

Weld
Plant



Naalbond Socks

I have had to learn how to Naalbind to keep peace at our Farmstead. I got tired of listening to my husband go on and on about how cold his feet were in the winter, especially since I will not let him have the key to lock on the 6 board chest.

I have always wanted to learn to naalbind, as it is a skill that every good Norse woman should know. Fortunately naalbinding is the precursor to knitting and crochet, skills which I will probably never master. I bought a pair of Jorvik style boots, at Pennsic this past year, and I have found the only comfortable sock or boot liner is wool naalbond socks (even in warm weather.) I have experimented with cotton and silk socks and found them uncomfortable. I made my first pair of socks a little over a year ago. The socks were made too large, so they would felt to a smaller size. (An added bonus to the felting processes is arch support. I now have a nice wool arch support built into my socks.) Because my socks will be worn with ankle boots, I have made them taller than the sock pictured below. I have not felted my socks, so the stiches can be clearly seen.

Naalbinding (also spelled n albinding, nalbinding, nalebinding) is a needle-work technique that produces cloth with similar characteristics to knitting. It is a more tightly worked cloth, which can be felted, thus it tends to be warmer. The cloth will also stretch, but if a stitch is missed it will not unravel. Unlike knitting naalbinding uses a length of yarn and a single needle (not a ball of yarn and two needles.) The stitch I used to make my socks is called the Oslo stitch . The construction technique I used was to start at the cuff and work my way to the toe, then stitch the heel in place. In the past I have not stitched the toe end of the sock as tightly as I should, causing my big toe to poke out. Apparently mending a naalbond sock was a common problem, as Jorvik sock was also mended. The Jorvik sock is the only complete garment or textile find to come from the York Archeological digs . It was from the tenth century.

Everybody has quirks and one of mine is that I always wear yellow socks. I was concerned that colored socks would not have been correct for a Norse persona. I have found evidence that the Norse people loved color, as described in the sagas. One of the most common dyes to create yellow is weld. Weld has been around for well over 2000 years. It has been found at Neolithic sites in Switzerland and through out the British Isles. Wool that has not had a mordent used will not take color easily. Alum, tin and copper were mordents used in the Viking era. I can now enjoy my yellow Naalbond socks, with my newfound knowledge about Viking era dyes and craft skills.

Weld Dye Chart

Alum on wool

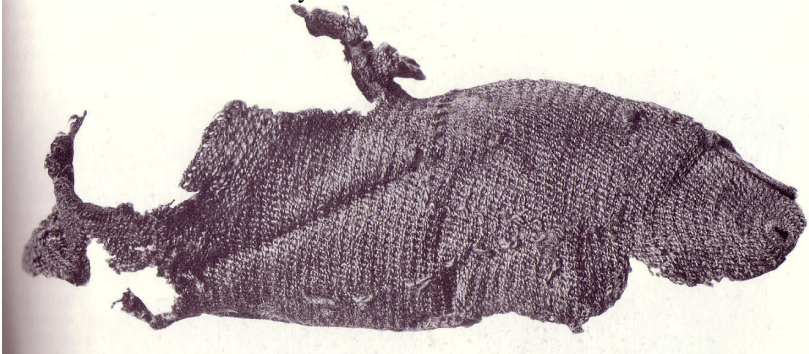
Alum on wool

Tin on wool

Copper on wool



Jorvik sock– 10th century



Oslo Stitch

