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# Etobicoke Handweavers & Spinners Guild

## Newsletter for May 2021

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### A Message from our President

Well, here we are on the cusp of summer. Although lately it has been a harbinger of what's to come. Sweltering, so I'm told. That suggests we may have to switch from spinning and knitting wool, to cotton, flax and other cooler fibres. Check out the knitting update and the Flax plant-a-long.

Our year so far has been far from normal, but we stayed calm and carried on. The Zoom drop-ins have been a lifesaver and we will continue them through the summer. Same Zoom details.

Our membership has expanded to include members from outside Etobicoke, thanks to the online format we are working with.

We have exciting programs and workshops coming up as Sharon has been busy setting things up for the next two years. Lots to look forward to.

Thanks to Cindy, our new newsletter editor, for taking on the task. Please continue to share reviews, tips, tricks and all other sorts of fibre news.

And now ... on with the show.

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## Membership Update

*By Susan Lapell*

As we near the end of this interesting year, I'm thrilled to announce that we have 42 NPCC members and 12 zoomers. Welcome all newcomers--Bethany Garner has just this week joined our ranks.

## Workshops

### [Robyn Spady workshop: novelties, tips and tricks](#)

*By SharonRose Airhart*

Barbara, a member of a neighbouring weavers' guild, said it best: "I have, for a long time, wanted to take a class with Robyn, so the class was perfect."

One of 18 non-members to take part in the May 15 Robyn Spady workshop, Barbara thanked EHS for opening the session to other guilds. There were a total of 40 participants.

"Opening our workshops -- and meetings and drop-ins -- to people who are not members of the Etobicoke guild is exactly the kind of outreach we are emphasizing," says Carolyn Ramos, guild president. "First, it leverages our capacity to use technology to keep weaving and spinning education moving forward in spite of the pandemic. Not all groups have that capacity; we're happy to share. Second, it brings new people and ideas into our guild. We have been enriched over the last months through the ZOOM memberships of weavers and spinners from many provinces and states."

Carolyn Ramos adds that technology has also provided a unique environment in which guilds like Etobicoke Handweavers & Spinners (EHS) are able to engage widely-known and far-flung stars of the weaving world to teach and showcase their work.

Robyn Spady, for example, who lives in the U.S. state of Washington, is an acknowledged leader in weaving innovation and education. She launched the popular digital magazine [Heddlecraft](#), in 2016 and is also known for her workshops across North America and her articles in publications like Handwoven and Shuttle, Spindle & Dyepot as well as from her monographs and instructional video, Totally Twill.

The first of her two presentations May 15 was Great Weave Structures for Colour and Texture, designed to give weavers the ability to incorporate novelty yarns into their work.

Robyn explained that we're often tempted by gorgeous, colourful knitting yarns but they're challenging to use. Even if they're stable enough to use as weft, or even warp, they're costly. She discussed the weave structures and techniques that showcase novelty yarns, providing images of the drafts and the cloth.

The second presentation, Weaving TnT: Dynamite Tips 'n Techniques for Every Weaver provided dozens of ideas to enhance every weaver's skill set and toolkit. From dollar store items like perforated tongs to facilitate warping with several threads to homemade tools like a jig to make repair heddles, Robyn's treasure chest of tips is the result of more than 50 years of weaving experience.

"The opportunity to learn from Robyn Spady was not only enriching, it was fun. I'm delighted that Robyn has agreed to join us again and will be our special program guest at our first meeting in September, 2021," says program chair SharonRose Airhart.

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## Spinning Update

By Joan McKenzie

### Workshops:

Two workshops, Spinning Silk Bricks and Silk Blending, were held in March and April this year – taught by Julia Lee, of Provenance Yarns, and a member of the Toronto Guild. Building on comments from what to do with the Silk bricks that were in the Sister Mary Collette (*aka The Spinning Nun*) Stash last summer, it was decided to do a workshop on how to spin them.

Julia was engaged to teach the workshop, and discussions on the content soon revealed that she had so much content to cover that two workshops were proposed. Due to the pandemic restrictions, the workshops were held via Zoom. Each workshop consisted of two 90 minute sessions, a week apart. And it worked very well. The workshop fibres were introduced at the first session, and then spinners had time to practice, before delving deeper into the subject at the next session.

The second session was on Silk Blends. Julia supplied a fibre kit with some of her signature blends, as well as some base fibres for us to make our own blends. The second workshop was recorded as some participants wanted to take the workshop but were unavailable at the time of the zoom. It also gave participants a chance to review the workshop sessions. From the feedback, all went well! The sessions were posted as a private YouTube, and secured by providing the emails of those authorized to view.

### Spinning rentals:

Yes – some of our equipment is available for rental!!

Here's what is currently available:

- Lendrum spinning wheel
- Electric Eel Nano spinning wheel
- Blending hackle
- Blending board
- Drum carder (the big Lendrum one).

