

7 Essential Steps To Straw Bale Success - Day 6

Shaping Bales



The soft curves of straw bale walls are beautiful and practical. Around windows, they allow more direct light to filter into the room while acting as reflectors for indirect light. These curves are relatively easy to produce and they have a wonderful affect on the aesthetics of the house.

WELDED WIRE MESH

When using a welded wire mesh for the engineering of the building, the creation of curves is quite simple. The mesh itself acts as the form for the straw. Loose straw is placed behind the mesh before it is nailed to the framing to create the desired shapes. For some shapes, like a curve around a window or door, additional plaster lath (blood lath) may be needed. As the name implies, this stuff is dangerous, so use extreme caution when working with it.

NICHES AND NOOKS



Another advantage of the thick straw bale walls is the ability to create niches or nooks. These little spaces are actually carved into the walls after they have been stacked. The use of a template speeds the process and produces uniform shapes from one nook to the next. These spaces are ideal for items you might want to highlight in your home. A well placed light fixture can really draw attention to these beautiful little nooks.

There are a number of different options available for shaping mesh. I have found that the structural

welded wire mesh is the best for most applications and that a plastic mesh works well in others. I stay away from chicken wire entirely as I find it too difficult to work with accurately. Plaster lath is a great material, especially for tight corners where the other options allow stuffing to fall out too easily. Whichever material you use, experiment and have fun with the shapes you create.

**Tomorrow I'll introduce you to the best way to plaster
your straw bale house.....**

Happy Baling,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Morrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

Andrew Morrison
Professional Straw Bale Contractor
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