

Pandanus Weaving

Weaving with pandanus leaves dates back to the arrival of the first settlers to Ogasawara in 1830. Many of the settlers were from Hawaii, and they adapted Hawaiian weaving techniques to fit the shorter and stiffer leaves of the native pandanus trees—also known as the *tako-no-ki*, or “octopus tree.” The leaves are a pliable material from which weavers made hats, baskets, boxes, sandals, and many other items for daily life.

In 1898, an industrialized weaving facility on Chichijima called Nagashima Factory began producing woven goods that were shipped to Tokyo and sold as luxury items in department stores. Many of the traditional weaving techniques were lost when the island was evacuated during World War II, and since then a number of groups and individuals have worked to revive the practice. The Ross Museum on Hahajima displays a number of items made in the factory, including a remarkable cigarette case that modern weavers have been unable to replicate. Visitors can also take weaving lessons and learn to make everything from simple bracelets to nested boxes out of pandanus leaves.