

**EXTENSION BULLETIN 168 (Revised)**

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**RESEATING  
• CHAIRS •**

!

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE  
EAST LANSING**

# Reseating Chairs

By GERTRUDE REIS'

## CANE SEATS

### Precautions

1. Begin the strands at the center and weave toward the outside edge in both the lengthwise and crosswise directions.
2. Keep the shiny side of the cane showing at all times, even on the under side as the cane threads from hole to hole.
3. Do not allow the cane to become twisted while weaving.
4. Use a wet sponge or cloth to rub the cane to keep it damp as it is used. Dampen both the single cane and the woven portion.
5. Do not draw the first four steps too tightly for they tighten as the cane dries and as the weaving progresses.
6. Avoid passing over a hole on the under side if possible as this interferes with the use of the hole.
7. Keep all lines running straight and parallel to those nearby.
8. Do not weave too far before pulling the cane through in Steps 4, 5 and 6.
9. As the cane slides over and under other canes in the weaving process it should slide with the cross notches on the cane and not against them. These notches appear every 12 or 18 inches the entire length of each cane.
10. Fasten the ends of cane by wrapping and not with a knot. The ends of the cane are wrapped two or three times around another cane on the under side of the frame. The end should wrap around a cane that joins the hole where the cane has ended. The cane must be wet and pliable while wrapping. Even though no knot is used the cane will not pull out when dry.
11. A clear varnish is usually used on the finished seat although the cane may be treated with an oil stain before being varnished. The natural color is usually preferred to the stain.

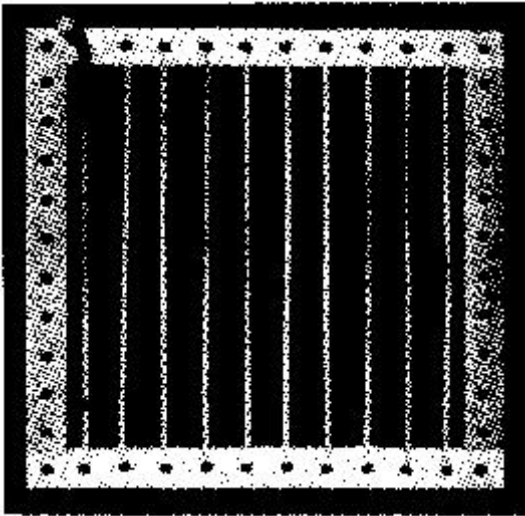
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<sup>1</sup>Former Staff Member

## Directions

### STEP I

1. Run the cane through the holes at the back and the front of the chair seat to make *single strands from back to front*. These will be called number one's.



2. Start at the center and work to each side.

3. On odd-shaped seats go into only those holes that will make the strands run parallel. Some holes may have to be left empty at this step. But they will be used later in the weaving.

4. Fasten the beginning and the end of each long cane by wedging it into a hole with a wooden peg.

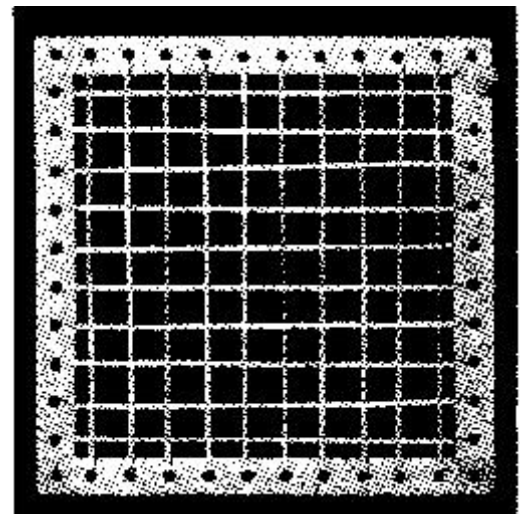
Leave 2- or 3-inch ends to be tied later in the process

### STEP II

1. Run the cane through the holes on each side of the seat to make single *strands from side to side* of the chair. These canes will be called number two's.

