

# Colorado 4-H

## 2025 LEATHERCRAFT PROJECT

### INSTRUCTION GUIDE

This information will guide you to which parts of the Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Manual to use for each unit.

#### **Project Exhibit Rules for All Units:**

- A. Put name, age, and county on back of exhibit board and on tag attached to individual exhibit articles.
- B. Indicate in e-Record whether articles are made from a kit or are self-cut and designed by the member.
- C. A set means several things of the same kind that belong, or are used, together (i.e., six matching coasters, belt and buckle with matching designs, etc.).
- D. It is suggested (not required) to do Units 1-3 in order. Units 4-9 may be taken in any order. Members may exhibit in more than one unit, provided the member is enrolled in and has completed the requirements of each of the units they are exhibiting in.
- E. Project will be evaluated on the quality of the information completed in the e-Record (25 percent) and quality of the exhibit (75 percent).

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft manual can be found at  
<https://co4h.colostate.edu/projects/manuals/Leathercraft.pdf>.

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Instructional Video Series can be found at  
<https://co4h.colostate.edu/colorado-4-h-leathercraft-instructional-videos/>.

The Colorado 4-H Exhibit Requirements and project score sheets can be found at  
<https://co4h.colostate.edu/state-fair-information/>.



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## INTRODUCTION TO LEATHERCRAFT AND CREATIVE STAMPING—UNIT 1

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft manual, which includes links to appropriate videos for each chapter, can be found at

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/projects/manuals/Leathercraft.pdf>.

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Instructional Video Series can be found at  
<https://co4h.colostate.edu/colorado-4-h-leathercraft-instructional-videos/>.

**Read these chapters to find the information in the manual for Unit 1.**

Chapter 1—All about Leathercraft

Chapter 2—Preparation of Leather for Stamping

Chapter 3—Using Creative Stamping Tools

Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish

Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather

Chapter 10—Using hole punches and lacing chisels

Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques—Preparing for lacing,

whip stitch, running lace, hand and saddle stitching

**\*Ideas for projects on a single layer of leather**—bookmark, set of coasters, wrist bracelet, belt, pet collar

**\*Ideas for projects with at least two pieces of leather that are hand sewed together with lace and/or using whip stitch, running stitch, or saddle stitch**—coin purse, knife sheath/case, simple purse, wallet

### COLORADO EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS INTRODUCTION TO LEATHERCRAFT AND CREATIVE STAMPING—UNIT 1

All exhibits will consist of the following:

- A. Completed Leathercraft e-Record presented in a sturdy binder/notebook.
- B. Exhibit two completed leather articles. Place the exhibit items on a board 12" x 18" x 1/8" or 1/4" (preferably pegboard) to which items are attached by means of lacing or thread, so items are less likely to be misplaced during display.
- C. One each from categories below:
  1. One completed article or one matched set of articles with a creative stamping design on a single layer of leather. Examples: belt, bookmark, wrist bracelet, or set of coasters with matching elements.
  2. One completed article with a creative stamping design on at least two pieces of leather that are hand sewed together with lacing and/or thread stitching using whip stitch, running stitch, or saddle stitch. Examples: coin purse, knife sheath/case, simple purse, wallet. Pre-cut or self-cut kits are allowed.
- D. Apply a **clear finish** to complete your article.

**Not Permitted in Unit 1: Carving, color shading or dyeing, antiquing, or machine sewing.**

## BEGINNING LEATHER CARVING—UNIT 2

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft manual, which includes links to appropriate videos for each chapter, can be found at

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/projects/manuals/Leathercraft.pdf>.

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Instructional Video Series can be found at

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/colorado-4-h-leathercraft-instructional-videos/>.

