



## Cattail Mat Making

### Materials:

- 20-50 cattail leaves that haven't been dried for at least a day in the sun and flipped every few hours
- Scissors
- A type of cordage (sinew, cattail cordage)
- Water (in a bucket or spray bottle)

### Steps:

1. Lay down a few cattails, placing them vertically on your table.

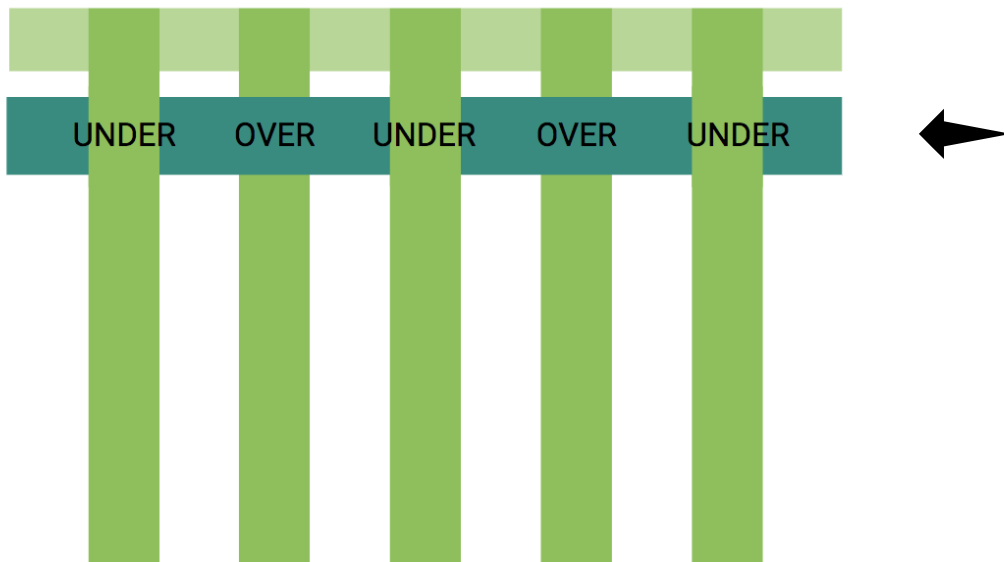
All cattails, when placed, should be with the rounded side facing down, as this makes them easier to bend and it reduces any breakage.



2. Weave cattails through, placing them horizontally. Each cattail you add to the mat horizontally, will be placed in an over under pattern.

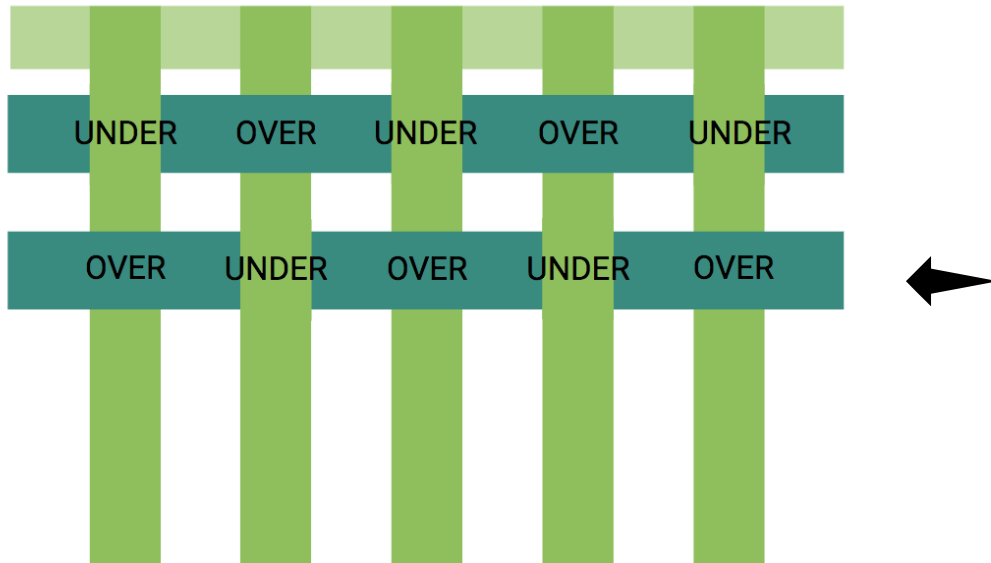
Pour or spray water on the cattails when you feel like they are getting harder to bend. The water will make them more flexible.

