

## Shuttle-Craft Bulletin: Summer & Winter Weaving Patterns



Summer & Winter is a unit weave that Mary Meigs Atwater claims credit for reintroducing to American weavers. In fact, she wrote in the July 1937 Bulletin that she thinks of it as her highest valued contribution as it is a beautiful weave. In the 1937 Bulletin she stated that many Shuttlecraft Bulletin members do not understand the profile draft for Summer & Winter and that her Shuttlecraft Book of Weaving did not explain it very well. So, she used this bulletin to go further.

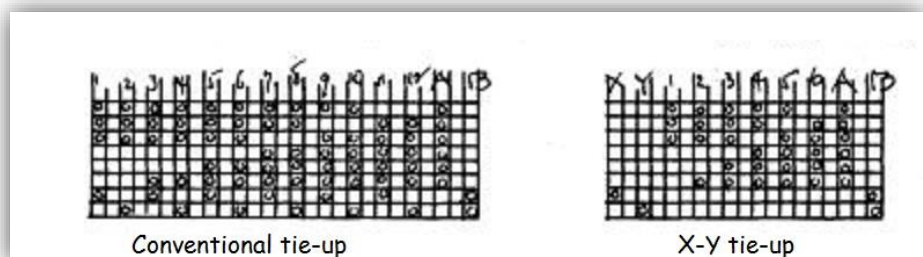
She said that the history of name for the pattern: Summer & Winter is unknown and called it a fanciful analogy with summer and winter aspects of nature; dark and light. The name is from the Pennsylvania German weavers and it is “pleasant to preserve” the name. The weave is unknown outside the United States, although Marguerite Davidson identifies it as Finnish in origin and provides sources. Mary Meigs Atwater first noticed it in old coverlets. She wrote that when handweaving was first revived in the US, overshot was the only weave fairly current, and used for many purposes, some unsuitable, such as rugs.

In the Summer & Winter weave, the pattern weft is tied down every 4<sup>th</sup> warp thread, avoiding long floats. The fabric produced is double faced, reversible and it is a matter of opinion which side is the “right” side. Each 4 threads is a unit, consisting of one tie-down warp end on shaft 1 and another on shaft 2. The remaining 2 threads on a 4 shaft draft are on pattern shafts (3 and 4). Threading for the 2 blocks on a 4 shaft patter would be 1,3,2,3 and 1,4,2,4. These blocks may be repeated as desired and are usually indicated as block A and B.

The July 1937 Bulletin provided a detailed explanation of the profile notation for the draft and a thread-by-thread draft in the diagram at the end of the issue. Mary preferred the profile draft for the ease of following in threading and draft development. It can also be directly applied to other unit weaves.

In her discussion of weaving materials for this pattern, Mary wrote that there is more latitude in the Summer & Winter weave than in overshot-warp and pattern threads should be of the same size, with a finer tabby thread. The structure allows for more freedom of design and many different figures may be woven on the same threading, with a change in the tie-up.

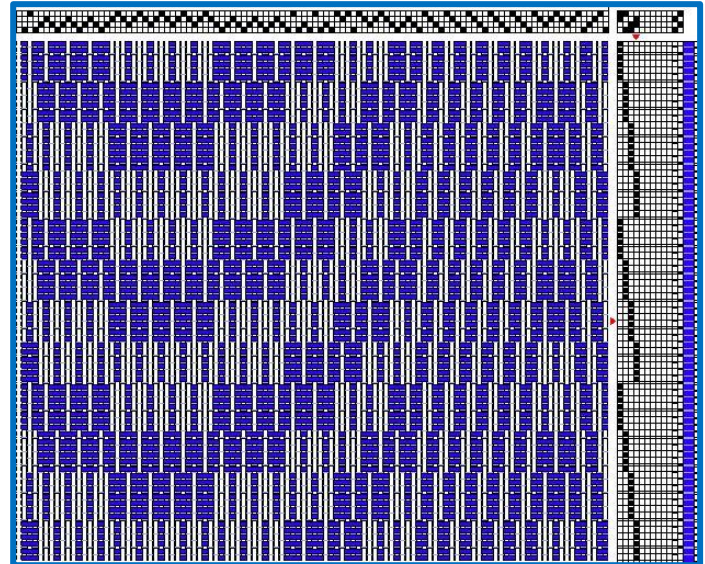
The tie-up for Summer & Winter requires 2 treadles for each pattern block and 2 for the tabby tiedown. For elaborate patterns, this may require more treadles than are available. Mary developed what she calls the “X-Y” tie up, a sort of skeleton tie-up for these cases. In the X-Y tie up, 2 treadles must be used together for the weave, 1 for the figure and 1 for the ties. See the illustration from here from one of her Bulletins.



Mary discussed weaving on opposites and with two colors in Summer & Winter, saying that she had never seen an ancient example of either of these two techniques with the weave. She recommends that rugs be woven on opposites, with a coarser weft yarn, where, strictly speaking, no tabby is required.

I can see why some Shuttlecraft Guild members were confused by Mary's write up of the weave structure. It is described by Marguerite Davidson (*A Handweaver's Pattern Book*) as "not easy to weave; the sequence in which the tabby threads follow the pattern makes a difference in the effect on the pattern", and I can attest to that.

In the September 1928 Bulletin, MMA reviewed two Summer & Winter patterns she calls Palm (a) and Stripes or Old Pattern (b). She presented these in both Summer & Winter and in a Swedish technique that looks like Crackle to me. She calls the patterns modernistic, with overlapping blocks. Both sides of the material produced would be almost identical, making it suitable for scarves or shawls. The number of repeats for each block is at the weaver's discretion. Mary recommends both materials and colors for the weave, mainly fine yarns, including silk and a color shading progression from tan to dark brown as the blocks progress. I've included a drawdown for a portion of the Swedish technique for B here, with 6 repeats for each block.



I'd recommend some more recent write ups for the Summer & Winter weave to better understand it: such as Madelyn Van Der Hoogt's book: *The Complete Book of Drafting for Handweavers*. 1993.

And online: <http://www.weavingtoday.com/learn-how-to-weave/summer-and-winter/weaving-summer-and-winter-love-at-first-pick>

<http://www.weavezine.com/content/summer-and-winter-taquet%E9.html>

<http://leighsfiberjournal.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/summer-winter-treadling.html> , and many issues of *Handwoven* magazine.

Also, Deanna Baugh offers a great class on Summer & Winter, in which you can try out several ways to weave it. Ask her when she is going to offer it again.