**Read or review these chapters to find the information in the manual for Unit 2.**

Review Chapter 1—All About Leathercraft

Review Chapter 2—Preparation of Leather for Stamping

Review Chapter 3—Using Creative Stamping Tools

### **Chapter 4—Traditional Floral Carving and Tooling**

Review Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish

Review Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather

Review Chapter 10—Using hole punches and lacing chisels

Review Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques—Lacing,  
Preparing for lacing, Double Loop Lacing

**\*Patterns good for Unit 2 are in Chapter 4 and the appendix of the manual.**

\*Ideas for the completed project include a wallet, coin purse, small purse, knife or pliers case, credit card case, or sunglasses case. **The completed project must be laced with double loop lace.**

## COLORADO 4-H EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS BEGINNING LEATHER CARVING—UNIT 2

All exhibits will consist of the following:

- A. Completed e-Record presented in a sturdy binder/notebook.
- B. Exhibit three samples and one article. Any floral pattern can be used as long as it uses all the required tools of Unit 2 within the design. **Exhibit board 12" x 18" x 1/8" or 1/4" (preferably pegboard)** to which items are attached by means of lacing or thread:
  1. Three samples with labels showing:
    - a. Sample 1: Use of swivel knife and camouflage tool.
    - b. Sample 2: Use of swivel knife, camouflage tool, pear shader, beveler, and veiner.
    - c. Sample 3: Use of swivel knife, camouflage tool, pear shader, beveler, veiner, seeder, backgrounder, and decorative cuts. **Note: The labels should reflect the tools used for each sample.**
  2. One completed article using tools and skills studied in Unit 2 with double loop lacing.
- C. Apply a clear leather finish to complete your article and sample 3 (optional for samples 1 and 2, so one could complete samples being exhibited later and then apply a finish).

**Not Permitted in Unit 2: Pictorial carving or figure carving (realistic animal and human figures), color shading or dyeing, antiquing, or machine stitching.**

## INTERMEDIATE LEATHER CARVING—UNIT 3

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft manual, which includes links to appropriate videos for each chapter, can be found at

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/projects/manuals/Leathercraft.pdf>.

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Instructional Video Series can be found at  
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**Read or review these chapters to find the information in the manual for Unit 3.**

Review Chapters 1-4

### **Chapter 5—Carving Techniques and Styles**

- **Inverted, Silhouette and Roughout Techniques**

Review Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish

**Chapter 7—Coloring for Leather** (only Antique Finish, Two-Tone Finish, and Background Dyeing for Unit 3)

Review Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather

### **Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication**

Snaps, rivets, linings, skiving, hole punching

### **Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques**

Help with lacing.

**\*There are a couple sample patterns that are good for Unit 3 in the appendix of the manual.**

**\*Some ideas for Unit 3 projects include**—belts, purses, bags, wallets, book covers, knife cases, gun shoulder straps, pictures.

## **COLORADO 4-H EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS INTERMEDIATE LEATHER CARVING—UNIT 3**

All exhibits will consist of the following:

- Completed Leathercraft e-Record presented in a sturdy binder/notebook.
- One completed article, matching set, or picture/wall hanging that includes at least one of the major skills: traditional carving, inverted carving, or silhouette carving techniques. (Note: All pictures or wall hangings meant to be hung need to be complete with hardware to hang for display, whether framed or not.)
- Clear finish, staining/antiquing, two tone finishes, and background dyeing are allowed in Unit 3. No machine stitching allowed. Any lacing and/or hand stitching may be used in this unit, though they are not required.

**Not Permitted in Unit 3:** Pictorial carving or figure carving (realistic animal and human figures), color shading, solid color dyeing (only background dyeing is permitted), or machine stitching.

## **ADVANCED UNITS 4 – 9**

**Note:** The advanced units do not have to be taken in order. All pictures or wall hangings in units 4-8 meant to be hung need to be complete with hardware to hang for display, whether framed or not. Any dyeing, color shading, antique/stain, and finishing techniques may be used in units 4-9.

### **ADVANCED LEATHER CARVING—UNIT 4**

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft manual, which includes links to appropriate videos for each chapter, can be found at

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/projects/manuals/Leathercraft.pdf>.

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Instructional Video Series can be found at  
<https://co4h.colostate.edu/colorado-4-h-leathercraft-instructional-videos/>.

**Read or review these chapters to find the information in the manual for Unit 4.**

Review Chapters 1-4

#### **Chapter 5—Carving Techniques and Styles**

Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish

Chapter 7—Coloring for Leather

Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather

Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication

Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques

**\*Some ideas for Unit 4 projects include**—Belts, purses, bags, wallets, book covers, knife cases, gun shoulder straps, holsters, horse gear, chaps, pictures.

**\*Unit 4 projects need to have one of these advanced leather work techniques on the project.** Traditional carving, figure carving, pictorial carving, decorative swivel knife carving, embossing or filigree work.

