

The Shuttlecraft Bulletins on Rug Weaving

Rug weaving is addressed in the March 1926, Aug 1931, Nov 1932 and Nov 1939 Bulletins. Techniques and designs for rugs woven in the simplest weft-faced plain and other weaves, warp faced or as identified by Mary in the “Swedish Fashion”, knotted pile and soumak rugs are covered. In weft-faced (as in photo below of Karen Elrod’s rug now at the Guild show), the weft is densely beaten and the warp is

completely covered. This effect is ensured by setting the warp farther apart than usual.

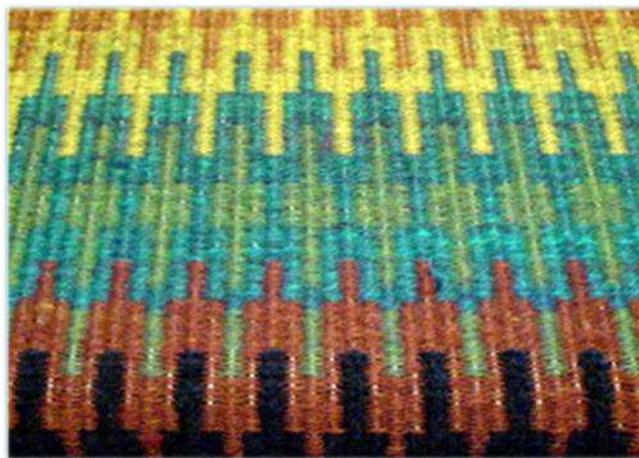
It is recommended that the warp be of coarse material, like heavy linen, or a tripled “ordinary” warp such as carpet warp. Ordinary carpet warp may be threaded with 3 ends/heddle, and a sett of 15 ends per inch. Warp for weft faced wool rugs



may be of carpet warp, perle cotton or coarse linen. Weft materials may be a heavy woolen yarn, cotton chenille, or fabric strips.

Other weave structures discussed include a 3 harness weave from “the course”, that is the Shuttlecraft Course in Handweaving (https://www.cs.arizona.edu/patterns/weaving/monographs/amm_cour.pdf) - like a krokbragd, or a Summer and Winter weave from the course Diagram 22; a two block profile draft. The 3 harness weave in particular, lends itself to the use of a lot of color to achieve beautiful patterns. There are so many examples online. See this one from the Tangleweave blog:

Bold, simple patterns give the best results. Mary recommended against overshot in rugs, she preferred Summer and Winter or crackle. The illustration in the 1932 Bulletin is of Summer and Winter woven on opposites, with wool weft and on carpet warp that is also used for the tabby weft after each pair of pattern shots. It is a long narrow rug, 27” x 60” long and requires 2 lbs of wool weft and 3/4 lbs of perle cotton for warp, plus waste. It may also be woven in cotton chenille. The 1932 Bulletin gives the most rug pattern suggestions, in Summer and Winter or crackle weave. For a great review of weft-face pattern weaves, see the book *Weft-Faced Pattern Weaves, Tabby to Taquete* by Nancy Arthur Hoskins.



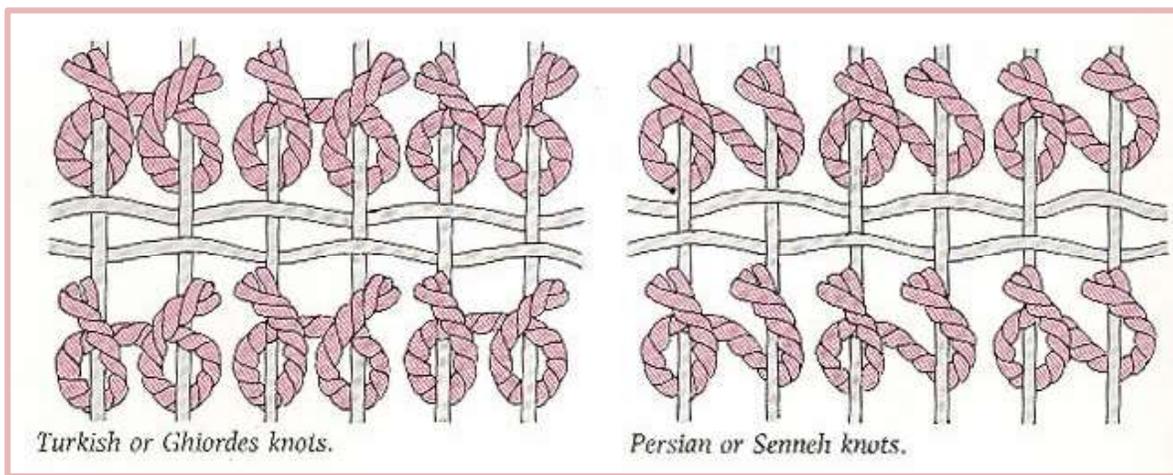
For the crackle weave, Mary suggests using 3/2 perle cotton, set at 10 epi or carpet warp at 12-15 epi, with woolen rug yarn or fabric strips for weft. Cotton chenille yarn is another weft option, doubled for pattern and single for tabby. The threading is given in the August 1931 Bulletin is a variation of a diamond pattern.

For warp faced rugs done in the Swedish fashion, a warp of 3/2 cotton, with a 32 epi sett; and a thick weft of cotton strips or mop cord and thin weft of the warp material, as in a Repp weave is used. See the photo of an example rug from Weaving Today.



An 8 dent reed is preferred when working with the densely sett warp. Care is needed to maintain an even width in the work. A 4 block pattern may be used, any of the crackle weave block patterns may be adapted to this. For some beautiful color photos of repp weave rugs, see the book, *Custom Woven Interiors*, by Kelly Marshall, published in 2012.

In the 1939 Bulletin, Mary discusses knotted pile rugs, including the Swedish Flossa technique, using the Ghiordes or the Sehna knot.



The best warp for knotted pile rugs is coarse, rough linen. A detailed description of the knotting technique is given. Mary recommends the use of a gauge bar to ensure even knots. A heavy loom is recommended as firm beating of the fabric is needed, and as before, simple figures are often best, usually in straight lines or square forms

The soumak weave technique is also described. This technique gives a thicker, firmer rug, and can be used to create single color diagonals or zig zag patterns. See the diagram from:

<http://www.ioakeimidis.gr/old/istoria/megethien.htm>

A number of patterns from the Recipe book are suggested to be developed in pile or soumak weaves.

If you are looking for more information on any of the techniques, or materials, the definitive work on rugs was done by Peter Collingwood in his book: *The Techniques of Rug Weaving*, which is available online at this link:

<https://www.cs.arizona.edu/patterns/weaving/books.html>

♥ Maureen Wilson