For example, say you taped a couple of cattails vertically on our table. Then, when you add in horizontal cattails, add them in from the same side each time. This will help you keep an over/under pattern.

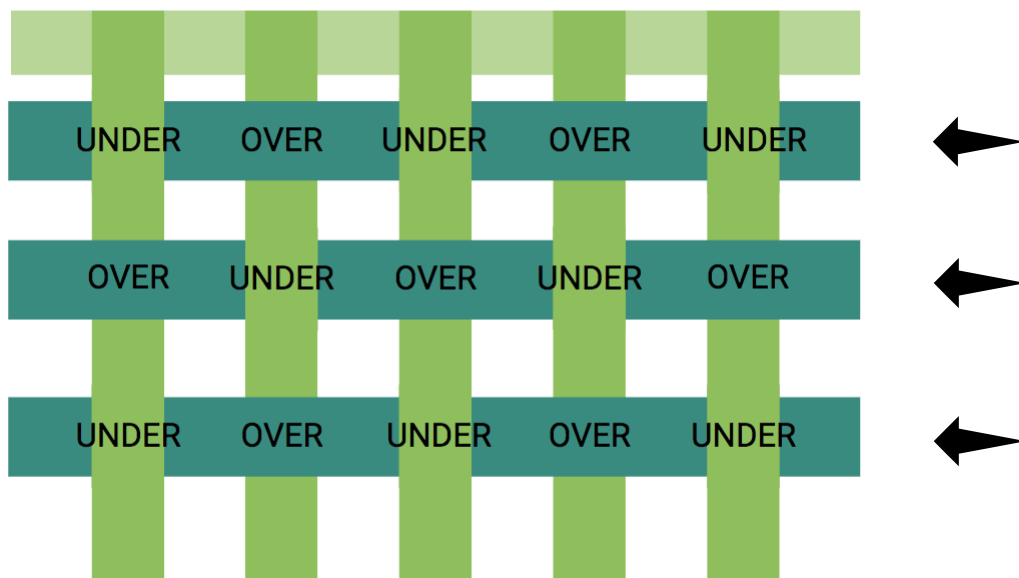




When you add the next horizontal cattail, start weaving from the same side. Let's say we started weaving from right to left. Therefore, our next cattail will go over the first vertical cattail from the right.



Then, add another horizontal cattail from, starting from the right. You will then start to see the alternating over/under pattern. Two cattails beside each other either lying vertically and horizontally can never have the same over/under pattern.