Pickup is from Joan McKenzie's front porch. When NPCC is open again, rentals of more equipment will be available.

### Spinning and other Challenge for 2020/2021:

The Challenge is still ON! Many of you received a little bag of fibre goodies containing some fibre to spin, or some yarn bits, and a suggested item to make.

Please send a photo to Jennifer James of what you have done with your baggie for the June meeting Show and Tell.

### High Park Llama

The yarn that was spun commercially was a great success. It sold out online in just 24 hours. I will advise when the next batch will be available; likely at the end of 2021.

The Llamas are getting a new house that is currently being built. Be sure to visit once we are able to do so!

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## ***Spinning Tips & Tricks***

***By Joan McKenzie***

*Do you have a length of roving that has been lying around and has been squished so that it's compacted? Try steaming it over a boiling kettle, or over a pot. It works wonders. You can also put it in a steamer basket, or on a baking rack on top of a pot of boiling water, but be sure to check it often to see how it's doing. (Found on Facebook).*

## **Weaving Update**

***By Karen Fowler***

As we are closed down at NPCC, I am sure our looms are missing us. I hope we will be back soon.

## **Weaving Tips & Tricks**

***By Joan McKenzie***

*Need to organize your reeds, raddles, and lease sticks? SharonRose Airhart passed on a great tip on a Friday zoom: organize them using IKEA's Hutton wine racks! I ordered 2 and had them delivered, and voila – my reeds/etc. are now organized. I can even fit in the warp spacers too.*



Here's the before (Left) and after (Right) photos. Note that you need 2 racks stacked one on top of the other to hold items for looms wider than 24", so they don't topple over.

## **For the Love of Twills**

***By Claudia Clipsham***

Thirty-plus years ago, I was drawn to weaving twills: specifically, to the play of twill lines across a multi-coloured warp, trying to create a flow of colour across a varying background. An example is below, left.



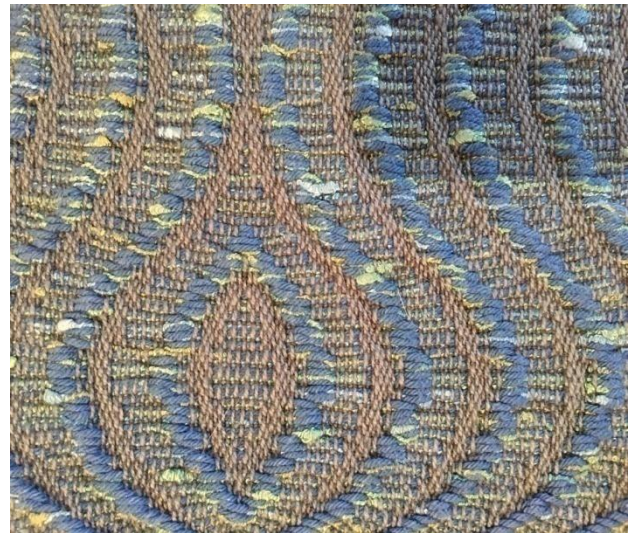
Upon returning to weaving after retirement, twills still exerted their magic. This time, playing with the shapes and variations of twill lines that could be created using 16 shafts was fascinating. I yearned to create curves across the fabric! One of the most useful references to guide that exploration was (and continues to be) Bonnie Inouye's book, *Exploring Multishaft Design*.

As you can see in the picture above right, undulating twill was interesting, but the fabric wasn't all that stable, and the curves that were possible were small.

Another article by Bonnie Inouye in a series on weaving curves in *Weavezine* suggested another alternative: weaving a block weave such as overshoot, arranging the blocks to allow curves to be woven.

[Flowing Curves: Overshot and Weaving as Overshot by Bonnie Inouye on July 15, 2009.](#)

You can see the result on the right. It was fun – the curves were very satisfying. But, the resulting fabric was relatively heavy and not very drapable. Partly, this was because of the weight of the cotton I used, but it was also due to the tabby shots that were required to make the fabric stable. Someday I will try this again using fine silk.



In her second article in the series on weaving curves, Bonnie Inouye suggested using network drafting ([Flowing Curves: Network Drafted Twill by Bonnie Inouye, Weavezine, August 28, 2009](#)). In this approach, you can play with curves and interesting designs, while maintaining a consistent fabric structure such as twill, producing a fabric that is stable and drapable. This suggestion led to a completely new and exciting, but challenging, avenue for exploration. Both this article and Bonnie's book provided fuel to play and explore network drafting, but the learning curve was steep. I puzzled through the same pages over and over again, trying to understand in words, in drafting symbols, and in the actual interlacement of threads, what network drafting really meant.

In addition to the links to the articles by Bonnie Inouye listed above, there were several resources that helped to explore the fascinating world of network drafting:

- Bonnie's wonderful book, *Exploring Multishaft Design*, is out of print. However, she is revising it, and I was able to purchase a revised version of the first 7 chapters of her book by writing to her. You can write to her at [bonnieinouye@gmail.com](mailto:bonnieinouye@gmail.com). It's really worth the effort. There is enough material in this one book to fuel several lifetimes of inspired weaving explorations.

