

Silk Tidings

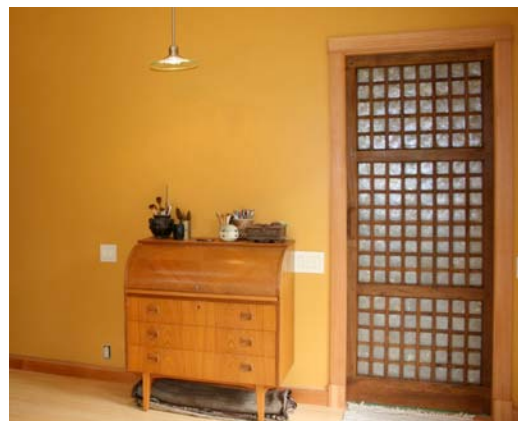
Greetings from Salt Spring Island

Well, it feels official, spring is here and we have moved our bed outside under the stars. We do have an awning we can crank out if it sprinkles and we move inside when it pours. The night life is particularly active during the mating season. The frogs take up chorus in one pond and as abruptly as they stop, the frogs in another pond start up simultaneously. In the background one hears the barred owls, screech

owls, barn owls, great horned owls and pygmy owls calling back and forth. In the midst of all this, one crazy little white crowned sparrow sings his song as if he is dreaming. We so love this time of year when all things are shaking off the winter and acting a bit frisky.

We have some fabulous sale items at 50% off to make you

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Karen's new studio

Silkster's Gallery

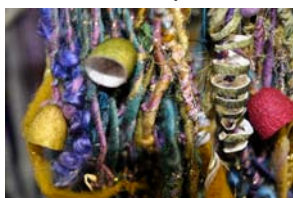
We have a new gallery of unique and heartfelt pieces to inspire you this spring. As always the pieces are beautifully done with much thought put into each detail. Revel in your fellow artists' creativity on our website at www.treenwaysilks.com/gallery.html or look for Silkster's Gallery under Galleries in the menu. Congratulations and thank you to all for sharing your art.

Kathy Erskine of Elkhorn, Wisconsin, wove a fantastic black sequined shawl which reflects the light beautifully.

Lorrie Irwin of Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, used silk fusion to cover the front of a leather bag. It is unique and beautifully made.

Jean Johnson from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, has only been weaving for three years and produced a classy scarf.

Sheila Joss of Nanaimo, British Columbia, used silk ribbons and threads to embellish this stunning crazy quilt shawl made from her mother's fabrics.



Jan's art yarn

Jan Massie from Oak Creek, Wisconsin, uses funky silk fibres and cocoons to spin amazing art yarn.

Doreen Page of Sutton, Quebec, has a fascinating story to accompany her amazing kimono outfit.

Margaret Wheeler from Leavenworth, Washington, has been doing very personal and lovely silk fusion pieces for the past few years. You will be awed by her latest pieces.

Vikki Zulpo of Ottawa, Ontario, is making faux felt to create exceptional wearable art.

Call for Entries

Our next Silkster's Gallery will be in our September issue. We encourage all of you to send photos of your work using Treenway silks. It is fun and inspirational for all of us to see what unique work is being produced. We reward you for your time with silk product from Treenway.

See our web site for details of what we require from you to participate in this exciting gallery. We so look forward to your entries.

www.treenwaysilks.com/gallery.html

Treenway Silks is located at 501 Musgrave Road, Salt Spring Island, BC, Canada, V8K 1V5. You can reach us toll free at **1.888.383.SILK (7455)** or at 250.653.2345 or by fax at 250.653.2347. Email us at info@treenwaysilks.com. See our website www.treenwaysilks.com.

continued....

Greetings from Salt Spring Island

feel frisky and get creative with something different. We wish you good gardening and inspired fibre arts projects for the spring and summer.

Clay/Straw House

Studio



I have moved into my studio! It took a long time but I had to amalgamate my inventory from four different places, at least half of which I had not seen for nine years. I am going to have one big sale this fall.

I am the kind of person that likes to organise and clean before beginning a new project. I like to work in the clutter of the current art project; it helps me "see" how the piece will evolve. So I designed my studio with a partial wall. This keeps the library,



filing cabinet, boxes of yarn and fibre and all the other necessary accessories out of sight, but close at hand.

