

Summer and Winter

Belongs to a family called “tied unit weaves” as are Overshot and Crackle.

The name probably comes from the fact that in its classic form using a dark on a light background, the pattern shows as dark with a light background on one side and a light pattern and dark background on the other.

Mary Meigs Atwater is generally credited with bringing summer and winter to the attention of modern weavers. She (and others) began researching its origin and use in the early 20th century. She, not finding any reference to it in the Swedish or German weaving books assumed it was of American origin. However, it was widely used in Finland and Denmark and was most likely introduced to this country by Finnish and Danish settlers. Mrs. Atwater could not find much use of it except in areas of Pennsylvania. Items (mainly coverlets) were woven between 1781 and 1825, with it completely dying out around the Civil War.

After Mrs. Atwater reintroduced it, it began to be popular and creative weavers are taking advantage of its versatility, making items from apparel and upholstery fabric to wallhangings and household items - even coverlets!

Summer and winter is a four thread drafting unit: 1,3,2,3; 1,4,2,4; 1,5,2,5; and so on. The first and third thread are the tie down threads, the second and fourth represent the pattern. In America, the tie down threads are usually on the first and second harnesses, with the pattern threads on subsequent harnesses. In the drafting units at the beginning of the paragraph, the 1 is on the first harness, the 3 is on the third and the 2 is on the second.

The four thread units (1,3,2,3,) can be combined into blocks, either by repeating the units multiple times (1,3,2,3,1,3,2,3,1,3,2,3,) or by combining them with other units (1,3,2,3,1,4,2,4,1,4,2,4,1,3,2,3,).

The first and third threads form one tabby shed; the second tabby shed consists of all of the remaining pattern threads. Summer and winter tabby on a four shaft loom is 1,2, for the first half of the tabby, then 3,4 for the second half. For an eight shaft loom it is 1,2 for the first half and 3 - 8 for the second.

In existing patterns and/or projects always do the tabby as specified.

The first two (tie-down) harnesses will need many more heddles than the pattern harnesses. Always count the heddles and add as necessary.

Use a warp and tabby of equal size (usually the same yarn) and a pattern weft twice as thick as the tabby.

Resources

Atwater, Mary Meigs
The Shuttle-Craft Book of American Hand-weaving

Ed. Strickler, Carol
A Weaver's Book of 8-Shaft Patterns

Sullivan, Donna
Summer & Winter
A Weave For All Seasons

Tidball, Harriet
The Handloom Weaves

Tidball, Harriet
Summer and Winter and Other Two-Tie Unit Weaves
Shuttle Craft Guild Monograph Nineteen

Ed. Van Der Hoogt, Madelyn
The Best of Weaver's Summer and Winter Plus

Handwoven Magazine March /April 1991

Handwoven Magazine May/June 2006