- One of the clearest and most straightforward introductions to network drafting is in the video and accompanying materials by Robyn Spady – [Totally Twill: Beyond the Basics](#) – available at Longthread Media
- Robyn’s online magazine, *Heddlecraft*, had one whole issue devoted to *Network-drafted Twills*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, March/April 2019.
- The classic reference is [Network Drafting: An Introduction by Alice Schlein](#), Bridgewater Press, 1994, available online.
- There are several articles by Schlein and others on network drafting in the wonderful book, *The Best of Weaver’s: Twill Thrills*, 2004, edited by Madelyn van der Hoogt, XRX Books.
- Eva Stossel’s [Weaving Blog](#) is a wealth of ideas about weaving, including network drafting.

I’m slowly trying to explore some of the possibilities afforded by network drafting. So far, I’ve just explored using a straight draw 16 shaft threading, using networking in the treadling only.

Here are some of the experiments, using hand-dyed wool at 24 epi.



### Lessons Learned

In my opinion, the scale of these weavings works well: at a medium distance, you can see both the large scale design and the interplay between individual threads.

- The potential to play with curves, and to experiment with positive and negative space, is fun.
- Playing with different twill structures – those that are based on a 1/3 structure throughout, vs. those that have some bands of plain weave interspersed between the twill lines – allows a wide range of design styles and fabric textures.
- Making colours flow across the warp is challenging – small differences in value end up looking very stripy in the final cloth. Next time I will try to use colours that are closer in value.
- While using a straight draw threading is very flexible, the extent to which twill lines can curve in a flow across the cloth is limited. It’s time to move on to the next warp, to play with network threading as well as treadling.

So you can guess what I will be doing in the near future!

## Knitting Update

*By Cindy O’Malley and Gloria Williams*

The Knit Night Study Group has been well attended, with an average of 18 participants each meeting. The last instructions were issued for the Mystery Knit-A-Long with the reveal planned for the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. All participants are asked to send in photos of their project, completed or not, to Jennifer, along with a brief write up describing:

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- The yarn used for the project
  - Any personalization (or off roading) incorporated into your project
  - Your favourite and least favourite of all the stitch patterns
  - Prominent lessons learned from this exercise.

A new challenge was issued for participants to knit a project using one of the stitch patterns from the KAL. It could be anything, like making a cowl with the Horseshoe Lace pattern, a mosaic bag, herringbone placements, or even a Brioche blanket. The possibilities are endless.

Based on some of the feedback that we have received from participants, there is always something new to learn at every meeting, and we are looking for experienced knitters to share their knowledge at one of our sessions. If you have something to share, contact Cindy or Gloria to get put on the schedule. One of the reasons we love this craft is that you never stop learning.

### [Knitting with Linen](#)

**By Cindy O'Malley**

Knitting with linen can be both rewarding and difficult at the same time. One of the most popular misconceptions about working with linen is trying to achieve gauge while knitting. Not only can that be painful on your hands as linen has no elasticity, but after laundering as per the manufacturer's instructions, you may discover all that pain was for not.

I had the opportunity to evaluate and knit with Fibra Natura's [Lina](#) and [Flax Lace](#) linen yarns. It wasn't the first time I had worked with linen, and experience paid off. I previously learned, the hard way I might add, that you must swatch and launder linen before you embark on the finished project. The characteristics of the knitted fabric change after laundering – all the air pockets before laundering, disappear when the fabric softens up. That's the gauge you need to know and strive to achieve.

Another important "need to know" is that knitted linen fabric will bias when it comes out of the dryer ... yes, the dryer. Commercial linen yarn will often state machine washable and tumble dry. The tumble dry stage softens the fabric, but never let it completely dry ... take it out of the dryer while still damp, pull it back into shape, then lay flat to finish drying. The result is a soft and beautiful fabric, perfect for summer.

For more information, you can review these articles on [KNITmuch.com](http://KNITmuch.com).

### [Knitting Tips & Tricks](#)

**By Susan Lapell**

*When knitting or crocheting a baby or child's sweater, particularly if you don't know if it's a boy or a girl, make buttonholes on both sides. When you find out, simply sew the buttons over the buttonholes on the side you want. Another advantage to doing this is that if you want to switch sides--perhaps for another child, cut off the buttons and place them over the buttonholes on the other side.*

## **Charity Outreach**

**By Gloria Williams**

Thanks to all who contributed to our outreach program for 2020 by donating items for distribution to charitable organizations.