My work space is divided into different stations: weaving, silk fusion, beading and embellishing, sewing and paints and other art paraphernalia. Each station now has all of its parts nicely organized so I can find what I need without digging in boxes being

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From right, clockwise: drawers of beads and other embellishments; the old card catalogue, the window seat, behind the partial wall, the weaving corner, the work table and looking out to the veggie gardens and orchard



continued....

Greetings from Salt Spring Island

frustrated and wasting valuable creation time.

It was a delight to design my space and I am proud of the fact that we used and rebuilt lots of old furniture to fit into the studio. I bought paint for the furniture and new Formica for the table top, but everything else was reused or recycled and it all looks lovely.

My first project was making a bag with a five year old friend. She wove the fabric and we sewed it into a bag and twisted a wonderful handle. She had a very good time going through the embellishing drawers to find just the right buttons to finish it off.

Bathroom Vanities

Mike has built the most beautiful vanities for the bathrooms. The doors are woven wood strips – just what every weaver should have in her home! He has also completed building the bones of the cabinets built in the recycle room and walk-in pantry.



The bathroom vanities with woven wood doors

Kitchen

The kitchen cupboards are all finished and we are just waiting for the wooden counter tops. I could potentially start cleaning the dust from the kitchen!

Robert, our cabinetmaker, has done a fantastic job with the beautiful New Zealand woods sent to us as a house warming gift from our dear friends Richard and Elizabeth Ashford. I designed a set of drawers to house a lot of the dried foods we eat, from beans and rice to our own dried tomatoes. You can tell what is in each drawer just by glancing at the outside of the whole unit.



Drawers with beans, rice and grains.



The kitchen cupboards newly oiled.

Masonry Stove

Terry has completed the masonry stove and chimney. We have already had many fires in it and are thrilled with how it burns and how quickly it heats everything. The first time I experienced one of these

stoves was while teaching in Vermont. A fire only needs to be lit for 1–2 hours each morning! The smoke travels within the stove before traveling out the chimney. This means the heat has time to warm up all the brick and stone which continues to radiate throughout the house all day.

Den

The den is completed with Murphy bed in place.



Murphy bed with built-in mahogany shelves and stereo centre.

The journey does continue but with fewer things on the to do list. The septic tank is in with all the necessary piping. The drain field is all that is left on that front. Decorative stones need to be put onto the brick of the chimney. Cabinets in the bathrooms, pantry and recycle room need finishing touches and I think that is it!

The Treenway Gang

Specialty Fleeces



Front row, left to right: Teri, Karen Selk, Carol
Back row, left to right: Susanna, Terry and Karen Ely

Here we are, the crew that operates the goings on of Treenway. We are thrilled to welcome Karen Ely, now known as Ely to avoid confusion with Karen Selk, as our newest member.

Carol, Ely and Karen talk to you on the phone, answer emails, make your invoices, pack your parcels and get them ready for the 10:30 mail pick up by either John or Michael, our friendly posties. Besides this, there is packaging of our products from 50kg bales into 25g or 50g bags, keeping on top of inventory so we know when to ask one of our dyers to put something in one of their magic colour pots so Judy can wind those beautiful little skeins of thread and ribbons for stitching and embellishing.

Teri (aka Xpresso) is our numbers gal. She keeps our books and inventory straight and she is always accompanied by Emily her darling toy poodle. Susanna is the artist with layout and colour and a master with the design programs on the computer. She helps create our style. Terry knows where the money is and where and when it can go out. It is a fine balancing act for a small business to keep it rolling forward at just the right pace. Karen is the manager who oversees all that is done and keeps working with our products in new and creative ways.

Our dyers – Bean, Charlene, Cheryl, Jill, Linda and Mary – and Judy, our amazing packager, all work in their homes. We are all here to serve you, our valued and loved customers. We carry through each step of the process of getting your silk to you with as much care as we can. Even with all this conscious effort, mistakes can happen. If that happens to you, please let us know so we can make it right. Your satisfaction is our goal.

We have a few of our specialty fleeces left and are lifting our one fleece limit! Fleeces are listed below by Fleece Number, Weight and Description.

