



CAYMAN ISLANDS
**NATIONAL
MUSEUM**

Our History of Using the Silver Thatch Palm

Long ago in Cayman, children often helped their moms and dads gather tops to plait or twist strings. Soon it would be their turn to learn.

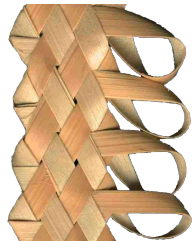
As night turned into morning and children slept, moms and dads plaited and twisted strings. They plaited STRINGS to make baskets, hats and fans, or they twisted STRINGS into rope. This is the way many families earned a living to support themselves.

At dawn, the children walked many miles to the nearest merchant's shop to carry the thatch-work made from STRINGS. There, they traded the thatch-work for flour, sugar, beans and such, before walking to school.

Today, the silver thatch palm is recognized as the National Tree of the Cayman Islands.

Can you name these plaiting styles?

Draw a line from the picture to the correct name.



Eleven String

Snake Belly

Notch

Openwork

Hedgehog

Strings are cut from the "top" of the Silver Thatch Palm. A "top" or "bud" is a new thatch palm leaf that has not yet opened. When the whole top has dried, the leaves are separated. The vein or "back" of the leaf is removed. These are used to make brooms. The remaining leaf blades are called strings. Strings are plaited into baskets, hats, and fans or they were twisted into a very strong natural rope.