COVID-19 and the pandemic created a challenge this year in more ways than one. Usually all the gathering, sorting and grouping for distribution happens in Studio C at Neilson Park Creative Centre. With NPCC closed to the guilds, members pitched in to help gather items and deliver them to my house

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for sorting. I missed the social aspect of discussing the items, admiring everyone's handiwork, and deciding which pile each item should be assigned. (My husband doesn't have the same appreciation for the stitches or the colours; he humoured me by admiring the work.) I would like to give a big thank you to Marlyn Rollauer and Jane MacFarlane who made the deliveries for me.

And now for the numbers . . .

We donated a total of 124 items. This was made up of hats for adults and children, scarves, wraps, shawls, cowls, children's sweaters, mitts and fingerless gloves, socks, and even a throw.

Items were knit, woven, crocheted and some commercially manufactured.

This year, items were delivered to The Salvation Army and Youth Without Shelter. Some members made donations directly to charities in their own neighbourhoods, and they were also included in our count.

As part of the Outreach program, the guild is usually involved in promoting EHS and NPCC at the Etobicoke Market and the various open house events at NPCC. We anticipate that we will be doing that again as soon as possible.

The Outreach programs are part of the information that is taken into consideration when EHS applies for the grant from the Toronto Arts Council.

Please continue to make and donate items to this guild activity. It's a great way to sample new stitches or try out new patterns, and remember that there is always a need for warm items each winter.

## Project Spotlight

### Knitted Lace Stole

**By Friedl Ballaban**

I recently knitted a lace stole. It has a story - - like so many pieces we create. It is definitely not a "pandemic stole;" I refuse to call it that. Instead, it is a tangible expression of special moments with family and fibre friends in Queensland, Australia.

I had the privilege to connect with many talented and enthusiastic weavers and spinners on the Gold Coast in Queensland, where my son and his family live. I'm an "honorary" member of the Gold Coast & Hinterland Weavers and Spinners, and continue to be inspired by them. I'm also in awe of the ravishing and opulent colours found in the southern hemisphere. I see these colours reflected in the hand-dyed fibres that have followed me home.

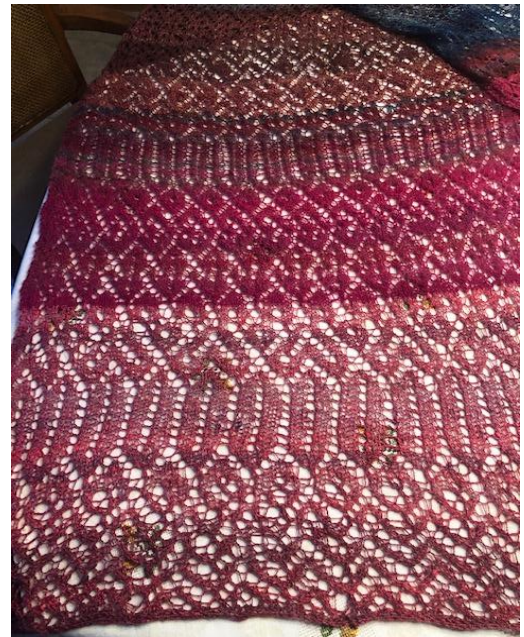
The braids of silk and silk blends remind me of the awesome flora and fauna I encountered. I look at them and hear the cheeky laugh of the Kookaburra and see the brilliant green/yellow/blue/red of Lorikeets. I marvel at the bare bark of the gum trees, the mystical green of a rainforest and the different shades of blue in the seas as the sun sets.

The fibre braids remind me of flowers with blooms bigger than my hand and names I would never be able to repeat. They remind me of many kind and generous Australian spinners and weavers who welcomed me into their homes, their studios, and onto their farm.



Fibre that is acquired “by happenstance” is often kept in a dark place to meditate. Every now and then, a new skein, a different colour, or another unusual blend joins the group. Silently, they wait until they are brought out into the light to be sorted and processed. After all, their whole existence is to “make something of themselves”.

One day last month, my assortment of colourful skeins demanded my attention. They let me know that a lace pattern would suit their disposition. They wanted to just hang out with each other, even if they were non-complementary. I have never been known to not yield to the call of fibres (the truth doesn't always roll easily off one's tongue). I had my own ideas of what the pattern should be - - and somehow it seemed that the envisioned lace pattern and the multi-coloured skeins just wouldn't get along.



There is so much to consider when designing a hand-made article: colour, shape, pattern, grist of yarn and plies (if hand spun), and a myriad of other factors. After consulting with my expert friends at an EHS zoom get together, it came down to just this: is the stole for my own use? Yes? Then do what makes you happy! Sage advice indeed.



**Friedl's Daughter-in-law to be, Doris, modeling this gorgeous and colourful lace stole.**

I completed the project in record time. Even though I have committed quite a few fibre faux pas (missed some yarn over's (yo), inserted additional yo, not coordinating change of colour with change in pattern, used yarns with different grist, etc.), I had a wonderful time of relentless knitting - and loving it!

