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# HOW TO LOOK AFTER FISHNETS

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# Introduction

In practically all the islands of the South Pacific, people use fishing nets. Some of these nets are handmade from local or imported materials, others are bought ready-made.

Nets are well worth the price you pay for them or the time you spend making them. They should be regarded as valuable items and you should keep them in the best possible condition.

This book tells you how to look after your nets so that they will last longer.

A net that is not properly looked after becomes useless very quickly; but if you follow these simple methods of caring for your net as described in this book you should be able to make your nets last for several years.

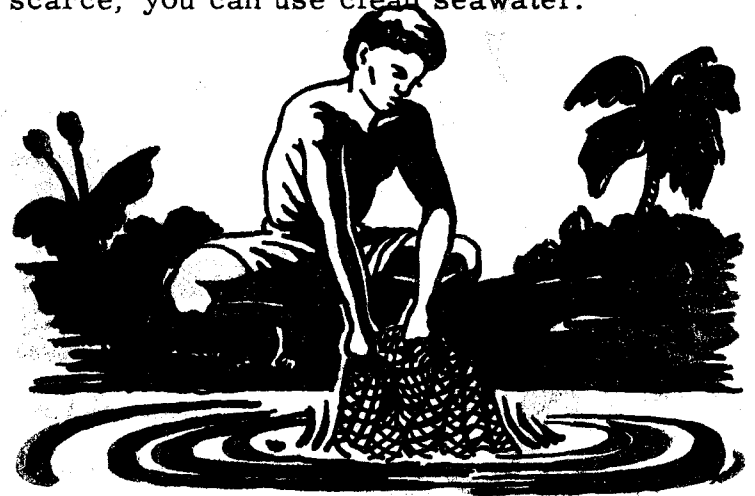
If you have any problems in looking after nets, your fisheries officer may be able to help you or you may write to the South Pacific Commission for more information.

# Care of your Net

## KEEP YOUR NET CLEAN.

You should always keep your net very clean when it is not in use.

After you have been fishing, wash your net in clear fresh water. If fresh water is too scarce, you can use clean seawater.



Wash your net in clean water

Make sure you remove all the fish slime, the seaweeds and mud which stick to the net - these will make your net rot quickly.

### DRY YOUR NET PROPERLY.

Before you pack your net away until the next fishing trip or fishing season, you must



Dry your net in the shade or under a shelter

## Summary

- Keep your nets clean. Wash them well in clear fresh water.
- Dry your nets carefully - hang them loose, under shelter. Do not dry them in the sun.
- Store your nets only when they are really dry. Keep them away from the ground. Check them from time to time and hang them in the air.
- Preserve your nets with simple processes. Tanning is easy and will keep your nets in good condition.
- If you use chemicals for preserving your nets, be careful to keep children away and also to wash your hands and arms well. These chemicals are poisonous.

Tanning is only good for a certain length of time and it depends on how often you use the net. If you use your net, say once a week, then you should tan it every six months; but if you use the net every day, then make sure you tan it once a month.

### USING CHEMICAL PRESERVATIVES.

Apart from tanning solutions, there are a number of ordinary chemicals and commercial preparations which can be used for preserving nets. These products are usually very effective, but most of them are dangerous to handle.

Check with your fisheries service for the kinds you can buy in your area and directions about their use.

When using any of these substances always remember -

- (1) Never let children play near the nets and drums.
- (2) Always wash your hands and arms very thoroughly when you have finished.

dry it thoroughly. Do not dry your net by putting it out in the sun; always hang your net in the shade under a tree, or better still, under a shelter.

It is worthwhile building a small shelter with open sides in which you can dry your nets properly.

When you hang up your net to dry, spread it out as much as possible so that the air can move freely through it. Do not leave any bunches which will stay wet too long.

Make sure your cork rope and lead rope are really dry before you store the net. These ropes are thicker than the net material and they can hold moisture longer.