Pricing

All fleeces except Merino – \$26.50/kg (\$12.05/lb)
Merino – \$29.50/kg (\$13.40/lb)

Notes

1. Prices in Canadian funds.
2. Weights in kilograms. 1 kg = 2.2 lbs
3. Fleece numbers with an A or B at the end are one half of a fleece.

English Leicester

A heavy curly lustrous wool, even in length and fibre diameter. Show off these lovely staples using them as surface texture in felting or weaving. English Leicester is one of the Old English breeds developed in Leicestershire and dates back to the 1700s. For many years it was the most popular long wool sheep in the North of England with a dual purpose of large meat body, with a heavy strong fleece of wool renowned for its wavy crimp and big round locks.

#13	2.8kg	Dark grey with brown tips
#16	3.0kg	Near black with brown tip
#18	3.0kg	Mid grey with silver tips
#19	3.1kg	Near black with brown tips
#21	3.4kg	Mid to silver grey

Perendale

A Cheviot and Romney cross. An easy care breed that can forage in the hill country of New Zealand. It is in the finer crossbred range with exceptional spring which gives good shape retention to knitwear and adds bulk and stand-up ability to carpet pile. High insulation factor in blankets.

#108A	2.2kg	White	#108B	2.3kg	White
#112	3.0kg	White	#113	3.4kg	White
#114	3.4kg	White	#115	3.4kg	White
#116	3.4kg	White	#117	3.5kg	White
#119	3.7kg	White			

Romney

A lustrous fleece. Locks hang separately with minimal cross fibres between them. Uniformity of crimp from the butt to the tip of a lock is typical. Has the finest fibre diameter of all the long wool breeds, with a spinning count from 40-48 (38-31 microns). Spins easily with a low grease content that makes for a very light shrinking fleece. Can be used for many products, from sweaters to outerwear to carpets. The Romney originates from the wet fens of south-east England.

#95	2.6kg	Mid grey to light brown
#97	2.8kg	Dark grey to light brown
#101	3.4kg	Grey to brown

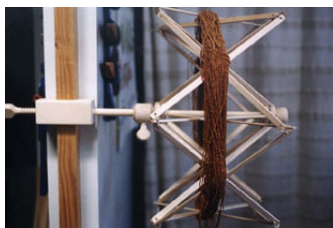
Specials

Spring Cleaning Sale – most items 50% off

We have just finished inventory and cleaning up the place and have taken note of items we are overstocked with. We are passing along a good savings to you to help us with our spring cleaning.

Special Tip for Working with Reeled Silk Yarn

Reeled yarn is extremely slippery and requires some special handling to avoid frustration. A ball winder should NOT be used with reeled silks. The yarn will slip off, making a tangled mess. Wind the balls by hand, or better still, wind your warp and shuttle directly from the skein placed on a yarn holder (swift). It is best to clamp the swift sideways rather than straight up. Investing in a couple of swifts and bypassing the ball stage saves time and tangle no matter what type of silk yarn you are working with.



#0 Reeled Silk Yarn

Reeled or filament silk is the highest quality yarn and is very white and shiny. The cocoons are inspected and sorted, as only those with a perfect shape can be used for the reeling procedure. Cocoons are soaked in warm water to soften the gummy sericin. The silken strand from a single cocoon is too fine to use alone, so individual filaments of 6-20 cocoons are unraveled at the same time, traveling through a very small eye. The softened sericin dries, hardens and binds the strands together to become one thread the size of a human hair. It takes many cocoons to make a yarn as thick as the #0.

The weight of this yarn makes it popular with knitters. Our projects have worked up nicely with 3.75mm (5US) needles with a gauge of 24 sts and 32 rows = 4 inches in a stocking stitch.

This is our heaviest filament yarn and it is extremely shiny, soft and 'scrunchy'. For weaving, it is good combined with



#0 Reeled Silk yarn knit on 3.75mm needles (24st x 32 rows = 4")

our lustrous 20/10 or 20/6 spun silk and the matte finish of our 10/2 noil yarn. The sett is between 10-14 epi depending on whether it is woven in tabby or twill.

The skeins weigh approx 160-180g (5.6 – 6.3 oz) and have approx 1,450 yd/lb or approx 175 – 230 yd/skein. 50% discount!