The pattern consists of 12 parts, each with a different design (1 -12). After reaching #12, the pattern continues in a mirror image (12 – 1). There is no need to knit two identical parts and then join them. The whole stole is knit in one, long part.

Not surprisingly, the pattern has a story too. I came across it more than 10 years ago on an online knitting group in Europe. The different lace patterns were published, one at a time, from December 1 to December 24. It was a daily surprise. Essentially, it is one very long sampler.

And what can you do with a long lace sampler? Well, you can casually sling it around your shoulders or wear it formally as a stole in the

summer; in the winter it will keep you warm if bunched around your neck. You can also drape it over a chair and admire it. Time will tell how I will use it. But I know one thing for sure: whenever I do, I will re-live happy memories of being with family, friends, brilliant colours and fibre.

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## Knitted Poncho

**By Karen Fowler**

Many years ago (2012 to be exact), I bought a Vogue Knitting magazine because I loved the lace poncho on the cover. This pattern ticked all my favourite boxes; lace, lace, and more lace. I vowed that someday I would knit this piece. With the lockdown in place, I started spinning my stash of Wellington Fibre's fleece. One of the colourways I had was 500 grams (2 boxes) which would be enough for the poncho. Although this was not fast knitting, I enjoyed the project so much that I have started another, with mystery wool from my stash. If anyone would like to try this pattern, it can be found in the Vogue Knitting, Early Fall 2012 edition.



**The completed poncho knit from yarn that Karen spun from Wellington Fibres**

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## Garden Update

### Flax Plant-A-Long (PAL)

**By Joan McKenzie**

EHS is participating in the OHS Flax PAL – somehow I just couldn't resist the opportunity to grow our own fibre. With our garden at NPCC not readily available, and needing work if we were to grow any flax there, a call was put out to members for garden space – and of course our members replied in spades (or at least in plots..). We have a total of 6 gardeners, for our 7.5 square meters of flax. There is a Facebook group for those in the project to show and share photos and information, and a series of 5 webinars on Soil Prep, Planting, Plant Harvesting, Seed harvesting, and Retting. There will be opportunities in the fall (I hope) to have more members participate in the processing of the flax. Stay tuned for more information about this in the coming weeks. For those of you who would like to grow flax but weren't able to this year, stay tuned for next year. I fully expect to harvest seeds from our flax plants for next year's crop.

Our Gardeners are: Joan McKenzie, Cindy O'Malley, Jane Bridgeman, Jane Steeves, Mary Ellen Duff, and Cathy Richards.

Guild member Helen Skelton has also planted plots of flax.

I'll be posting photos on our Guild Face book page – check them out! [www.facebook.com/EHSGuild](http://www.facebook.com/EHSGuild)

### Neilson Park Wisteria & Dye Garden

**By Joan McKenzie and Cindy O'Malley**

Back in April, a team of volunteers assembled to tame the wild and overgrown wisteria at Neilson Park, with the intention of cultivating the sinuous vines to make baskets. The team, led by Suzanne Wylie, consisted of Carolyn Ramos, Karen Fowler, Joan McKenzie, and Cindy O'Malley. With our pruners, twine, drop cloths, gloves, and masks, we attacked the savage beast along with assistance by Petra Nyendick and NPCC ladders.

Much to our dismay, the sinuous vines were not sinuous at all, but rather brittle; therefore, no baskets. On the up side, it made the job go a little faster since we didn't need to save anything. It took several hours, coupled with brute force, pruners, and a sturdy ladder to bring it down.



**Photo of my plot at week 1: Seedlings have just start to sprout.**



**Left - Suzanne with her head between the rafters, Right – Cindy & Suzanne – Job Done!**

Since we couldn't use the vines for weaving baskets, the plan changed to harvesting the newer growth later in the year. Joan recently took a trip to Neilson Park to assess the state of our dye garden that was decimated during the NPCC renovation. And much to our delight .... It's ALIVE!



**New growth on the Wisteria, complete with flowers.**

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I have a wisteria in my backyard that has been growing for 12 years and still hasn't flowered. I guess the secret is you've got to be cruel to be kind.



**Madder growing in Dye Garden at NPCC**

Joan surveyed the dye garden and is happy to report that the madder is alive, but has migrated. Not so sure about the rest, but time will tell. Hopefully, we can get a crew of volunteer gardeners to clean up that area as well.

# The Chemistry of Madder

By Helen Skelton

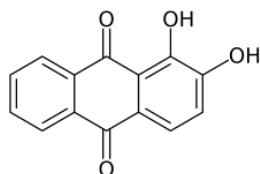
Madder is a dye plant that has been used for thousands of years, to give an intense red dye, and is commonly used by textile dyers; we have a good patch growing in the EHS dye garden. But, this simple perennial plant is an amazing source of fascinating chemical compounds with interesting properties.

The Madder plant's Latin name "*Rubia Tinctorum*", literally translated as red dyed, indicating that it has been known for its coloristic properties for a long time. Our knowledge of this dye comes from ancient India / Pakistan around 3000BC.