2. Start at the center and work to the outside.

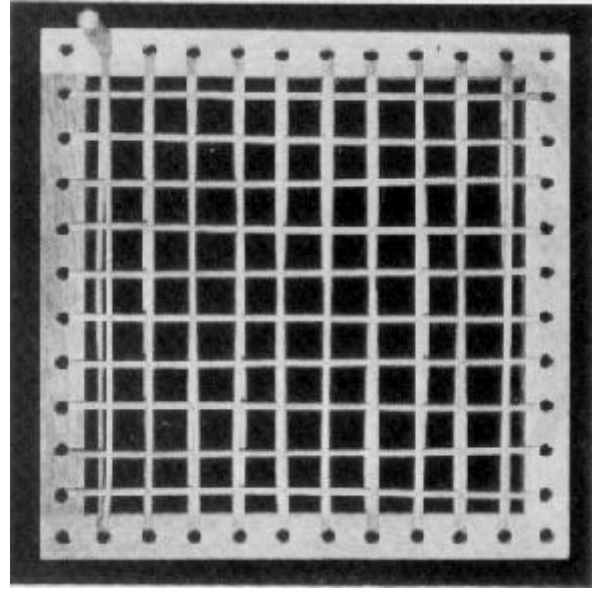
3. Number two's go on top of number one's.



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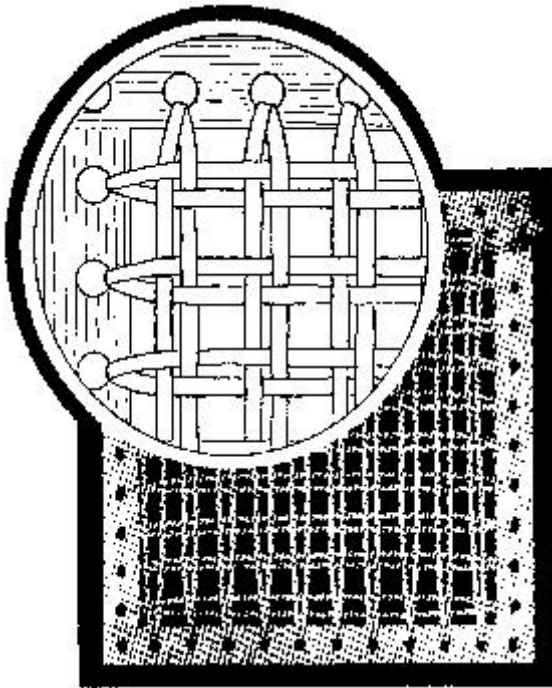
### STEP III

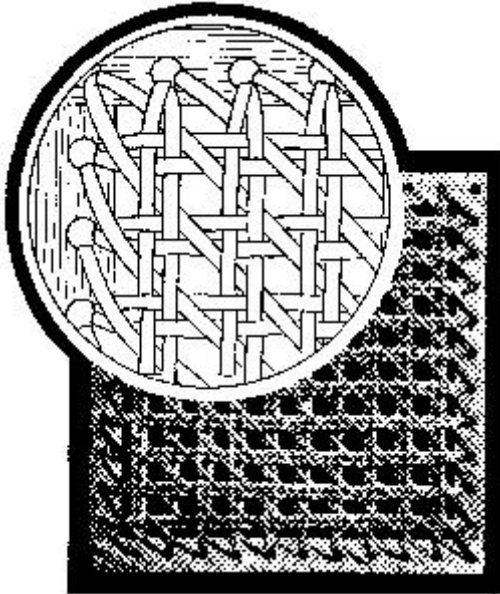
1. To make *pairs from front to back holes*.
2. Go in and out of the same holes that were used in step one.
3. Go on top of number two's.
4. Call these number three's.