Sale Price: \$138.30/kg (approx \$22.15–24.90/skein)

Hide & Seek Scarf with #0 – Directions

A favourite childhood game of hide and seek can be played with threads in weaving. The very shiny #0 and the matte noil 10/2, take turns coming forward to show off this simple, but elegant scarf. The lustrous 20/10 could also be added to the warp for an additional change of texture and sheen.

The scarf is threaded in a simple four shaft point twill with the shiny reeled thread showing in one diagonal and the textured noil thread showing on the opposite diagonal.

Warp

#0 reeled silk in natural (approx 175 – 230 yd/skein)
approx 150 yd for one scarf or 250 yd for two scarves
10/2 noil silk in natural (approx 450 yd/skein)
approx 126 yd for one scarf or 210 yd for two scarves

Winding Sequence

8 x #0
(7 x noil, 7 x #0) 6 times

Width

Approx 7.5 inches

Sett

12 epi

Length

3 yd long for one scarf of 72 inches plus fringe
5 yd for two scarves of the same length

Threading

Twill and Reverse Twill
First 8 threads of #0 are threaded: 1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4
Next 7 noil threads are threaded: 3,2,1,4,3,2,1
Next 7 #0 threads are threaded: 2,3,4,1,2,3,4
Repeat the threading of the 7 noil followed by the 7 #0 five more times



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Beat

16 ppi

Weft

#0 – approx 150 yd for one scarf or 250yd for two scarves

Treading

Twill treading: 1 2, 2 3, 3 4, 4 1 – repeat

20/10 Spun Silk Yarn

We designed this yarn specifically for our knitters. It is creamy soft with an interesting “cord” look. We had our manufacturers take five strands of our most popular 20/2 yarn and ply it together. It knits beautifully and highlights textured stitches. Bev, our knitter, has knit an overall acorn pattern and cable design using 4.5mm (7US) needles with a gauge of 20 sts and 32 rows = 4 inches. Both the acorn pattern and cable have a wonderful hand. She used the same 4.5mm needles in a stocking stitch with a gauge of 25sts and 28 rows = 4 inches.

For weaving, it is sett between at 8 to 14 epi depending on whether it is woven in a tabby or twill. The 20/10 combines nicely with other exotic yarns like cashmere, merino and chenille for luscious woven throws, just right to snuggle under with a good book. This spun yarn does not have a tendency to pill because of all the plies.

The skeins weigh approx 120-130g (4.2-4.5 oz) and have approx 115 – 135 yd/skein.

50% discount!

Sale Price: \$125.50/kg (approx \$15-16 per skein)



120/2 Spun Silk Yarn on cones – 200g

This is our finest yarn and made by the same factory that makes our 20/2, 30/2 and 60/2. The quality and twist is as good as the above mentioned yarns. The yarn is extremely fine, like a sewing thread (though not suitable for sewing). It is perfect for fine weaving and is often used by spinners for plying. The strength of this yarn always amazes us. The spring cleaning price is a perfect time to try a fine yarn. It is sett at 120 – 140 epi. depending on the weave structure.

The yarn on the cone weighs 200g and there is approx 1,200 yd/cone.

50% discount!

Sale Price: \$23.80/cone

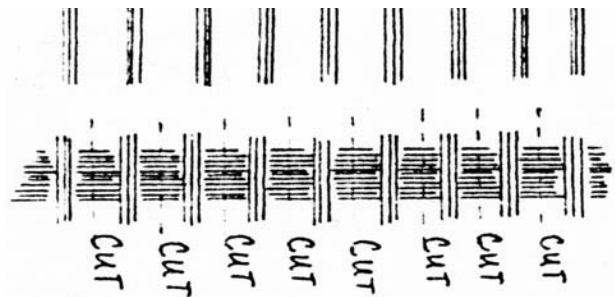
Silk Chenille

Chenille is a woven yarn. The first warp is groupings of fine threads with empty spaces between them, similar to the diagram below.

After the weft has been inserted, the completed fabric is cut between the groupings of warp threads. Each group of warps with little fuzzies protruding from each side becomes a chenille yarn. It is round and fuzzy like a caterpillar. Wow, isn't everything relating to textiles absolutely fascinating.



