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## The Nature of Beads

August and September always seem like nature's "prom time." It's a period of final bloom and culmination, one that blazes with color, shape, texture, and scent. If I weren't so preoccupied most of the time with being a grownup, I'd be mucking about on the beach, collecting rocks and shells, or traipsing through the woods near where I grew up, brushing against clumps of horse-hair ferns or the tips of willow branches. After all, bright

fallen leaves, pussy willow branches, feathers, speckled rocks, or translucent agates are just a few of the first beauties children collect. And we never escape the power of their impression on us.

Nature, as ever, instructs and inspires us. Translated into beaded bracelets, cuffs, and necklaces, reflections of the natural world reaffirm our connection to it. For those who especially love fashioning creaturely delights, you can craft both the "Peyote Reef Fish" and the "Dragonfly Pin". And for those who want to flex their wire-working muscles, the wireworked bead ropes of "Four-Way Fashion" offer challenge and innovative adornment. Who wouldn't like to make a single project that can be used alternatively as purse handles, necklaces, bracelets, or belt? Thanks to our talented intern, Keriann Gore, you'll have the blueprint for this hip and versatile item.

Whether mimicking nature's forms or miniaturizing our favorite pastimes, charms are more popular than ever. "Totally Charmed" is an exuberant look at these cherished dangles and at several artists who make or collect them. You'll even learn where you can have custom-made charms manufactured just for you.

Beginning with this issue, we've added two exciting new departments. In her Fast & Fabulous column, special projects editor Jamie Hogsett will offer a sophisticated, but quick-to-make project each issue. For anyone with an out-of-control stash (isn't that most of us?), this feature can be a boon in whittling down things to a manageable size in less than a lifetime. And for those who long to take the seed bead challenge, senior editor Dustin Wedekind introduces Seeds, a new department sure to build your seed bead confidence.

At summer's close, please join us in celebrating nature, beads, and the joy of handcrafting!

Happy beading,

### What's Cookin' in the *Beadwork* Office?

- Good news for bead stringing fans—a new book, *Stringing Style* by *Stringing* editor Jamie Hogsett, will be on sale in September as will our much-anticipated next issue of *Stringing* (for more information, see page 98).
- It's your last chance to sign up for **The *Beadwork* Retreat** in Sonoma Wine Country August 17–19. Enjoy the hands-on workshops, then stay for the **Sonoma Wine Country Glass Art & Bead Festival** August 20–21. This event is sure to be a blast. Hope to see you there!

PHOTO BY TODD MAKASHIMA



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