

FIBER HEMP - THE BASICS OF MANUAL PROCESSING

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From Field to Fiber

This is a brief guide about how to turn fiber hemp stalks into workable fiber using hand tools.

Step 1: Retting

This field was winter retted. It was left out in the elements to break down naturally over the winter and was harvested in the spring.



Step 2: Breaking

This step breaks the hurd (inner woody part) from the outer bark layer called the bast. This is done using an antique flax brake which crushes the dry stalks.



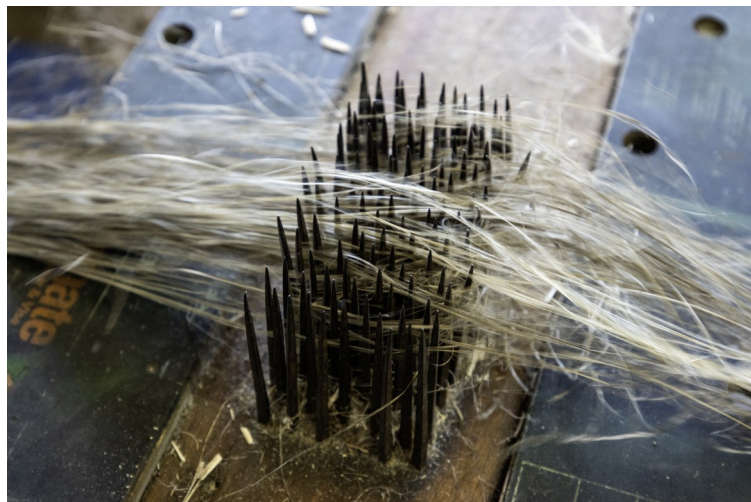
Step 3: Scutching

The next process involves beating the remaining chunks of hurd off from the bast fibers using a scutching sword (or scutching knife), which is a hardwood plank.



Step 4: Hackling

The last step involves a tool representing a bed of nails to clean and comb out the fibers, aligning, and untangling them, making them usable for the next step of wet spinning into yarn.



Want to learn more? Check out the UVM Extension Northwest Crops & Soils web page and our Hemp Processing Video Series at <https://go.uvm.edu/hemp>

