

## BEAUTIFUL, FREE, WOVEN GARDEN FURNITURE

### Sustainably created from tree prunings and offcuts

“Armed with an active imagination and a lopping pruner, you can transform green sticks into pretty trellises, fence panels and plant supports. These simple structures are easy to make, cost practically nothing, and give your garden a handcrafted look. Indeed, once you get the hang of making things with bent and woven wood, you might find yourself wanting to grow these useful branches on purpose.

“This is not a new idea. Beginning in the Bronze Age, when knives, saws and hatchets came into use, many Europeans and early residents of the British Isles developed wattle work, the art of weaving branches into walls, fences and roofs. Wattle fences are made by weaving flexible green sapling wood between upright posts, like a wooden tapestry, so they’re both beautiful and strong. They were originally used to contain domestic animals, such as sheep. These days, wattle weaving is a great way to build all kinds of useful rustic garden accents from sustainably harvested wood.”  
[Read more](#) at Mother Earth News Organic Gardening.

*The following information includes extracts from an article by Barbara Pleasant and photos of work by Lee Zieke Lee.*

#### Make a Woven Plant Cloche

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Cloches protect plants from animals, wind, and frost. They can be woven from split bamboo or any long, pliable sticks such as prunings - a renewable resource. Stylish plant cloches are practical in the garden and look highly decorative in the veggie patch.

Great for protecting delicate plants as they settle in, or guarding freshly planted seedlings from hungry birds and beasts. Great for the organic gardener as they help to create a microclimate around plants helping them to get established and protecting from wind and frost. Weave them any size you want – eg. Small – 30cm, Medium – 40cm, Large – 50cm

#### Make Garden Wickets

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Bend pliable branches into arches to make garden wickets that protect perennials from foot traffic. If you leave them in place, they can work as plant supports later in the season.

Any type of wood can be used for wickets. Whether you link them together to form an edging or place them over plants, all that’s involved is bending 3-foot-long smooth, green branches into an arch, then sticking the ends in the ground.

When using wickets as outdoor plant supports, place two or three of them over a plant in one direction, then crossing them with another set of wickets that arch over the first.

## Make 'Wattle' (woven wood) Hurdles

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Functional wattle fence panels, called hurdles, make it easy to section off parts of your yard and garden, plus they're fun to make. In addition to willow, you can use minimally bendable woods, including oak and maple. You should be able to build a hurdle in a single day, provided you have a source of 30 or so 6-foot-long branches that measure less than 1 inch in diameter at the base ends. A good hurdle size to make is 3 feet by 5 feet.

Note: the art of wattle weaving is generally more detailed than described here. This is a simple version of how it's done. First prepare five posts that are about 1½ inches in diameter, and 12 inches longer than the anticipated hurdle height. Use a hatchet to sharpen the bases of the posts, then drive them into the ground, 14 inches apart and 12 inches deep. I used a piece of rebar to make guide holes for my posts since I was pounding them into hard clay. You can also make a baseboard for the fence by splitting a long log in half and drilling holes along it for the posts.

Collect a number of long, supple branches and weave them in and out of the posts, allowing the ends to protrude. Alternate the weave of each new row by starting it on the opposite side of the post from the last row. Also alternate the base ends of the branches with tip ends, since the thick bases give a tighter weave. After each branch is in place, push it down to the base of the fence. When you are satisfied with the panel, use loppers to trim off the ends.

For extra stability, I wove hemp string through the ends to further tighten the hurdle. When working with sticks, I've come to regard hemp string as the duct tape of the craft. If something's not quite right, you can usually fix it with hemp string, though traditional wattle hurdles are crafted by wrapping the weaving branches around the end posts to secure them.

## Make Towers and Trellises

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Woven wattle hurdles require lots of branches, but you can make a beautiful twig tower for growing any type of vining plant using only a half dozen 6-foot-long sections. For my beginner's project, I made a tower in a large soil-filled pot.

Stick the uprights as far down into the pot as they'll go, at equal intervals, to hold the tower steady. Next, wire the top ends of the uprights together. I made two "stretcher" hoops to add structure to the inside of the tower. Using pliable branches and wire, I slipped a small hoop inside the top section of the tower, and a larger one near the bottom. The hoops and wires I used to fasten them together (and to the uprights) disappeared as I wove pieces of grapevine into the tower.

I decided the trellis would work better if it had more horizontal structure, so I gathered more grapevines and added a third band of woven branches. A tight wrap with honeysuckle vines made a great finishing touch for the top. The tower proved to be both beautiful and practical. After it supported a spring crop of snow peas, it served as a summer home for ‘Cypressvine’ morning glories.

Another method - Starting with 12 to 13 8-foot branches for the uprights, tie the uprights together about 2 feet down from the tops. To give the towers added stability, attach a wire ring inside the uprights, about 12 inches from the ground. To make the ring, bend #9 fencing wire into a circle and secure it with duct tape, before attaching the ring to each upright on the tower using short sections of wire. Once it's in place, you can weave branches and vines into the tower above the ring any way you like. To secure the finished tower outside, pound three pieces of 2-to-3-foot-long rebar into the ground, then wire three of the uprights to the metal stakes.

Of course, there is no law that a plant tower must be 6 or 8 feet tall. Using the methods described here, you can make one shorter or broader, or even a lean-to tower that can be attached to a wall or fence. Use your imagination!

## Make a Bean Teepee

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### [From Kiddie Gardens.](#)

You will need: 7 - 9 long bamboo poles, some twine, string or even masking tape, and runner or pole beans.



Start off by finding a suitable spot in your garden and dig the earth over in a circular shape. A circle with a diameter of 3-4 foot is usually perfectly adequate.

Beans like well-drained soil, so add some compost and fertiliser if needed - like in this example!



Firmly push the ends of the bamboo poles into the ground by about 3 inches on the outside of the circle.

Leave a gap between two of the poles to act as the entrance to the bean teepee.



Tie the bamboo poles together firmly near the top using twine, string, a bit of old rope or even masking tape.

There is absolutely no fine art in tying the poles together - the main and only aim is to ensure they are all VERY firmly held in place, as no matter how careful kids are, they are likely to knock the poles when going in and out of the teepee!



Plant the runner or pole beans about 2 inches deep. Plant them on the inside of the teepee rather than the outside, as this makes it easier to hoe and keep weeds down - anything growing on the outside of the bamboo poles are weeds!

It is usual to plant two beans per pole. That should ensure at least one healthy plant per pole.



Water generously. Beans usually take between 7 to 14 days to germinate. Once the seedlings appear, protect them from slug attacks.

When the beans are a few inches high, loosely tie them to the poles. From then on, they should find their own way up.

When the plants reach the top of the teepee after about 7-8 weeks, nip the growing ends off. Keep them well watered during a dry patch, especially once the pods have started forming. For an even more colourful display, interplant climbing flowering plants too, such as climbing nasturtiums or black-eyed Susan.

Want more weaving ideas? How about beautiful [coffee tables and serving trays!](#)