

## Tool Kit & Teacher Bio

### Beginner Tool Kit & Fabric Kit Options

Contact Instructor to Choose Fabric Colors: [idlewildwool@gmail.com](mailto:idlewildwool@gmail.com)

	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Beginner Tool Kit</b>	Braidkin lacer, tapestry needle, 100 feet of cotton lacing cord, 10 mini clips, large clip, short ball-head pins, hemostat or needle-nosed pliers, safety pins	\$23 + shipping
<b>- Optional Add-Ons</b>	Optional: Verna Cox Table Clamp	\$30 + shipping
	Optional: Large Black Table Clamp	\$30 + shipping
	Optional: Set of 3 Braid-Aids	\$15 + shipping
<b>Fabric Kit: 9" X 16", Stripped</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 oz of 1.5" strips of washed wool &amp; wool blends: 3 solids and 1 texture - enough to create the mat</li> <li>• sample of braiding/sample of T-start</li> <li>• strips to practice braiding</li> <li>• sample of T-start</li> <li>• lacing thread for project</li> <li>• short ball-head pins</li> </ul>	\$38 + shipping
<b>Fabric Kit: 9" X 16", in deconstructed garment pieces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 oz of washed wool &amp; wool blends – 3 solids and 1 texture (1/4 yd of each) - enough to create the mat</li> <li>• sample of braiding/sample of T-start</li> <li>• strips to practice braiding</li> <li>• sample of T-start</li> <li>• lacing thread for project</li> <li>• short ball-head pins</li> </ul>	\$24 + shipping
<b>Fabric Kit: 2' X 3' Rug, Stripped</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 4.5 yards of washed wool and wool blends in 1.5" strips - 3 or more solids and 2 to 3 textures - enough to create the rug.</li> <li>• sample of braiding / sample strips for practice braiding</li> <li>• sample of T-start</li> <li>• lacing thread for project</li> <li>• short ball-head pins</li> </ul>	\$165 + shipping
<b>Fabric Kit: 2' X 3' Rug, in deconstructed garment pieces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 4.5 yards of wool and wool blends in washed, deconstructed garment pieces - 3 or more solids and 2 to 3 textures - enough to create the rug.</li> <li>• sample of braiding / sample strips for practice braiding</li> <li>• sample of T-start</li> <li>• lacing thread for project</li> <li>• short ball-head pins</li> </ul>	\$99 + shipping
<b>Additional Fabric</b>	1.5" wide strips, color planned	\$3/oz or \$38/pound + shipping
<b>Additional Fabric</b>	Deconstructed garment pieces	\$2/oz or \$24/pound + shipping

Rose's Etsy Shop, IdlewildWool: [www.etsy.com/shop/IdlewildWool](http://www.etsy.com/shop/IdlewildWool)

Facebook of Idlewild Wool:

<https://www.facebook.com/Idlewild-Wool-119652778171283/>

Facebook of Lucinda's House at Idlewild: <https://www.facebook.com/historichomestay/>

## Interview: Rose Robertson-Smith

*Ed: I've always admired Rose and her rugs, so it was a real treat to interview her. She's one of those creative people who does 20 things at once and seems to do all of them well. Here's some of her story. Check at the end of the article for some interesting links!*

Rose Robertson-Smith was born in Shreveport, Louisiana as the fifth of six children. Her family moved to Taft in southern Texas where she grew up, and where she learned to sew. She would ride her bike to the Perry's "5 and Dime" store to buy fabric, and then had little supervision while she figured out how to sew garments. She remembers making a fancy dress with tiny ruffles in 5th grade for the "hanging of the greens" ceremony at her Methodist Church. She remembers that the dress felt a little odd, but it wasn't until one of the church ladies pointed out that her sleeves were set in backwards that she realized why!

That mild embarrassment did not deter her, though; she went on to become passionate about sewing. High school home economics classes really helped her understand the intricacies of sewing garments. She took every sewing class that was offered and even took classes in summers. She started to branch out into other crafts as she embellished denim shirts with embroidery, began to macramé, and learned other types of needlework.

