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The Bowyer's Den



Arrow Making

Straightening And Reducing Shafts

Straightening Wood Shafts

The first of the two methods you can use for straightening the shafts, and it is the best, is to straighten them as they dry. This could be called the green method. To do this you must grab the shafts and flex them just after the bark is removed to make them look straight. You will learn how far you can flex the green shafts and how much stress they can take green after you break a few. The wood can only take so much stress at one time so try bending it several times and not all at once. This is where the hard, quick bends will destroy shafts. If the shaft does not respond well to green straightening and you feel like it will break, do not worry, it will do better with the second method. Once you get all of them semi straight they need to be bound into a bundle using string and left until tomorrow. Then the next day, take them out and unbundle them and reflex them straight again. Keep doing this until you do not need to straighten any more and leave them bundled straight for a week to ensure they are dry. I have read several Indian books about bundling shafts and hanging them to dry. This never worked for me as the shafts shrink in diameter as they dry and loosen the string on the bundle. This lets them bend back to their former bends and not stay straight. Working them every day is a must to use this method.

This picture shows some raw unstraightened shafts on the bottom and some shafts on the top that have been through a first round of heat straightening.



The second method of straightening shafts is to use heat. This is the way to straighten shafts that are already dry or did not get completely straight using the