

# Pine Needle Weaving

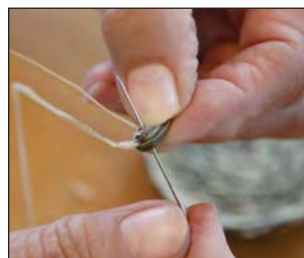
This medallion craft comes to you from Louise Gatlin, (Tsimshian). Louise makes pine needle baskets, medallions and other items, (including beautiful afghans) to give to people with cancer to show that she cares.

**Materials:** Pine needles of any kind, (longer, greener ones are best); a tapestry needle; raffia of any color; adornments such as ribbons, feathers, buttons, etc.; and a deep tray to hold warm water.

**1 To start:** Soak pine needles in warm water until soft. Split a strand of raffia and thread the tapestry needle. Bend a pine needle sprig into a circle. Holding your thumb on the circle, loop the raffia around and through—from the back side to the front and around—several times. Keep the hole small in the center small by pulling the long end of the pine needles after the first few wraps. Make sure to keep track of front side of the medallion. In the beginning it is important to keep the loops tightly together.



**2** Keep turning and holding the pine needles in place while looping the raffia (back to front) from the outer row through the mid-point of the row below. Every 2-3 loops, thread the needle through a loose loop in the raffia and pull to secure. When nearing the end of the raffia thread, leave a long end. With more raffia threaded onto the tapestry needle, begin looping by including the first raffia thread end for a few loops. Snip the remaining pieces later.



**3 Adding more needles:** Make one stitch and leave a loop. Push the sheath end of the new needles under the loop and on top of the tail end of the first needles. Pull the raffia loop tight. You can feel if it is laying flat with your thumb and forefinger. Continue winding and stitching until the coil is the size you want.



Louise says that keeping the sheaths on the ends of the pine needles makes a nice pattern. However, you can remove yours if you prefer a smoother look.

**TIP:** Split the tapestry needle through the raffia loop below if you want a braided look.



**4 Finishing:** At the end, back-wrap 2-3 times, and then sew under the raffia toward the end again, pulling tight. Snip the end of the pine needles, and all of the long raffia threads. (Do not tie knots in the work, they will show.) Stitch on buttons or feathers, and so on, as you prefer.

Gathering needles can be great fun. Louise and her sisters made a day-trip to do needle harvesting in the mountains. “Making and giving my creations away is a way I can express gratitude for my own good health,” she says. Louise and her siblings lost their mother, a brother, and other relatives, to cancer. It’s one reason why Louise stays as healthy as possible. Twice a week she does water aerobics. She is also careful about what she eats.



Louise Gatlin, Tsimshian

*For more detailed instructions, including how to do a complete basket with a lid, visit the Northwest Basket Weavers website at: [www.nwbasketweavers.org/pnbaskets/](http://www.nwbasketweavers.org/pnbaskets/)*