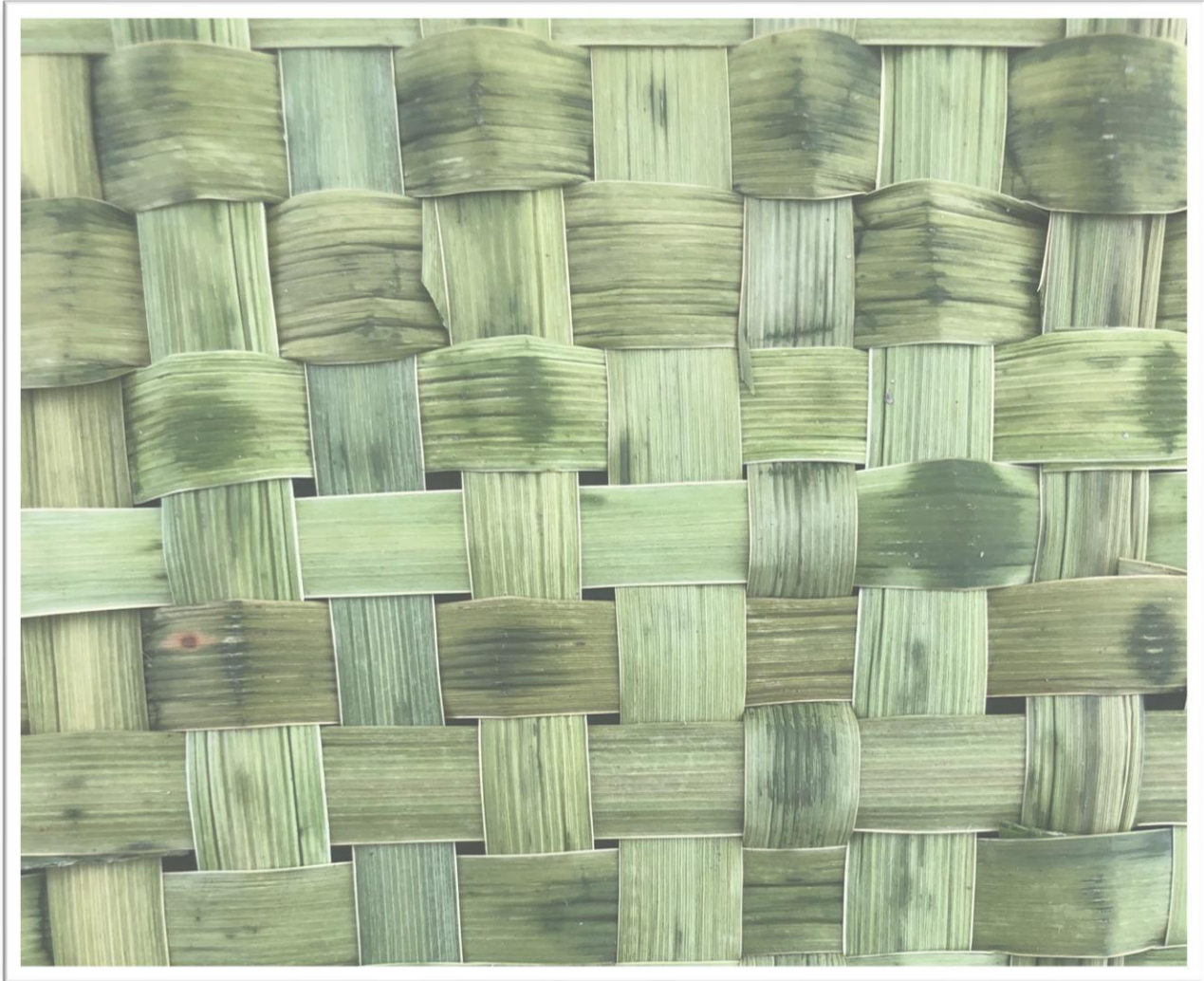




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Can you see the over/under pattern in the picture below? Try labelling the cattails with "Over" and "Under" to see the pattern.