The red dye is in the roots of the madder plant, in the outer layer of the roots, with the centre of the roots having a yellow colour. The roots are harvested and can be peeled, chopped or pulverized to extract the dye which can be applied without mordanting to give a strong red colour.

There are many possible red shades that can be achieved from Madder, due to: dye extraction from the root, use of chemical processes such as fermentation, mordanting and treatment with acid and alcohol. There are many possible combinations, but maybe more interesting is the massive variation in shade that can be achieved from just the growing conditions of the plant itself. Madder does not contain just one dye, but four, and also a degree of tannin that alters shade and can act as its own mordant, giving shades from brownish, through orangey red to intense blue shade crimson, which was most prized in history.

The colorants in Madder are all in a group of chemicals called "anthraquinones" which are strongly coloured and widely used in synthetic dyes. Anthraquinones are difficult to synthesize in a laboratory, but the humble Madder plant manages to make four complex compounds using metabolism as it grows. The exact balance between them depends on growing conditions; amount of sunlight vs. shade, water levels, mineral nutrients in soil, temperature etc.

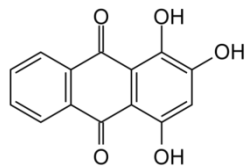


**Alizarin**  
**1,2-Dihydroxy**  
**anthraquinone**

The most prized of the dye molecules is "Alizarin" which gives a deep blue shade red on its own, and is also made synthetically and used as artists pigment "Alizarin Red".

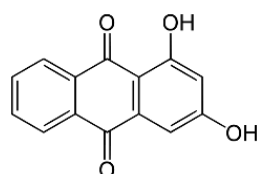
Alizarin is the beautiful blue shade red that ancient dyers tried to achieve, and is in high concentration in the outer ring of the madder root.



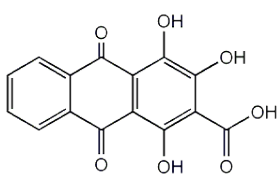


**Purpurin**  
**1,2,4-Dihydroxy**  
**anthraquinone**

Purpurin is a similar anthraquinone molecule but a much different shade being brownish orange in colour. It occurs in the yellowish centre of madder roots, and is responsible for the typical orangey-red madder shade that most natural dyers achieve.



**Xantho-Purpurin**  
**1,3-Dihydroxy**  
**anthraquinone**



**Pseudo-Purpurin aka Manjistha**  
**1,2,4-dihydroxy anthraquinone-3-**  
**carboxylic acid**



The remaining two anthraquinone compounds are present in smaller amounts, and xanthopurpurin is a dull yellowish shade, while pseudopurpurin is brown. It is easy to see from the shades of these dye molecules that the balance of these dye molecules can greatly impact the final dye shade achieved.

The Madder plant may look like a humble one at first glance, but it is able to produce a sophisticated range of chemistry that has enriched human civilization for thousands of years. Next time you see a textile or yarn dyed with Madder, consider all the incredible science behind it.

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## Product Reviews

### Electric Eel Wheel e-spinner

*By Vanessa Crandall*

The Electric Eel Wheel e-spinner is advertised as “portable, affordable, and thoughtfully designed line of electric spinning wheels” and after playing with my new Electric Eel Wheel 6 for a month, I would say it lives up to its billing.

I backed the Kickstarter project that brought the EEW6 to market, so I paid \$219 USD for it. It now costs \$279 USD. Shipping to Toronto is about \$50 USD.

My new EEW6 arrived at the beginning of April. It required minimal assembly (screwing together the bobbins) and was ready to use pretty much right out of the box.

I currently spin on a Lendrum double treadle and was worried that I would find an e-spinner too different. However, the EEW6 comes with a footswitch and it's very intuitive to tap my foot when I want to start or stop the device. Drafting is exactly the same as on a traditional wheel.

The first thing I did with the EEW6 was ply some light fingering/lace weight singles I had made on a drop spindle. I spent some time experimenting with tension and speed. I ended up setting the speed to about as high as it goes, set the take-up to pull in firmly, and plied all 200 yards quite quickly.

Bobbin capacity is about 8 oz. I originally intended this to be just a travel wheel, but now I expect to use the EEW6 as my main plying wheel.

Next up was bringing the spinner with me while visiting my Dad. The spinner weighs only a couple pounds and was easy to bring along in a tote. I set it up to spin some Ashford merino/silk. With the speed set at 2 (out of maximum 5), it was quiet enough that I could comfortably have a conversation while spinning. The wheel does get louder as the speed gets higher, but even top speed is not too loud.

The EEW6 comes with a power cord to plug into the wall, but it is also designed to be used with certain powerful battery packs, which increases the portability factor. When the weather is nicer I can see myself using this to spin outside.