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We worked closely with our Chinese supplier to design this elegant yarn. The core has some synthetic fibre, so will take the dye differently than the fuzzy part of the yarn. It is much lighter in weight than rayon chenille and has a deep warmth in feel and look. The woven cloth is cozy and plush, yet refined. We prefer the feel of cloth with another silk in the warp direction. Cloth woven or knit with silk chenille is perfect for shirts, vests, and scarves.



Warp: 8/2 Reeled Silk
Weft: Silk Chenille
8 Shaft Block Twill, Sett 22 epi

Different sizes of warp produce heavier and finer cloth. We used 8/2 as the warp, sett at 22 epi in an 8 shaft block twill. We also used 30/2 as the warp, sett at 32 epi in a 4 shaft twill.

The weight of this yarn is also very good for knitting. Our projects have worked up nicely with 28 stitches and 30 rows = 4 inches using 4.5mm needles (7US) in a cable stitch. The stocking stitch is knit at 20 stitches and 28 rows = 4 inches using 3.75mm needles (5US).

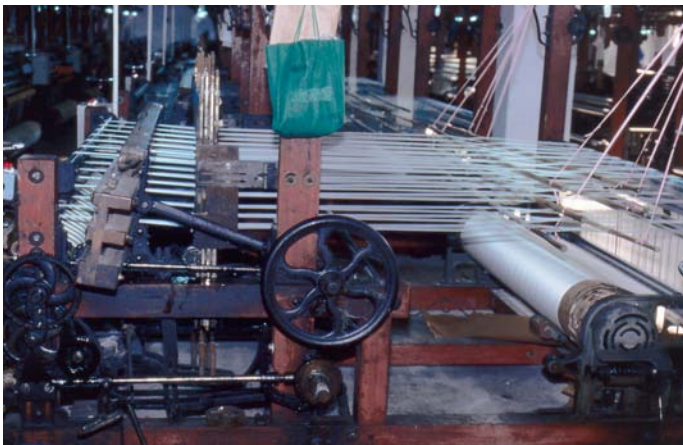
The skeins weigh approx 125-130g (4.35 - 4.5oz) and have approx 425 yd/skein.

50% discount!

Sale Price: \$149.50/kg (approx \$18.70 per skein)

13mm (7/16 inch) Silk Ribbon

Our ribbon is 100% silk in a plain weave. It was absolutely fascinating visiting the factory that makes our ribbons. Everything in the weaving room is done in multiples. Tiny warps are wound, tiny bobbins are wound and tiny warps are woven into yards and yards



of high quality ribbons. All of the ribbons are woven using fine reeled silk which still has the sericin in it. This acts as a natural sizing. The warp threads are two strands of fine silk that are twisted together. There are 300 fine warp threads per inch. The weft is a single silk strand.

The loom is set up to maximize efficiency in weaving the narrow ribbon bands. Approximately 14 ribbons are woven simultaneously across the loom with another layer of 14 ribbons above that and another 14 above that so that three layers of ribbons are woven at once. There are 42 tiny shuttles and bobbins carrying the weft back and fourth at one time. Observing the winding of all those thousands of fine threads into numerous layers and sections onto the loom was akin to watching an orchestra of spiders building a massive web. We have the sericin removed (degummed) before the ribbons are sent to us.

Stitchers love this ribbon particularly for doing flowers.

Knitters enjoy working with this width because it offers such interesting texture and eye appeal. As the ribbon is gathered into the knitted cloth, it folds and twists, leaving each stitch unique. We used 8mm needles with a gauge of 16 stitches and 16 rows = 4 inches. The feel and weight of the sweater is pure luxury.



The skeins have approx 155 yd.

50% discount!

Sale Price: \$32/skein

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Silk 55% / Cotton 45% Spinning Fibre 100g packages

Cotton is a cellulose fibre derived from the seed of the plant, similar to milkweed fluff. The cotton plant is a tropical and subtropical shrub. After the plant finishes flowering, a seedpod or boll forms. The mature boll opens to let the air further dry the seeds. It is important to harvest at this time before rain. A downy fibre called lint surrounds the seeds inside the boll. Separating the lint from the seed was a difficult job made much easier by Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin, which squeezes and 'saws' the seed from the fibre.