**\*There are a couple sample patterns that are good for Unit 4 in the appendix of the manual.**

### **COLORADO 4-H EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS ADVANCED LEATHER CARVING—UNIT 4**

All exhibits will consist of the following:

- A. Completed Leathercraft e-Record presented in a sturdy binder/notebook.
- B. One completed article, matching set, or picture/wall hanging using one of the following techniques: advanced traditional carving, figure carving, pictorial carving, decorative swivel knife carving, embossing or filigree work.
- C. Any lacing, hand sewing, and/or machine sewing may be used in Unit 4, though they are not required.

## **ADVANCED UNITS 4 – 9**

**Note:** The advanced units do not have to be taken in order. All pictures or wall hangings in units 4-8 meant to be hung need to be complete with hardware to hang for display, whether framed or not. Any dyeing, color shading, antique/stain, and finishing techniques may be used in units 4-9.

## **ADVANCED STAMPING—UNIT 5**

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft manual, which includes links to appropriate videos for each chapter, can be found at

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/projects/manuals/Leathercraft.pdf>.

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Instructional Video Series can be found at  
<https://co4h.colostate.edu/colorado-4-h-leathercraft-instructional-videos/>.

**Read or review these chapters to find the information in the manual for Unit 5.**

Review Chapter 1—All About Leathercraft

Chapter 2—Preparation of Leather for Stamping

Chapter 3—Using Creative Stamping Tools

Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish

Chapter 7—Coloring for Leather (any appropriate color and finish can be used)

Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather

Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication

Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques

**\*Some ideas for Unit 5 projects include**—Belts, purses, bags, wallets, book covers, knife cases, gun shoulder straps, holsters, horse gear, chaps, pictures.

**The project you choose needs to have an advanced stamping design on it.**

Minimal **carving** is allowed for effect (i.e., use swivel knife to carve border, letters, brands, etc.)

## **COLORADO 4-H EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS ADVANCED STAMPING—UNIT 5**

All exhibits will consist of the following:

- A. Completed Leathercraft e-Record presented in a sturdy binder/notebook.
- B. One completed article, matching set, or picture/wall hanging using an advanced stamping design. Minimal carving is allowed for effect (i.e., use swivel knife to carve borders, letters, brands, etc.).
- C. Any lacing, hand sewing, and/or machine sewing may be used in Unit 5, though they are not required.

## **ADVANCED UNITS 4 – 9**

**Note:** The advanced units do not have to be taken in order. All pictures or wall hangings in units 4-8 meant to be hung need to be complete with hardware to hang for display, whether framed or not. Any dyeing, color shading, antique/stain, and finishing techniques may be used in units 4-9.

## **SEWING LEATHER—UNIT 6**

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft manual, which includes links to appropriate videos for each chapter, can be found at

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/projects/manuals/Leathercraft.pdf>.

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Instructional Video Series can be found at

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**Read or review these chapters to find the information in the manual for Unit 6.**

Review Chapter 1—All About Leathercraft

**Chapter 13—Sewing Leather**

Review Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication

**\*Some ideas for Unit 6 projects include**—Leather garments, purses, bags, chaps, and pillow covers.

**\*The focus of this unit is developing sewing construction skills. Judging will be based more on construction and sewing than on tooling.**

## **COLORADO 4-H EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS SEWING LEATHER—UNIT 6**

All exhibits will consist of the following:

- A. Completed Leathercraft e-Record presented in a sturdy binder/notebook.
- B. One completed article, matching set, or garment made primarily by sewing leather.  
The focus of this unit is developing sewing construction skills. Judging will be based more on construction and sewing than on tooling and other techniques.
- C. Any hand sewing and/or machine sewing may be used in Unit 6.

## **ADVANCED UNITS 4 – 9**

**Note:** The advanced units do not have to be taken in order. All pictures or wall hangings in units 4-8 meant to be hung need to be complete with hardware to hang for display, whether framed or not. Any dyeing, color shading, antique/stain, and finishing techniques may be used in units 4-9.

## **BRAIDING AND UN-TOOLED LEATHER—UNIT 7**

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft manual, which includes links to appropriate videos for each chapter, can be found at

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/projects/manuals/Leathercraft.pdf>.