My EEW6 was missing the two orifice hooks that were supposed to ship with the device. I sent an email to Maurice Ribble, the one man show behind the EEW, and he had new ones in the mail for me the very next day. I also belong to the EEW group on Ravelry and Maurice is regularly on the forum, responding to problems and answering questions.

Because the EEW6 was designed to be affordable, it is made from sturdy molded plastic. The base unit is black and the bobbins are white, blue, or purple. To my personal taste, I don't find it that attractive. It's not an eyesore by any stretch, but I don't enjoy looking at it the way I do some of my other equipment.

To sum up, this is a very affordable little tool that is easy to use and extremely portable. When we see each other at NPCC again I'm sure I'll have it with me and I'm happy to let interested parties play with it. The guild also owns the smaller version, the EEW Nano, which is available for monthly rental.

Pros: extremely quiet performance especially in the lower half of the speed dial, affordable, great customer service

Cons: not as aesthetically pleasing as some other e-spinners on the market

For more information, visit: <https://www.dreamingrobots.com/product/ew6/>



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## Product Sources

### List of Canadian Fibre Sources

*By Vanessa Crandall*

Early last year I started learning to spin on a wheel, and since then I have been looking for new and beautiful fibre to spin. I started looking for indie dyers and blenders and fibre sellers of all kinds. Then the pandemic hit, and it became much more important to me to buy Canadian (not to mention our postal service seems to be doing a lot better than certain other nearby ones). Here is the result of a year of window shopping: my list of Canadian fibre sources. I haven't purchased from most of them (yet) so I can't comment on quality, but gosh, aren't they all gorgeous?

**Akara Yarns** ([www.akarayarns.com](http://www.akarayarns.com)) Bond Head, ON

Hand dyed yarn and fibre, with numerous non-merino options.

**Bad Habit Wool Co.** ([www.badhabitwoolco.com](http://www.badhabitwoolco.com)), Strathroy ON

Hand dyed yarn and fibre, largely merino and superwash and similar. Numerous gradient sets.

**Cloud 9 Fiberworks** (<https://cloud9fiberworks.com>), Winnipeg MB

Hand dyed yarn and fibre. She offers numerous fibre and yarn bases, and she does bright and more subtle colours.

**Divinity Fibres** ([www.divinityfibres.com](http://www.divinityfibres.com)), QC

I believe this started as a wet felting supply store, but she stocks lots of interesting spinning goodies like sari silk shreds and dyed wool locks on top of many, many, many colours of wool roving.

**Firefly Fibre Arts** ([www.fireflyfibrearts.com](http://www.fireflyfibrearts.com)), Thunder Bay ON

Her store is currently down for redevelopment but when I purchased from her last year, she had hand dyed yarns as well as roving and hand carded batts available.

**Fireweed Fibre Co** ([www.etsy.com/shop/FireweedFibreco](http://www.etsy.com/shop/FireweedFibreco)), Winnipeg MB

Hand dyed yarn and fibre, as well as rolag sets.

**Frayed Knot Fibre** ([www.facebook.com/frayedknotfibrefarm](http://www.facebook.com/frayedknotfibrefarm)) Welland ON

Hand dyed yarn and fibre. This is who made the neon pink braid I was spinning on our Wednesday drop ins.

**Lily and Pine Fibre Arts** ([www.lilyandpine.com](http://www.lilyandpine.com)) Calgary AB

Hand dyed yarn, fibre, and batts. Her site shows knitted swatches of all her current colourways, which I think is really useful!

**Little Laurel Fibre** (<https://www.etsy.com/shop/littlelaurelfibre/>) Peterborough ON

Hand dyed yarn and fibre, plus some handspun.

**The Olive Sparrow** ([www.etsy.com/shop/theolivesparrow](http://www.etsy.com/shop/theolivesparrow)) Toronto ON

Commercially dyed low-micron merino in dozens of colours. The shop is targeted at felters but I stocked up for my blending board needs. Super fast shipping.

**Small Bird Workshop** ([www.etsy.com/shop/smallbirdworkshop](http://www.etsy.com/shop/smallbirdworkshop)) Nanaimo BC

Hand dyed yarn and fibre. Some of her fibres are locally sourced and milled (e.g. CVM), and others are interesting non-domestic blends (e.g. BFL/Masham).

**Squish Fibre Co** ([www.etsy.com/shop/SquishFibreCompany](http://www.etsy.com/shop/SquishFibreCompany)) Calgary AB

Hand dyed yarn and fibre. She has quite a lot of locally sourced and milled Alpaca available.

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**Stitch Noir** ([www.stitchnoir.com](http://www.stitchnoir.com)), Hamilton ON

Hand dyed yarn and fibre on many different bases. A lot of her fibre is sold in 150g quantities. She regularly offers gorgeous gradient skein sets. I'm spinning one of her braids right now and really enjoying it.

**West Coast Colour** ([www.westcoastcolourandcarding.com](http://www.westcoastcolourandcarding.com))

Hand dyed yarn and fibre, much of which is Canadian farmed and milled. Some yarn is even from the sheep they raise on their farm.