The fibre is graded for length, uniformity, colour and fineness. Carding aligns the fibres and removes foreign matter and short fibres before spinning. Higher quality cotton is also combed before spinning, providing a stronger, more uniform, smoother fibre with greater lustre.



Cotton is the most common of all the natural fibers because it is comfortable, strong, and absorbent, washes easily and has a fair amount of elasticity. Short staple length and depletion of soil nutrients are its weakest properties.

Silk blended with cotton adds more length, elasticity and shine to the cotton, making it much easier to spin and more affordable than 100% silk. Yarn made of these combined fibres is a pleasure to weave, with the hand of the cloth being soft, smooth and cool, perfect for summer garments and scarves.

The hand of this sliver blend is creamy and lustrous with little balls of texture. The staple is longer than 100% cotton at 1½".

50% discount!

Sale Price: \$8.40/100g

Embroidery Silk Thread and Ribbon

50% off 47 colours

We currently have all of our 100 hand-dyed colours wound into mini skeins in three types of silk threads (10 yards each) and in 3.5mm ribbon (in 5 yard lengths). We will be discontinuing these mini-skeins in 47 colours.

Sale Price:	
20/2 Spun	\$1.25/10 yd
Fine Cord	\$1.45/10 yd
8/2 Reeled	\$1.45/10 yd
3.5mm Ribbon	\$2.35/5 yd

Emerald Dream #9		Gypsy Passion #958
Sea Lyric #11		Cherry Blossom #47
Black Forest #208		Diva #45
Irish Rover #954		Fireweed #959
Celadon #213		Slate #54
Pistachio #41		Platinum #25
Smokey Topaz #17		Silver Lining #50
November Maverick #226		Soft Iris #216
Champagne #35		Love-in-a-mist #218
Spiced Cognac #34		Silk Pyjamas #219
Tiramisu #33		Wisteria #217
Canyon #224		Winter Solstice #3
Sand Dune #9517		Blueberry Haze #2
Evening Spirit #9510		Midnight Blue #1
Wild Bordeaux #209		Intrepid #48
Harlequin #43		French Blue #955
Creole Spice #222		Persian Night #220
Pondicherry #21		Danish Blue #206
Flamingo #30		Peacock #207
Christmas Cactus #27		Turkish Bath #19
Hollyhock #26		Mermaid Tears #14
Cantaloupe #31		Glacier #214
Persimmon #9513		Sea Spray #16
Paprika #204		

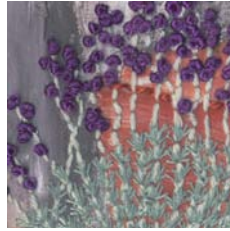
Following, are some creative ideas for taking advantage of this great opportunity for projects and embellishments.

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continued....
Specials

20/2

In addition to stitching, this yarn makes beautiful twisted cords, kumihimo braids, tassels and buttons.



Needlework by
Diana Caleb

Fine Cord

This yarn has a firm twist. It is very interesting in stitching and is excellent for making cords for many purposes. The kumihimo braiders also like working with this thread as do jewelry makers to fashion cords for their necklaces.



8/2

This yarn is shiny and plump and adds another dimension to stitching. It makes lush tassels, kumihimo braids and cords for many things.



Bullion Twisted Cord

We use an electric drill to make lush colourful cords in minutes. There is a lot of take up in the length of thread being twisted. Depending on the amount of twist you apply, you will need to add up to one third as much length to the threads than your finished cord.



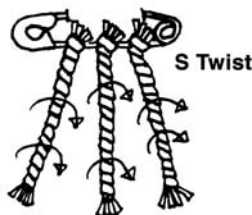
Above: shoelaces
Right: necklace cord

Colours can be a subtle mix, dramatic barber pole, thick or thin. Adding ribbon gives a great textural effect. This is the fastest and most fun way of making cords and bands.