### STORE YOUR NET CAREFULLY.

You have cleaned your net and dried it; it must stay clean and dry when it is stored away. Do not put it in a damp place.

If you can find an old crate, make sure it is dry and pack your net in it. Put the crate

on rocks or wooden blocks to keep it away from the floor.



Keep your nets in a dry place

Another way is to hang your net in a bunch in a dry place, sheltered from the sun and rain.

Whether you store your net in a crate or hang it from the rafters in your house, make sure from time to time that insects or mice or rats are not damaging it. If these animals

### HOW TO USE THE TANNING SOLUTION.

1. Make sure your net is clean and dry. Even if your net is new, it must be washed and dried first.
2. Put your net into the warm solution and leave it soak for 12 hours.
3. Take the net out and hang it up to dry.

Remember - Spread the net out to dry, do not let it hang in bunches.

4. When the net is dry, warm up the tanning solution and soak the net a second time for 12 hours.
5. Hang the net up to dry.
6. Your net is now tanned and ready for use.

NOTE: A new net tanned for the first time turns brown and after it has been tanned several times becomes dark brown.

When you have tanned your net, do not forget about keeping it clean and dry. If you look after your tanned net properly, it may last up to three times as long.

4. Let the bark soak for one day and one night.
5. Next morning, you light a fire under your drum; boil the water for one and a half hours.



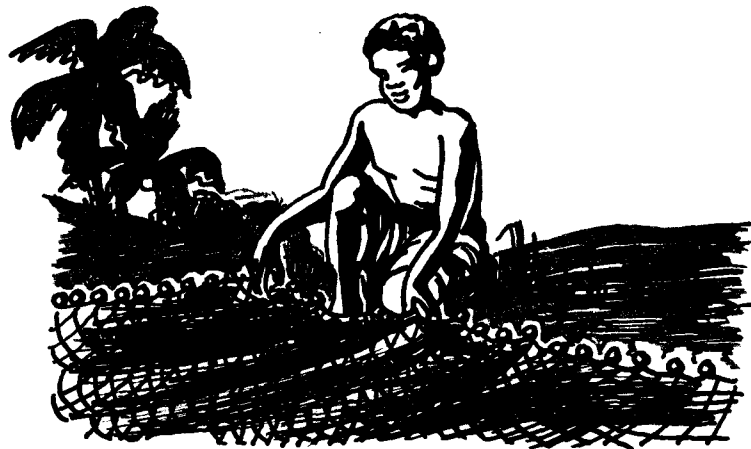
Stir the bark in the boiling water with a stick from time to time

6. After your tanbark has been boiling for one and a half hours, put out the fire and the solution is ready to use.

have put dirt on your net, wash and dry it again.

If you have to keep your net stored for a long time, say more than six weeks, it is a good thing sometimes to take it out on a clear day and hang it as if you were drying it. If you do that every six weeks, the moisture that your net may have taken from the air will not have time to damage it.

In very wet places you should check your net more often - say every 3 to 4 weeks.



Check your nets from time to time

# Preserving your Net

To preserve a net is to treat it with some product that will keep it from rotting. This product soaks into the thread and ropes and it prevents any bacteria from damaging them. These bacteria are too small to see with the naked eye but they start working when your net is wet and dirty and they destroy all the strength in the thread.

You can preserve your net by soaking it in a tanning solution or by treating it with a chemical preservative. A tanning solution is made by using the bark of certain trees. This bark is called "tanbark".

There are many trees in the South Pacific which produce good tanbark. The best are mangrove trees, but the bark of casuarina trees, the rind of guavas and the guava bark can also be used for tanning nets.

## HOW TO MAKE A TANNING SOLUTION.

Whatever bark you use, the method of making the tanning solution is always the same, as follows:-

1. Take some bark from branches 3" to 6" thick.
2. Chop or break the bark into small pieces about 1" or 2" long.
3. Get a large container, such as an old oil drum, and put the chopped bark in it, with water. Use 3 parts of water to one part of bark.



Chop the bark into small pieces