Being able to sew was one of her moneymaking sidelines at college. She did a lot of mending, and remembers sewing on a lot of patches (it was the 70's!) After a few semesters at a college majoring in fashion & merchandise design, she transferred to



*Photo of Rose by Melissa Fuller*

Texas A&M and majored in education. Upon graduation, she taught kindergarten in public schools for a decade.

Rose married and ended up moving numerous times in less than 5 years. Then her husband Greg decided to pursue a career as a software engineer. Rose and Greg and a newborn moved up to New Hampshire for his studies. Rose points out that she was from SOUTH Texas and she moved up to New Hampshire in 1988, when they had one of their snowiest winters on record.

Rose is usually an upbeat person, but this time was extremely difficult for her. She lost her two remaining grandparents within a month, had to figure out how to care for a 5-month old, had to learn to drive in snow, and how to adjust to life far away from home. She remembers that time as the darkest period in her life. She didn't start to come out of it until February, when she was making a Valentine's gift out of a tattered old quilt made by Greg's grandmother, and she started to feel better. Engaging her sewing skills reminded her of how joyous just being creative could be.

It was that recognition – making something with her hands made her happy – that has fired Rose's lifelong pursuit of creativity. She found an amazing store in Nashua, NH called the Covered Bridge. The store became Rose's "heaven on earth," where there were materials and great teachers for every craft. Rose decided to try English smocking, so that she could make smocked dresses for her daughter. Rose's smocking instructor, Diane Luszcz, became a lifelong friend as a result of all their time spent



*Photo of Idlewild, Rose's home*



Rose calls this her "Pansy" rug. What wonderful colors!

together while Rose took classes up to the expert level. Dianne was involved in the Red Riding Hood Smockers' Guild, which Rose also began attending. There she met Karen Levendusky, who was taking smocking and French sewing classes.

As Rose's children aged out of wearing smocked clothing, many of her needlework friends were experiencing the same thing. The friends began taking classes and trying new crafts as a group. Rose began referring to the group as the "Stitch and Bitch Ladies." They were all at the same point in life with their families and needed to release some tension. Getting together weekly turned in to a winter getaway weekend where they learned something new. As the years worn on, their weekend getaways included more shopping, drinking wine and whining than burning the midnight oil to finish an Easter dress or a pile of American doll clothes.

One of the group's summertime activities was to attend the League of New Hampshire Craftsman's fair each August. Most years they saw Barbara Fisher and Sandy Luckury demonstrating rug braiding at the fair. Rose adored Sandy's rugs in the Living with Crafts display and always voted for her rugs for best of show.

In the summer of 2006, Sandy was demonstrating braiding at the fair and Rose began talking with her at length about the process. During their discussion Rose mentioned that she knew Sandy from another setting: they had taken a weekend class on doll-making together. Sandy said that if Rose could make a Gail Wilson Santa doll, she would have no trouble learning how to braid a rug. The challenge was on! Karen, Diane and Rose signed up for her drop-in classes on rug braiding.

In hindsight, Rose wishes she had been able to have a weekend course in beginning rug braiding. It took months of making the long drive to Dorr Mills to create her first rug, which was a 4 by 6 oval. She learned a lot on that rug: butting, keeping a rug flat while increasing, and color progression. Rose made a traditional rug of blues and greens, with a pop of gold color. Her next rug was a 4' wide red and black heart, then a 4' by 9' brightly colored oval rug. Rose says she was not afraid to tackle anything -- remember the fancy white dress -- she would just, "go for it." Like the sewing skills that she eventually mastered, having teachers with high standards and patience was the right combination for her to learn a craft well. She is grateful to Diane Luszcz, Karen Levendusky, and Sandy Luckury for their instruction.