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<https://co4h.colostate.edu/colorado-4-h-leathercraft-instructional-videos/>.

**Read or review these chapters to find the information in the manual for Unit 7.**

Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish

Chapter 7—Coloring for Leather (any appropriate color and finish can be used)

Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather

Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication

Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques

**Chapter 12—Construction and Braiding Leather**

**\*Some ideas for Unit 7 projects include**—Mystery braid belts, purses, bags, wallets, knife cases, gun shoulder straps, holsters, horse gear, chaps, gun scabbards, braided gear, plant hangers, wall hangings, leather sculpture, bouquet of sculpted leather flowers.

## **COLORADO 4-H EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS BRAIDING AND UN-TOOLED LEATHER—UNIT 7**

All exhibits will consist of the following:

- A. Completed Leathercraft e-Record presented in a sturdy binder/notebook.
- B. One completed article, matching set or picture/wall hanging constructed with un-tooled leather using one or more of these leather art techniques: Lacing, braiding, expanding, sculpting, or molding leather. (Minimal tooling for effect, such as names, initials, or brands will be accepted.)
- C. Any lacing, hand sewing, and/or machine sewing may be used in Unit 7, though they are not required.

## ADVANCED UNITS 4 – 9

**Note:** The advanced units do not have to be taken in order. All pictures or wall hangings in units 4-8 meant to be hung need to be complete with hardware to hang for display, whether framed or not. Any dyeing, color shading, antique/stain, and finishing techniques may be used in units 4-9.

## MASTER LEATHERCRAFT—UNIT 8

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft manual, which includes links to appropriate videos for each chapter, can be found at

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/projects/manuals/Leathercraft.pdf>.

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Instructional Video Series can be found at  
<https://co4h.colostate.edu/colorado-4-h-leathercraft-instructional-videos/>.

\*Review chapters for help as needed to complete the project. Refer to the Table of Contents on pages 2-5.

\*More information is available on the references and resources page.

\*Unit 8 projects need to be more complex, using multiple techniques from multiple units, which could include color techniques, to create the desired effect!

\*Some ideas for Unit 8 projects include: belts, purses, bags, wallets, book covers, note book covers, knife cases, holsters, horse gear, chaps, pictures.

\*Some examples of using multiple leathercraft techniques on a project include:

1. A book cover with a horse head carved in an oval on the front and a geometric stamping design around the oval and on the back.
2. A carved picture of an elephant in the rain forest with a basket weave stamped frame.
3. A floral carved belt with filigree around the name with buckstitching.
4. A purse with basket stamping and an embossed horse head on the front flap.
5. A belt with silhouette carved horses and a filigreed name on the back of the belt.

The combinations of techniques are endless!

6. A sewn leather vest with a tooled yoke.

## COLORADO 4-H EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS MASTER LEATHERCRAFT—UNIT 8

All exhibits will consist of the following:

- A. Completed Leathercraft e-Record presented in a sturdy binder/notebook.
- B. One completed article, matching set or picture/wall hanging using multiple leather working techniques.
- C. Any lacing, hand sewing, and/or machine sewing may be used in Unit 8, though they are not required.

D. Some examples of using multiple leathercraft techniques on a project include:

1. An article with a stamping design that included an area of figure carving.
2. A carved picture with a stamped frame.
3. A floral carving with areas of geometric stamping.
4. A purse with basket stamping and an embossed horse head on the front flap.
5. A belt with silhouette carved horses and a name in the back with filigree.

- E. The combinations of techniques are endless!

## **MAKING AND REBUILDING SADDLES—UNIT 9**

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft manual, which includes links to appropriate videos for each chapter, can be found at

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The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Instructional Video Series can be found at

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**\*Read these chapters to find the information in the manual for Unit 9.**

**Chapter 14—Making and Rebuilding Saddles**

**\*More information is available on saddle making on the references and resources page in the manual.**

### **COLORADO EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS MAKING AND REBUILDING SADDLES—UNIT 9**

All exhibits will consist of the following:

- A. Completed Leathercraft e-Record presented in a sturdy binder/notebook.
- B. One completed saddle (a new build or rebuild of existing saddle). The leather may be either tooled or un-tooled and may be finished in any suitable fashion.
- C. Any lacing, hand sewing, and/or machine sewing may be used in Unit 9, though they are not required.