

sions of this bast fiber are finer than our finest cotton thread and stronger. Just before the fruit has ripened the outer bark is peeled. By using three strands, it is plaited so that a very strong cord is obtained. It was also, by further combing and plaiting, made into heavier ropes."

Of the common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca* L.) "mana-wi'tca" Smith reports that it and "other milkweeds are used in the same way that spreading dogbane is used, for sewing thread and making cords for fishlines, etc."

Smith also gives us an excellent description of the Menomoni mode of obtaining the fiber of the basswood (*Tilia americana* L.). "Basswood bast or bark fiber was and is the ready cordage for the Menomoni," writes Smith. "The women go to the forest to gather the raw material. Saplings are peeled in the spring when the cambium is active and is readily separable. A long strip of bark is cut off and the outer cortex is slightly cut. Then the bark is bent at the cut until it projects far enough to get the teeth fastened on the outer rind. This is then pulled off and thrown away. It is now ready for use, except dividing it down to the desired size. Should a ball of twine be wanted, the gathered bark is coiled and bound to keep it in a coil, then boiled in lye water. Then it is cut three feet long and rolled to break up the fibrovascular bundles. Finally, it is twisted and joined by the Menomoni woman against her shin and between her palms. Basswood fiber is used widely in many arts. Matting, baskets and fish-nets are made from it." (Bulletin, Milwaukee Public Museum.)

"When they wanted to, Indians knew quite well where to go for material for fishing lines and nets," writes Charles F. Saunders in his "Useful Wild Plants of the United States."

Continuing Saunders states that "their knowledge of wild plants packed with useful fiber was extensive. One of the most widely distributed of these native fiber plants is the so-called Indian hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*, L.), an herbaceous perennial with a smooth, milky-juiced, woody stem two to four feet high, and inconspicuous, greenish-white flowers producing very slender seed-pods about four inches long. It is found in thickets and dampish ground from Canada to Mexico and from the Atlantic to the Pa-