Photo of a lime and purple rug in progress. Rose and her family moved to Nashville in 2010, and she began searching the internet for braiders. She kept finding the Valley Forge Rug Braiding Guild. Rose talked Karen into going to one of the

braided ins. At this point Rose was making her rugs with mostly repurposed wools since she was no longer lived within driving distance of Dorr Mill. Working with recycled wool challenged her to learn to work with different weights of wool, to blend colors due to smaller amounts of wool to work with, and to create patterns.

Rose made a large round contemporary rug for her sister, and she entered it in the Tennessee State fair shortly after moving to Nashville. The rug won Best of Show for all hand crafts! She was surprised that her rug was the only braided rug entered in the fair, and that it was not part of the "Woolery" display or included with the wool hooked rug categories.



*Rose won Best of Show for this striking round rug.*



*Isn't this a striking rug? It's still in progress at this point. What beautiful zigzags and diamonds!*

Rose had to talk with the State Fair officials to get rug braiding represented in the correct category. She met with a bit of resistance at first, and she was told that because a braided rug was made with fabric and was sewn, it didn't belong with rug hooking, spinning and weaving. Rose pointed out that the only sewing in a braided rug was to add on strips, and that hooked rugs started out with the same raw goods as braiding. The judges finally agreed to let Rose into the fair if she would demonstrate on education day.

At this point Rose had started teaching rug braiding classes with Nashville Community Education. She asked her students to join her and sit near the hookers to demonstrate rug braiding. She met Jamie Ledford, a rug hooker who was involved in the fair as a judge. Jamie ended up taking braiding classes from Rose, and she recuses herself when judging Rose's entries. Judy Gilliam is another student who introduced Rose to her hooking friends, and they later invited Rose to demonstrate at their regional meeting.



*Lucinda's House*

In the meantime, when Rose moved to Nashville, she chose a home built in 1874 that is on the National Historic Register as the Robert Chadwell House, although it has always been known as "Idlewild." Rose renovated (with permission) the separate living quarters on the property where a cook and her son lived, known as "Lucinda's House." Rose has turned them into a guesthouse that also functions as a Bed and Breakfast, which she manages through Air BnB.



*Some of Rose's wool stash*

Rose's property is beautifully maintained with lovely gardens. Recently, one of her daughters was married on the grounds, and the care that Rose lavishes on her gardens was evident.

In addition to renovating Lucinda's House, Rose also oversaw the creation of a room for crafting. It is a room for sewing, braiding, needlework, and just about any other craft that you can think of. She hosts braiding gatherings and other craft events in this area.

Rose also runs "IdlewildWool," which is an Etsy shop selling recycled wool. Right now, there are several pieces of blue that she points out would be perfect for the Blue Willow Challenge....

Rose is pleased to be offering her first "Braiding Get-Away" March 15-17 of this year. The plan is to work on projects during the day, and dine at restaurants in the evening, and stay at Rose's B&B, for \$150. Contact Rose for more information: [idlewildwool@gmail.com](mailto:idlewildwool@gmail.com)

Reflecting on her lifelong love affair with hand work, Rose says that she realizes that in addition to the immense personal satisfaction of completing a project, it is the friendships that have grown out of pursuing her love of creating that are the real treasures.



*Rose's Craft Room*

In Rose's words: "Coming together with others who love to create, while sustaining a traditional utilitarian folk art for future generations, is a worthy endeavor. I am hopeful that I can be a part of this as I continue to beat the bushes in the mid-South for students of rug braiding!"

And: "I have gotten much better at handling requests from family and friends for rugs. My new response is, 'I would love to teach you how to braid, so you can make your own rug.'"

Rose's Etsy Shop, IdlewildWool:  
[www.etsy.com/shop/IdlewildWool](http://www.etsy.com/shop/IdlewildWool)

Facebook of Idlewild Wool:  
<https://www.facebook.com/Idlewild-Wool-119652778171283/>

Facebook of Lucinda's House at Idlewild:  
<https://www.facebook.com/historichomestay/>

Air BnB listing:  
<https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/16130404>



*Aren't Rose's color choices wonderful?*



*Multiple crafts are shelved in Rose's Craft Room*



*Heart rug with matching stool*

