



Artist Profile

Helen Efaw

Helen Efaw began making baskets in 1996 and now runs her own business, "Baskets by Helen." She uses original designs, along with many traditional Appalachian shapes and techniques which are both functional and decorative. Her oak handle baskets are handwoven using wet, high quality reeds, which makes them pliable for weaving. The finished baskets are then immersed into a handmade West Virginia Black Walnut stain bath.

She writes, "I live and weave in the family home where I was born and raised, in Marion County, West Virginia. The house is nestled in a small valley, surrounded by gently sloping hills. As a child, I loved the outdoors and gathered flowers, nuts, berries, roots, and bark for food and teas.

Today I still scan these same foothills, gathering many of the same things: from which I make the dyes and stains for my baskets. While still quite young, I found pleasure in creating and working with my hands. Over the years I became involved in various Arts and Crafts. Quilting was my favorite, I loved creating new designs specific to the

individual for which I was making the Quilt. In 1996 I made my first basket a twill weave market basket. After that everything else went 'on the back burner' including the velvet crazy patch quilt that was to be my daughter's Christmas present; it was as though I couldn't get enough! I bought reed and searched the local libraries for information on basket weaving. During the next few months I 'learned by doing.' Every time someone would call, he or she would find me weaving. Each 'Basket by Helen' is created with the thought in mind that it will last through many generations."

Helen is an artist at the Pricketts Fort Christmas Market each year and sells her work at Tamarack, which features the Best of West Virginia.



Fort Interpreter Mary Rose Mustachio makes a basket