

Bag of the Month

August: a dressed-up recycled bag

VIRGINIA BALCH

Since we've learned how plastic shopping bags have been making their way into the oceans and killing marine life, such as birds, turtles, and dolphins, weavers have been looking for ways to recycle and reuse. Recycled materials—especially plastic bags—are finding their ways to weavers' looms! As with Anne Mckenzie's shopping tote (June's Bag of the Month), this version is perfect for everyday runs to the grocery store.

My first project with strips cut from plastic bags was a tote, but once I found out how versatile this fabric is, I was off weaving runners and placemats using the same technique.

I prepare the plastic bags by laying them out flat and cutting off the handles and bottoms so that the bag forms an open tube. Instead of using a rotary cutter (Anne Mckenzie's technique), I use a pair of sharp scissors. I cut the bags starting at one end, cutting through only one layer and "spiral" the cut to create one long continuous strip of plastic.

For bag fabrics, I keep the strips about $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide. Each bag requires four or five plastic shopping bags.

Designing fun

Color in the warp creates long vertical stripes. Strips cut from tan-colored bags used as weft accentuate and unify warp colors. A blue cotton border provides a finished look for this bag.

Resources

Mckenzie, Anne. "Shopping Tote From Recycled Plastic Bags," handwovenmagazine.com/projectsandarticles.



Virginia Balch of Torrington, Connecticut, is a member of the rigid-heddle group on Ravelry.com. Her avatar is shown here.



