

# Wild Wayside Grain and Grass Wreath



## GRASS AND GRAIN FEATURED IN EXAMPLE

From top left to bottom right, the varieties of grass featured in the sample wreath are: Feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis*), Bunny Tails (*Lagurus ovatus*), Witch grass (*Panicum capillare*), Field Oats (*Avena sativa*), Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*), Green Bulrush (*Scirpus atrovirens*), and Indian rice grass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*).



## GATHER MATERIALS

Depending on location, an interesting wild gathered selection of materials might include lepidium, foxtail, fountain grass, sedge, wheat, sorghum or even rice. Floral Shops and Farmers Markets may be a source for folks unable to forage the back roads or backyards of their communities. The goal is to select a variety of material with contrasting textures and colors. In most cases it is best to pick sun-kissed, seedless heads of grass or grain. Cut stems on a dry day. Gather grass before the plant has fully formed seeds or after it had shed them. If you do not work with the material immediately, hang it in a cool, dry, dark place until needed. Return to the roadside throughout the summer to gather late blooming varieties. A lovely wreath can be made with a small assortment of snippets, but for maximum interest and fullness, at least six different elements are suggested.



## ASSEMBLE MATERIALS

You will need a wreath base, a bag of excelsior or Spanish moss, 22 gage paddle wire, scissors, glue gun, glue sticks, and bunches of grass and grain.



## PREPARE YOUR BASE.

Anything can serve as an armature: a wire box frame, a straw ring, an unadorned vine wreath or even an old picture frame! These wreaths can be made any size or shape depending on the armature used. Remember that the finished product will be about 6 inches wider than the base you choose. The 9 inch vine base shown here was used to build the finished 15 inch door wreath. Cover the base with a loose blanket of Spanish moss or wood excelsior. This will add volume and furnish a bed into which individual stems can be glued. Secure the moss by wrapping the wreath with 22 gage paddle wire.



## BUILD THE WREATH

Cut small bunches of the selected grass and grain leaving 2 inch stems. It is best to have these sorted and laid out before starting to assemble the piece. Shred bits of moss (excelsior) into handfuls. Fasten the paddle wire to the wreath. Bind bunches to the base by tightly wrapping wire around base. If you are working with very green stems, add a few strands of moss after wrapping bunches. This adds some volume to compensate for any shrinkage in drying. Continue to wire bunches until entire frame is covered. It will be necessary to clip the stems of the last few bunches very short to fit them in. If there is a gap or uneven distribution of texture, glue individual stems into the base until an even full look is achieved.

## ADD FINISHING TOUCHES

Though this handsome wreath needs no adornment, a simple raffia bow or other dried flowers can be tucked into the grass for a hint of color. Sprigs of greenery can be added for a winter holiday look. No two wreaths of this sort will ever be the same! Kept from sun and moisture, the wreath will appear fresh enough to evoke happy memories of high summer for many seasons.