

Design A Grass Basket

Paint a basket design inspired by natural berry dyes!

People across Alaska use the berries, bark and leaves of various plants to make colorful dyes. One way to use these dyes is to color beach grass, then weave it into baskets. Try making your own colorful basket design!

Left: Coiled Grass Basket by Lizzie Chimiugak, UA81-003-0078AB.

Materials Needed:

Grass Basket template, watercolor paints, paintbrushes
Optional: Paper, pencil, crayons or colored pencils.

Instructions:

Step 1: Look at the basket pictures on the next page. What colors do you see? What kind of patterns did the artist make?

Step 2: Plan your own grass basket design. Think about what kinds of colors will be in your design.

You can copy a design from the basket pictures, or come up with your own!

Optional: Sketch a picture of

Berry Dyes in Alaska

People across Alaska use the berries, bark, and leaves of various plants to make colorful dyes. Here are a few examples:

- The Dena'ina people traditionally use highbush cranberries or currants to make **red**, and blueberries for **purple**.
- The Gwich'in Dené (Athabascan) people traditionally use the berries of the strawberry spinach plant to make **red**.
- The Yup'ik people traditionally dye beach grass with lowbush cranberries and **black** with crowberries.
- You can also use raspberries to make **purple**, cloudberry or strawberries for **pink**, or soapberries for **red**.

Dying fabric with blueberries.

Plants are used to dye materials such as beach grass, porcupine quills, hides, birchbark,

Grass Basket Template