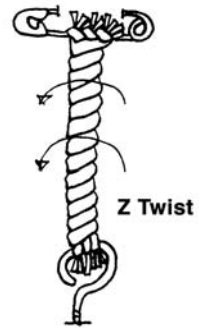


Procedure

- Measure the yarns on a warping board or similar device with two stationary points
- Get as many groupings wound as required – we usually do three
- Anchor the ends of all groups of threads around a stable object or onto a safety pin
- The safety pin can be pinned to the back of a chair or couch



- Insert a cup hook into an electric drill in place of a drill bit
- Attach the looped ends of the first group of threads to the cup hook
- Hold thread taut and run the drill forward until the group wants to twist back on itself (S Twist)
- Remove the threads from the drill and keep taut. Keep the twist in by taping the end to the floor or table
- Repeat with the remaining groups of threads until all have been twisted in one direction
- Keep taut and join all the thread groups back onto the cup hook in the drill
- Twist using the reverse rotation of the drill until the twist is evenly balanced (Z Twist)
- Tie an overhand knot in each end to secure the twist or use the wrapping method shown in tassel making



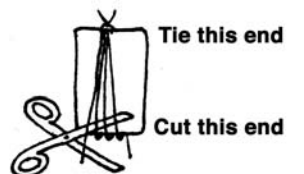
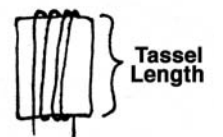
Tassels

Tassels are playful and provocative the way they swing and sway, flirt and dance. They add a sense of festivity to any celebration, elegance to clothing and furniture and a feeling of fun to hats, musical instruments and animals.



Procedure

- Wind yarn around the right size of firm cardboard to get the length of tassel you desire. The more yarn wound makes a fuller more luxurious tassel.
- Cut another piece of yarn or twisted cord to tie the threads together at one end of the cardboard. Cut threads at the other end. Form the neck by wrapping.
- Lay a loop of strong, smooth yarn on the tassel. The looped end hangs down beyond the neck area to be wrapped



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New Products

continued...
Specials

SSI Series

Treenway and our dyers, Cheryl, Mary and Charlene, have added two new and delicious colourways to our much enjoyed hand painted tussah silk sliver.

Forest Ridge Fandango and Saltair Samba will widen the spectrum for your spinning, silk fusion, needle felting and all fibre arts. You can view these colour combination at www.treenwaysilks.com/ssi_series.html

The fibre is available in two sizes:

25g (approx .9 oz) \$9.70 each
\$9.20 each for three or more

50g (approx 1.8 oz) \$18.00 each

Forest Ridge Fandango



Saltair Samba



From left to right: sliver, silk fusion, handspun, hand knit

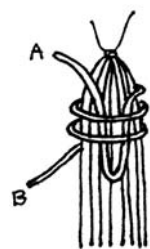
30/2 Spun Tussah Silk

When our last shipment of Tussah Silk yarn ran out, we had to work very hard at getting another shipment. A wild silkworm produces this yarn. (You can find a lot of information about the tussah silkworm and the making of tussah yarn and cloth in this issue and previous issues of the newsletter).

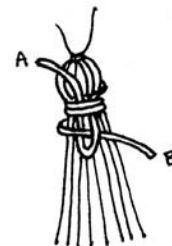
Our newest shipment is not exactly the same as the previous shipment but it is that lovely tussah colour in a 30/2 weight. The unique colouring blends subtly with all Bombyx naturals (reeled, spun and noil) to make a sophisticated cloth. The weight combines nicely with our 30/2 spun silk, chenille, silk/wool, silk/cashmere, 2P silk/cotton, silk/bamboo and silk/ramie for clothing.

A good sett for this yarn is 32-36 epi depending on the weave structure.

The price will not differ greatly from our previous supply of tussah yarn (\$23.10/100g) but we will not have the final price until the shipment arrives in about two weeks.



- Wrap over the two strands that form the loop as many times you want for neck thickness.
- Wrap from the top of the tassel downward to the loop
- Insert working end B through loop
- Pull up on other end A, to secure loop under the neck
- Cut off ends



This is the basic tassel, which can be embellished with numerous necks, beads and over skirts with small tassels, cocoon heads and much more.

NOTE on SPECIALS

1. Prices do not include shipping.
2. Specials end August 31st, 2010.
3. Regular 10% Discount: Our normal Bulk Discount for orders of silk yarns and fibres over \$150.00 CDN does not apply to Specials items.