### STEP IV

1. To make pairs *from the side to side holes*.
2. Use the same holes that were used in step two.
3. For the first time the cane weaves over and under other canes as it passes from one side to the other.
4. Number four's come *above* number two's.
5. Push all the number three's to the *left* so that the number one canes can be seen beneath.
6. Weave *over* the number three's and *under* number one's all the way across.
7. When step 4 is finished dampen the whole seat, then push the canes close together to show plainly the pairs. When the canes dry it will be easy to do Step 5.



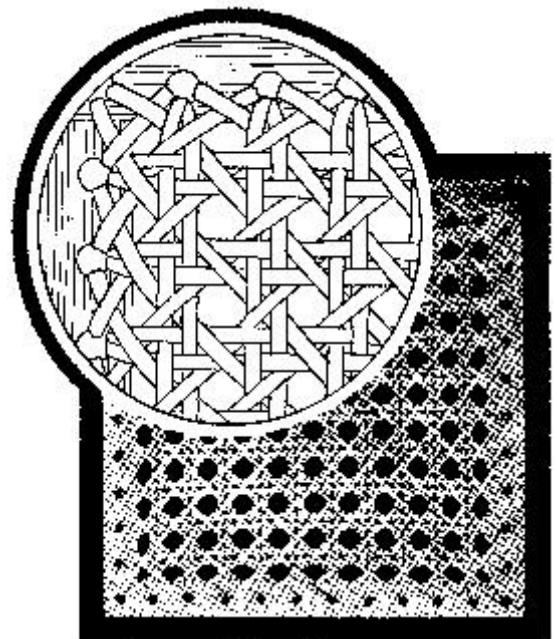


#### STEP V

1. Step Five makes a *diagonal from the upper left to the lower right* of the seat frame.
2. Weave *over* crosswise pairs of canes and *under* lengthwise pairs of canes.
3. Sometimes more than one diagonal cane may end in the same hole in order to make the canes appear as nearly parallel as possible.

#### STEP VI

1. Step Six makes a *diagonal line from the upper right to the lower left* of the seat frame.
2. Weave *under* crosswise pairs and *over* lengthwise pairs of canes.
3. As in Step Five, more than one diagonal cane may end in the same hole in order to make canes appear parallel.