**Yarn House Fibres** ([www.yarnhousefibres.ca](http://www.yarnhousefibres.ca)) Lake Cowichan BC

Handspun yarn, art batts, and fibre prep supplies like hand-dyed merino, nepps, sari silk, etc. I love literally everything she makes. Note that all her prices are in USD.

And for those of you who are knitters and looking for yarn, here is an extremely big list of Canadian yarn dyers: [www.knitbrooks.ca/pages/canadian-yarn-dyers](http://www.knitbrooks.ca/pages/canadian-yarn-dyers)

### [Window Cards](#)

*By Mary Ellen Duff*

The OHS has window cards for sale. They are cards with empty picture frames where you can put samples of any of your fibre arts. The site also suggests these are an attractive way of making a display. An arrangement of four would be a nice accent in a home.

## **Upcoming Events**

### [EHS Calendar of Zoom Events](#)

#### **Annual General Meeting**

Tuesday June 1<sup>st</sup>

#### **Friday Drop In**

Every week from 10:00am – 12:00

#### **Fibre Wednesday**

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> week from 10:00am – 12:00

#### **Knit Night**

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday from 7:00pm – 9:00

#### **50 Mile Coat Presentation**

June 24<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm

Presented to the EHS Guild members by Joan McKenzie. Details to follow.

### [World Wide Knit in Public Day](#)

June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

[Linda's Craftique](#), in Mono, just north of Orangeville, is hoping to host an outdoor event for WWKIP, subject to COVID-19 and lockdown rules.

### [Royal Ontario Museum \(ROM\)](#)

ROM is continuing to offer new Curator Conversations relating to their current exhibition "[Cloth that Change the World](#)". There is one event each month for the next four months. Registration is required, but there is no cost.

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### [Discover Toronto's Ravines](#)

Guest Speaker: Ellen Schwartzel

Monday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm - 7:30pm

S21DTR , Online, Free of charge

Ellen Schwartzel of the Toronto Field Naturalists will introduce Toronto's ravine landscapes - nature at our doorsteps. Participants will learn more about ravine wildlife, the role of ravines in flood protection, and how these lands have changed over thousands of years. Ellen will also sketch out the 21st-century challenges facing the ravines and their biodiversity and how Toronto Field Naturalists are lending a hand. The presentation will last approximately 30-45 minutes, followed by questions and answers.

To register, please visit: <https://www.neilsonparkcreativecentre.com/index.php/en/special-events/handmade-7> or email [programs@neilsonparkcreativecentre.com](mailto:programs@neilsonparkcreativecentre.com).

### [MAFA 2021](#)

June 24-27, 2021

MidAtlantic Fibre Association

### [Knitters Frolic](#)

July 24, 2021

Toronto Knitters Guild

Virtual Event

### [Fibres? Naturally! Conference 2021](#)

October 21, 2021 - October 24, 2021

Ontario Handweavers and Spinners

Registration is now open.

### [Woolstock ON](#)

October 16, 2021

Formerly known as Woodstock Fleece Festival

### [Great Ontario Fibre Fair](#)

Fall of 2021

### [Royal Winter Fair Sheep to Shawl Competition](#)

Jennifer James has volunteered to warp the loom and is looking for fibre donations from EHS members for the warp. The fibre must have some wool in it. For any further clarification on fibre needed, please contact Jennifer. Jennifer would appreciate the fibre by the end of August. Whether we go ahead this year (yet to be determined) or are incredibly prepared for next year, the competition is something EHS would like to continue to participate.

## **Acknowledgements**

### [Ann Arbor FiberArts Guild](#)

EHS would like to thank AAFG for including our members in the lecture series featuring Kaffe Fassett, and Linda Cortright.

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### EHS Executive:

President	Carolyn Ramos
Vice President	Joan McKenzie
Treasurer	Dorothy Thomson
Secretary	Cheryl Michalson

### Committee Chairs:

- Membership - Susan Lapell
- Programs - SharonRose Airhart
- Sales - Denise LaRocque & Gloria Williams
- Shows - Karen Fowler
- Spinning & Spinning Education - Joan McKenzie
- Weaving - Karen Fowler
- Weaving Education – Sharon Airhart

### Other Roles

- Past President – Jennifer James
- Newsletter – Cindy O’Malley
- Ambassador – Elizabeth Evans
- NPCC Resident Group Representative – Susan Lapell
- Charity Knitting – Gloria Williams
- Knit Night – Cindy O’Malley & Gloria Williams

Want to get involved in EHS activities? Contact anyone in the list above, or send an email to [EHSGuild@gmail.com](mailto:EHSGuild@gmail.com).

Thank you to everyone who submitted content for this newsletter. If you have something that you would like published in an upcoming newsletter, submit your article in writing to Cindy O’Malley with Newsletter Content in the subject line.

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