Remember

All prices are in Canadian funds.
Approximate exchange rate: \$1.00 Cdn = \$1 US

Web Specials

In addition to our newsletter specials, we have specials posted on our website. We notify everyone on our email list each time we post new specials. You can also check our website periodically. See the Specials button in the drop-down menu or go to www.treenwaysilks.com/sale.html.

If you would like to be added to this list, please send us your full name and email address to info@treenwaysilks.com. Please add us to your address book to ensure you receive our emails.

Asian Journal

Tropical Tussah (tasar), *Antheraea mylita* Orissa and Chhattisgarh, India

Our story of tropical tasar ends with weaving this wild silk.

Weaving

Weaving and Reeling Societies

Weaving and reeling societies exist throughout the tasar region. The weavers elect a board of 10 directors which operates under the Director of Textiles of Orissa state. The number of society members varies but they are all assisted by the government. In the village we visited there were 1,500 weavers and 11 societies. We spent our day with Hingula Tasar Society which was established in 1976. It has 150 members and 150 looms. Not all looms are active at once because there are other chores and field work to attend to as well. In this particular village they do not hold any land. They are free to weave whenever they want, they are not held to any time frame. The looms are in each weavers home and the whole family assists in the work.

There are three categories of weavers in this village.

1. Those dependent on the society who are poor and have no working capital. They get the raw material from the society and sell only to the society. They do not reel.

2. This group has some money and they are more skilled craftsmen. Sometimes they take designs and raw materials from the society. They can sell within the society or elsewhere. Some of them can reel.
3. These weavers are fully independent. They can take raw materials and designs from the society or shop at the market for their yarns and create their own designs.

The designs and raw materials are given to the weavers by the society and the weavers are paid according to the complexity of the design and therefore their skill. The society obtains their designs from The Weavers Service Centre. It is a design centre under the umbrella of the Department of Textiles. Each state has a team of artists that create new designs and colourways appropriate for the textile work being done in their region. For example, in some states the artisans do mostly embroidery because they are semi-nomadic people while in other states they are mostly

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*Above: Ikat weaving.
Below: plain weaving*



weavers. During our first visits to India all the designs were worked on graph paper with pencil and then very carefully painted. Today most of them are computer generated. In the tasar rearing region, most of the sari cloth has a weft faced ikat design with narrow patterned edges. Cloth made for household items is plain weave or simple four shaft twill variations.

Another village we visited had 350 pit looms and 1,000 families. All the family members are involved in weaving for 8-10 months a year. They work in the rice fields from July to September. These weavers are rich in the sense of land, holding 2-4 acres. Some of the family members farm while others work at making cloth.

Looms

Winding bobbins to feed the looms is done using simple equipment, just like we have. The bobbin winder itself is usually larger than what we have because the villages utilise old bicycle wheels or whatever else they have available.

The looms in the society we have been discussing are simple 2 shaft floor looms similar to what we use.



Above and Below: Winding the silk



They usually have a flying shuttle. The pattern on the edges is accomplished with a separately attached mini 4 shaft apparatus.

In many other regions of India, including Chhattisgarh, the looms are pit looms. The floors in the weavers' homes are earthen and a pit is dug in the floor to house the loom peddles.

The warp beam and breast beam are approx. 24" off the floor. The weaver sits on a pile of cushions on the floor with his feet operating the peddles in the pit.



Loom similar to what we use.



Pit loom

Dyeing

Acid dyes are used to colour the yarn or cloth. In some cases one household will do the reeling, dyeing and weaving whereas other households will just weave. Women and girls always do the reeling. Both men and women weave, with the majority being men, and men do all of the dyeing.

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Above: Preparing the dye baths.

Below: Freshly dyed yarns and textiles.



Finishing the cloth

After the cloth has been hung to dry, it is finished by softening. Until recently this was done by rolling the cloth around a smooth log and then beating it with a 10 pound mallet for about 45 minutes.

Today calendaring machines are used that press the cloth between two rollers. This machine is run by electricity.



Calendaring machine and an old fashioned mallet used to beat the silk

I have been saying girls help with the reeling. In all the villages I have visited, the children go to school dressed in their uniforms. The work they do with the family is after school.



Children in school uniforms

The next newsletter will continue with a more in depth picture of the muga caterpillar.