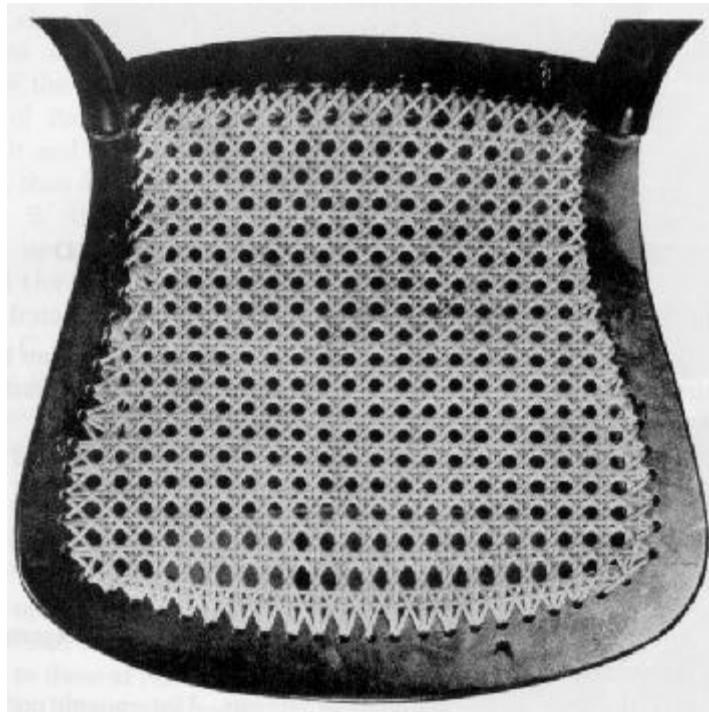


Reseating Chairs  
STEP VII

1. Binder cane may be wider than that used for the seat itself, although the seat cane can be used for binder.

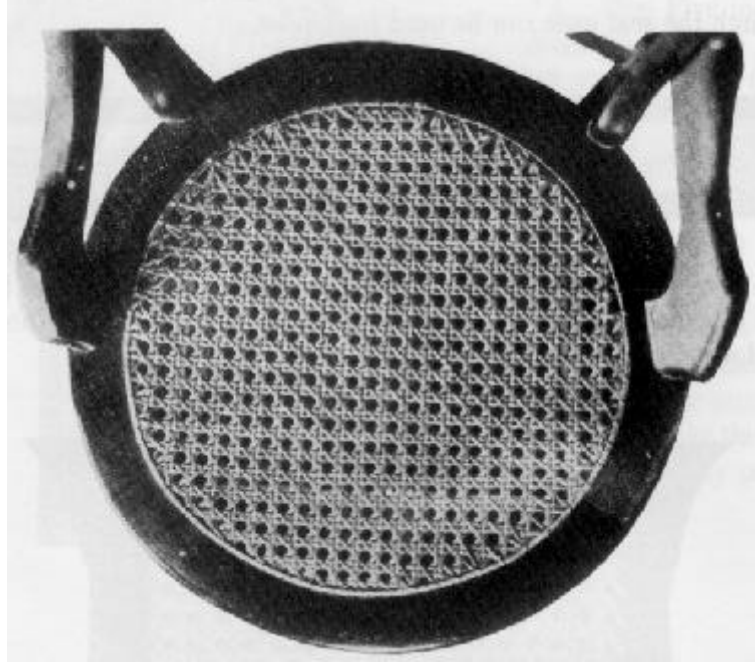


2. The binder is placed on top of the holes and held in place by a piece of cane being pulled up through a hole, carried over the binder and down through the same hole.



3. Pull each loop made like this tight and continue around the chair, going into every hole or into every two or three holes as seems desirable to hold the binder in place.

4. The ends of the binder are lapped and held in place by a loop of cane.



### **HONG KONG GRASS SEATS TO REPLACE OLD RUSH AND SPLINT TYPES**

#### **Precautions**

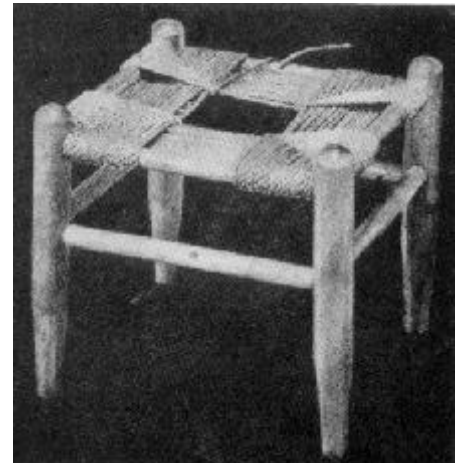
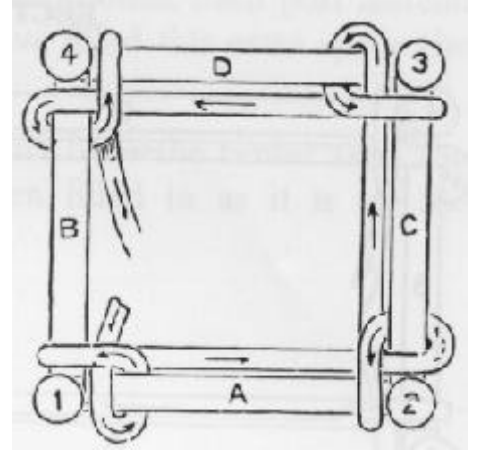
1. Hong Kong Grass is recommended because it requires no tools, it is strong, durable, and comes in continuous lengths. The grass has an attractive color and texture that resemble rush.
2. Materials needed: 1-1/4 to 1-1/2 pounds of grass per seat, and corn husks or brown paper for padding.
3. Finish the chair seat with clear varnish.
4. Dampen the grass to make it pliable. Dip it in water and then wrap in a damp cloth. Do not soak the grass.
5. Push strands close together on the rails and at the diagonals to make the weaving compact.
6. Pad the seat as the weaving progresses. Use enough padding to give the seat a plump rounded contour.
7. Join the ends of the ropes of grass by using figure-eight knots on any of the ropes that run parallel to the rails of the chair. These knots will be covered later by the cross stands.

