

## History

Now more commonly known as an octopus bag, fire bags (or many legged bags) originated in the Algonquin Nations. Originally these bags were made from animal hides. The Métis adapted these bags and began using cloth (velvet or Melton) and decorated them with beads and silk threads. These bags were used to carry tobacco, flint and steel and their pipes. When the bags made their way to the West Coast the Tlingit (pronounced KLING-it) renamed them, calling them octopus bags, as they looked like their main source of food – octopus!



**North Island Métis (NIMA) publishes a monthly newsletter.**

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Funding for this program provided by  
Island Health's Indigenous Health  
Initiative Program (IHIP) 2022-2023



**NORTH ISLAND MÉTIS**

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CAMPBELL RIVER, BC  
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**NORTH ISLAND  
MÉTIS**

## Fire Bags



## Beadwork

The beaded designs would usually include multiple stages of a plant's life (leaf, bud, flower, and fruit). And it is very common to see contrasting colors on the tips of buds and leaves – and sometimes flowers. Some bags were very symmetrical in appearance, but they were always well balanced. All the flowers would be connected by a 's' shaped vine that would have mouse tracks along it. The Métis would usually include a spirit bead in their work – this is a bead that is intentionally put out of place to show that only the Creator can design something perfectly.



*McCord Stewart Museum*

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## History of Tufting

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Beads – lii rasaad

Thread – li fil

Needle – aen nijwii

Velvet – li vloor

Flower – enn fleur

Sew – kaashkikwaata

flint – rosh di feu



*McCord Stuart Museum*



*McCord Stewart Museum*

## Getting Started

- Solid colored Melton, velvet or heavy broadcloth
- Brightly colored cotton of your choice
- 3-4 meters of 1/2" bias tape
- Interfacing (pellon)
- Nymo Thread for beadwork
- Polyester thread matching the color of your bias tape
- Beads
- Embroidery thread or yarn to make tassels
- Beading needles
- Basic sewing needles
- Scissors