for a leisure time activity which allows you to conserve energy, recycle fabric and save money while you create something useful and beautiful? If so, rug braiding could be the craft for you!

Rug braiding is a North American craft, which flourished first in the New England area where it has been perfected and promoted ever since.

Historically, braiding rugs was an inexpensive way to cover cold floors. Today, braided rugs are a practical answer to the problems of re-cycling and fit in with the country's renewed

interest in antiques and crafts. They complement colonial and early Canadian decor as well as modern decorating styles.

Rug braiding also provides recreational benefits. The braider is producing a useful, attractive article and is learning a craft which is easy to do and which can easily become addictive!

As well, there are money making possibilities in rug braiding. It could be used as a method of raising money for an organization, either by the sale of small braided articles by members, or the production of a rug made from shared recycled woolen scraps from all the members.

Braiding is a restful craft (some of the steps involved are very relaxing) and is a craft which demands very little in the way of eye strain. Braiding is also possible for people with arthritis, since round braids (as opposed to plaiting) require little effort for fingers. Many steps are involved in making a rug and it is not necessary to stay in one position for any length of time.

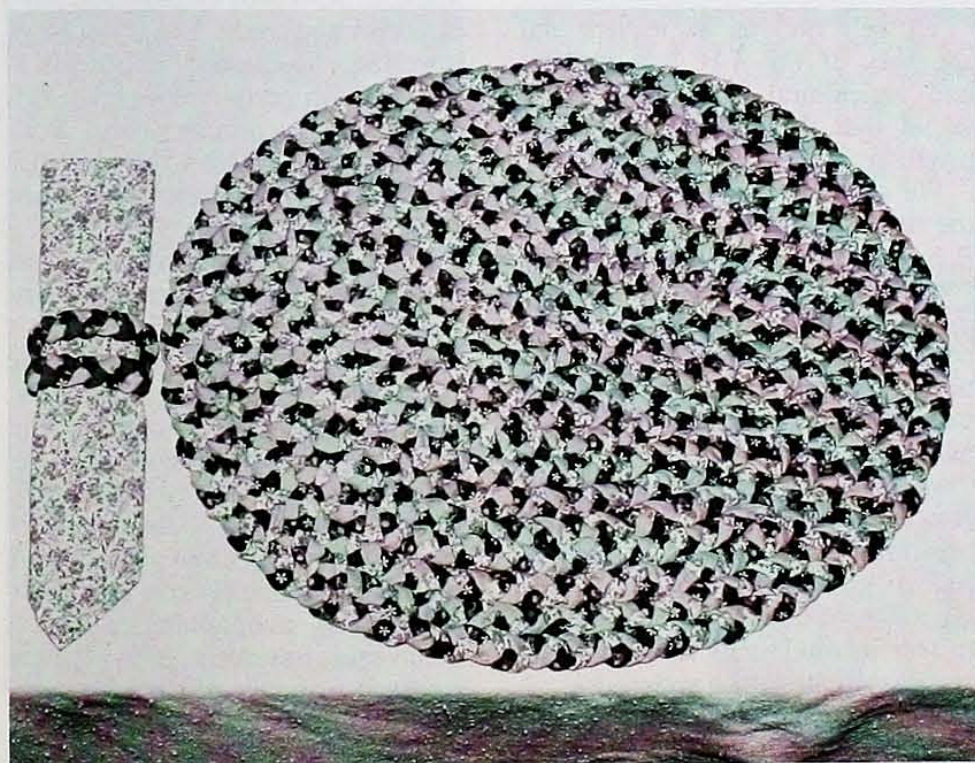
You don't have to be a color artist to make a braided rug, as an attractive rug or other article can be made using the "hit-and-miss" color technique. This produces a multi-colored rug, and uses up scraps, but can be color co-ordinated to a room by picking out one color from the drapes or furniture and carefully choosing a match in a small amount of wool for the rug.

A striking color scheme for a modern setting is a monochromatic one, which is easiest when new wool or specially dyed woolens are being used. Colors go from light to medium to dark values, ending in the deepest value of the color at the outer edge of the rug.

Braiding changes the effect colors have on their own, and they take on the colors of the surrounding braids, so it's a good idea not to rule out any color until you have tried a sample.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has available an adult leadership workshop in rug braiding, which volunteer representatives from rural organizations may attend. These course participants will then return to their local groups to pass on the newly acquired skill to the other members.

Those people interested in attending such a workshop should contact the county or district Rural Organizations Specialist at the local Ministry of Agriculture and Food office to find out when it is being offered.



*The art of rug braiding is not confined to making rugs only! Pictured are a placemat and napkin holder and they are only two of the many items you can braid. If you would like to learn about rug braiding, ask at your nearest Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food office.*