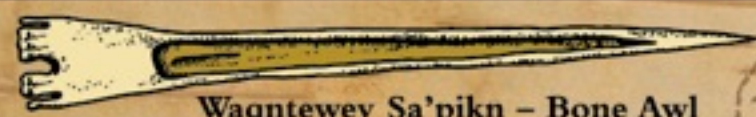




Wasoqijit
- Nature's Indicator, the Firefly



Waqtewey Sa'pikn - Bone Awl



Sisawiaqn aq Pekwetasiqewey -
Natural Dyes and Commercial Dyes



Matues
- Porcupine

Kawie'l Pu'taliewe'l Porcupine Quill Baskets

MI'KMAQ

WIKEWIKU'S HISTORY MONTH OCTOBER 2013

The use of porcupine quills in Mi'kmaq artwork is a long-standing tradition, from complex patterns on clothing and moccasins to beautifully crafted quillboxes. Mi'kmaq quillboxes became popular in the "made-for-trade" economies of the 18th century, with quillwork expanding later to chairs, tables and cradles. Some motifs are linked to particular families (e.g., Thomas or Williams), who have passed their styles down through generations.



Maskwi
- Birch Bark

Quillboxes are made from quills, birch bark and spruce root. Sections are created separately, and then fit together to create a finished box. Each box includes a base made of birch bark or wood, the inner birch bark liner, rings of spruce root (often decorated with quills), and the lid. Over time, the tools and techniques have evolved from bone awls to modern hole punches. Aniline dyes came into use after 1860, though some artisans still use natural dyes.

Wjipiskapi'l
- Spruce Root



Design is an intricate process. Imagine entire boxes, tables, or chairs being covered with quills, that are no longer than two inches each. Design methods include using a drawing compass and birch bark biting (an art form of its own). Much time is spent creating these exquisite patterns, which require great patience to execute. The final step is to assemble the box—fitting the sections into each other like a puzzle.



Kawi'l - Quills



Kawiey
- Design



Kisitasik Pu'taliewey
- Finished Basket



Amalukwaqn
- Quilling



Sa'qewey
- Old Style

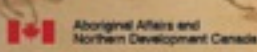
Elaqpa'tasiki aq
Kawiey Lukwaqn
Lid Edges - Spruce
Root vs. Quillwork



Piley
- New Style



Maskwi Jiltasi
- Birch Bark Biting



The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq



Native Council of Nova Scotia



Union of Nova Scotia Indians

Photo illustrations courtesy of: (top left) S. Blagg, (top right) Mi'kmaq Robert Edson Advisory Council, Sharon (1980), and Leah Rosewater for their language, spelling and editorial expertise. (center) Photos are from the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, DC, USA) and the Nova Scotia Museum (Halifax, NS). Printed and published by Eastern Woodland Print Communications, Millbrook, Nova Scotia, (print) 902-697-0070.