## Directions

### SQUARE SEATS

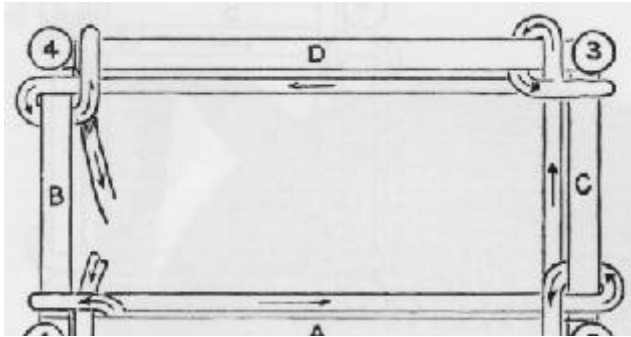
Mark the four corners of the seat, 1, 2, 3, and 4.  
Mark the rails A, B, C, and D.

Start at corner No. 1. A strand of the Grass is then laid over Rail A with the short end turned down on the inside. Draw the strand over the top of Rail A, then under it and up on the inside, then over the top of Rail B, then under it, and up on the inside. Pull the strand across the frame to the top of Rail C, at corner No. 2, draw it over the top of the same rail then under it and up on the inside and over the top of Rail A. Pull directly across the frame to the top of Rail D at corner No. 3. The operations at corner No. 3 and No. 4 are identical to those at No. 1 and No. 2. Repeat this until the seat is completed.





## RECTANGULAR SEATS

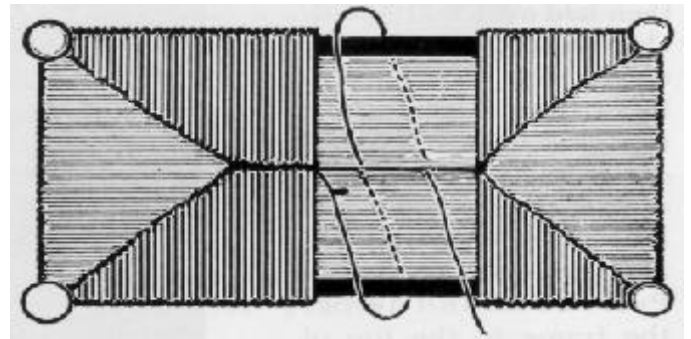


As in weaving the square seat, the first process is repeated at all corners until openings are filled. In the rectangular seats, the spaces on the short rails will be filled before those on the long rails. From this point, weave over and under a long rail into center and over and under the opposite long rail. Repeat this operation until the center is filled and the seat is finished.

## IRREGULAR SEATS

Irregular seats are those which are wider across the front rail than across the back rail. Measure the back width, center this same distance on the front rail and mark with chalk or pencil. This will leave a short distance near each front post that must be filled before the seat can be woven like a square one.

Fill in the two front corners up to the marks by using the same method as used in weaving a square seat, except that each time the weaving is done around the two front posts it will be repeated twice around each post instead of only once. When the ropes of grass have filled this extra space the weaving proceeds as for a square seat.



The diagonal lines may meet a little apart from the center as in the rectangular seat. The extra space is then filled in as it is on the rectangular frame.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Photographs illustrating the use of Hong Kong grass (pages 9, 10) are reproduced through courtesy of the American Reedcraft Corp., New York, N.Y. The rest of the photographs in this bulletin are reproduced through courtesy of Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa..

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