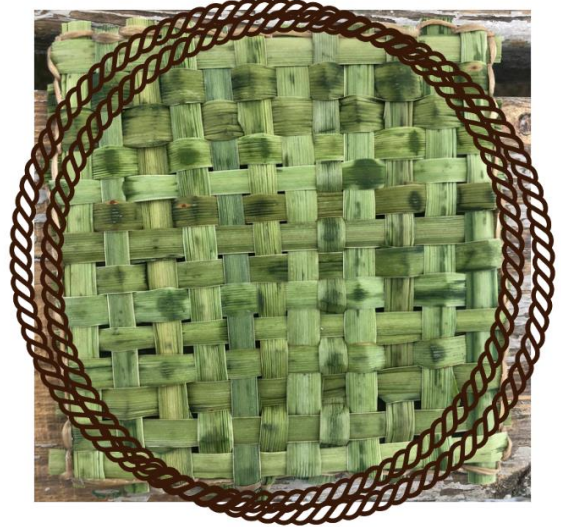




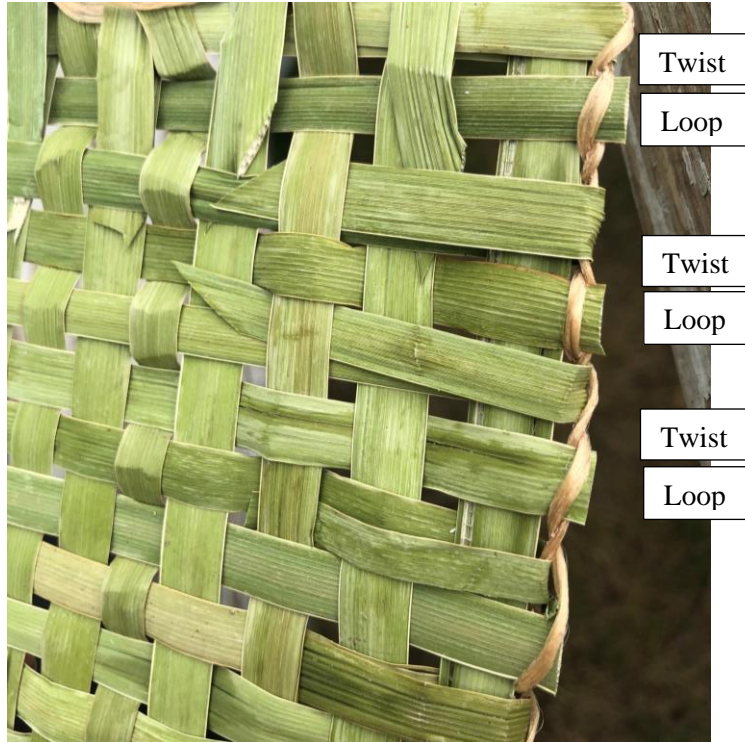
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3. Once your cattail mat is finished, lightly push in all of the leaves close to each other, so that they stay in that shape.
4. Cut the excess cattails off, leaving about 3-4 inches off unwoven cattails on each side of the mat.
5. Take your cordage and trace the outline of the mat in a circle, 2 times around the mat.



6. Choose a side of your matt to start tying your cordage. On this side, look for the one of the cattails in the center and loop your cordage around that leaf. After you loop the first cattail, twist the cordage and loop the next one beside it. This will create a pattern of twisting and looping.



When you reach a corner, do a double twist and loop the next cattail on the new side.





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There are other methods of securing your mat with cordage, such as weaving it through the cattail leaves. For example, once you make your first loop around the centre cattail, determine a top and bottom string of cordage. The top string will go over the next cattail, and under the one after that. The bottom string will go under the next cattail, and over the one after that. therefore, each cattail leaf is still in a loop with the cordage, but instead you are doing a weaving pattern.

While you are securing the mat with cordage, you can rotate the mat so that you are adding in the cordage towards your body, which might make it easier.

7. When you get back to the centre point at which you started, you are not going to loop back around the centre cattail. Instead, you are going to loop the cordage around the cattail after the centre one, so that the centre cattail isn't being pulled on too much. When you are looping this cattail, feed the cordage through the existing cordage loop.



Once the cordage is all the way around, push all of the cattails together again so that none are loose. You may even loop the next cattail for extra support.

8. Tie off your cordage and cut the excess off.

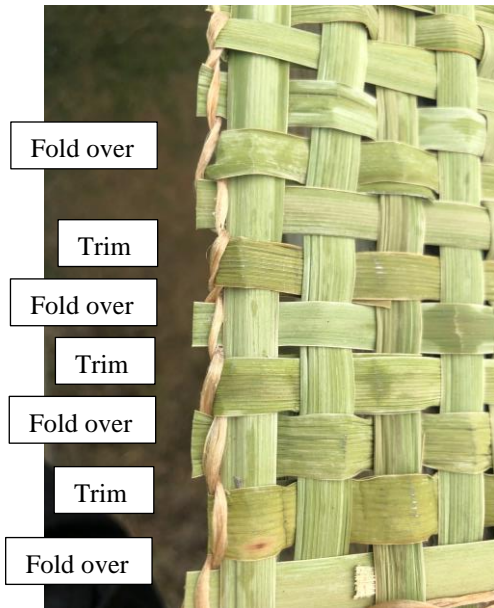
9. Now, you can either cut off the excess cattail leaves off, or you can fold over some cattails for extra security.

If you would like extra security, flip your mat to see which side you like best. Once you have chosen your side that you like, place it on the table, with that side facing up. Look at the cattails on each side and determine which cattails go "over" the outermost cattail. Fold these cattails will over the outermost cattails and weave them through the underside of the mat.



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You can cut the edge with scissors to make a point, which will be easier to weave through.

The cattails that go "under" the outermost cattail can be trimmed with scissors.

You will eventually see that one cattail will be trimmed, while the next is tucked in, and this pattern will repeat on all 4 sides.



Your cattail mat is now finished!

Check out these other resources for different instructions on weaving!

- How to Weave a Mat (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOKN4L2Axg4>)
- How to Weave Cattail Mats (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jtl1oikuRPw>)