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The Spinner's Book Of Fleece: A Breed-by-Breed Guide To Choosing And Spinning The Perfect Fiber For Every Purpose



Synopsis

The characteristics of fleece – its structure, grease content, and fiber diameter – vary widely depending on the breed of sheep the fleece comes from. In this comprehensive guide, Beth Smith profiles 21 types of fleece, from bouncy and pliant to lacy and lightweight. A sheep-by-sheep reference describes the best way to wash and spin each fleece into rich, soft yarn. You'll soon be confidently choosing the right fleece, spinning it to perfection, and enjoying the perfect yarn for your next fiber creation.

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Customer Reviews

KNOW YOUR FLEECE BEFORE GIVING IT A SPIN – An essential companion for spinners of all levels, this sheep-by-sheep guide provides fleece profiles of 19 breeds and describes the different spinning methods that produce yarns suitable for a wide range of projects - from lacy shawls to sturdy outerwear. You'll explore the basic characteristics of fleece – crimp structure, lock shape, and relative fineness or coarseness – and learn how they affect the quality of the yarn you spin. Also included are instructions on proper cleaning and processing techniques for different types of fleece and tips for successful spinning. Choose the right fleece for your project every time, and you'll have enviable control over each step, from washing to spinning to finished item.

Beth Smith, author of *How to Spin* and *The Spinner's Book of Fleece*, is renowned for her love of the variety and versatility of sheep breeds, and she teaches the whys and how-tos of preparing

and spinning wool from different breeds. For seven years she owned The Spinning Loft, a shop celebrated for its selection of hard-to-find quality fleeces. She teaches internationally and writes for PLY, Spin Off, and Knittyspin magazines. She also sits on the editorial board of PLY magazine. She lives in Howell, Michigan. Deborah Robson is co-author of The Fleece & Fiber Sourcebook and Knitting in the Old Way. She is a former editor of both Shuttle, Spindle & Dyepot and Spin-Off magazine, and she is currently the editor and publisher of Nomad Press, which publishes books on traditional and ethnic knitting and spinning. Robson is also an artist, working in textiles, printmaking, and oils. She lives in Colorado with her daughter.

At first glance, I saw The Spinner's Book of Fleece as just another reference book, something I neither needed nor wanted, with regard to its particular topic of consideration. However, I have since found that it is also an engaging, well-written book, and organized, interesting and readable book. I have other excellent references on this subject, and there's a wealth of information on the internet, but I bought The Spinner's Book of Fleece anyway. I'm retired and on a very limited budget. Another reference book about sheep breeds, spinning qualities of different fleeces, how to clean, prepare, or anything else to do with choosing or using fleece would at the very least, be superfluous to my needs. So, under those circumstances, you may ask why did I purchase this particular book? The answer is simple: It's a great book and I enjoy reading it. I'm interested in the subject, of course, but as I said, I already have an abundance of reference material to support pretty much any inquiry I might have on this subject. I started looking at this book at a friend's house, and she encouraged me to take it home and check out what the author has to say about something we'd been discussing. So I borrowed the book, and read the passage, which gave rise to my inquiry about another relevant topic, and I was hooked. I really wanted this book, whether I needed it or not. And I don't regret spending the money, even though it meant putting off getting something else that I have a more immediate need for..

I hadn't heard of Beth Smith when I first seen the book, and I chose not to buy it, but her name came up among members of my guild, so I gave in and got the book. My, oh, my! I've just read the first three chapters of the book and I LOVE IT! Even with all the other good spinning books I have on my shelves, this is a good one. Of course, one of the reasons I love it is because she approaches spinning the same way I do—she likes to start with a fleece rather than top or roving, and she wants to spin a consistent yarn. The part of the book that I've read so far is all about how to choose a fleece, process it, and how to spin and ply the wool, any wool. The rest of the book

is a breed study. Truthfully, I wouldn't have bought this book if her name hadn't come up, but I was curious to find out who she was and so I looked at the preview of the book on . I have the Fournier's book, Anne Field's books, Clara Parke's book, the Fleece & Fiber Sourcebook, and others, but this one is a keeper. It's good enough that once I finish reading it, I'll read it again and make notes. She doesn't have tons of new information for me particularly, but she puts things that I know into words, and then organizes those words well. The whole book, especially the pictures, is gorgeous. It has marvelous pin-up pictures of sheep, wonderful close-up pictures of locks and spun yarn. It's a beautiful book. It's published by Storey, so it's good quality, well edited, well put together. It's money well spent. It's a great book for someone who knows how to spin, but wants to know more. Another reason I'm in love with it: last year at a fiber festival I bought four ounces of lots of different breeds. I've been wanting to do an in-depth breed study for some time now, and this is her specialty. The book focuses on: Merino, Cormo, Polypay, Corriedale, Wensleydale, Romney, Lincoln, BFL, Suffolk, Southdown, Dorset Horn, Poll Dorset, Black Welsh Mountain, Karakul, Scottish Blackface, Shetland, Icelandic, California Red, Jacob, and Tunis. Heck, yeah, I recommend it.

I am so pleased with this book. I read many rave reviews, and they are all well-founded! More than just a study in breed-specific spinning, this book thoroughly covers everything you need to know about working with fleeces of any type. In particular, I found the discussion of processing tools incredibly useful - sure, you might not know what style of handcards you prefer until you use a few, but what should you be looking for in the first place? I haven't seen this discussed elsewhere. This is a heavy, expensive-feeling book. The layouts are clear, photographs are well-lit, perfectly focused, and attractively styled. Each breed's fleece is discussed along with many different spinning samples, all from a single fleece of that breed, with detailed notes on exactly how each sample was spun (prep, drafting method, wheel configuration, finishing, etc). The samples illustrate directly how that fleece behaves when handled in these different ways. It is wonderful to see clear examples to demonstrate how these differences pan out. It is one thing to offer advice, such as "always spin to the spin count of the fleece", but it's another thing to see demonstrations of what happens when you do or don't to illustrate the point. There is a wealth of knowledge in this book and I highly recommend it to any spinner. Whether you want to prep your own fleece or not, the spinning instruction would be useful for any handspinner.

So much information! A great resource for anyone who works with fiber, be it knitting, crocheting, or

weaving. As a new spinner I know I will refer back to this book time after time.

As a novice spinner who has a grasp of the basics this book has answered a myriad of questions and given me the tools to advance my spinning from the floundering rudimentary to the realm of selecting fleece or prepared fiber and spinning what I want in a finished yarn. It takes you beyond how to spin to understanding how selection of fleece or fiber and the way in which you spin it can give you the kind of yarn you want to create. No stone is left unturned in the process. It's a gold mine of information I've not found anywhere else. Anyone who is serious about spinning to achieve the results they want should have this book. It fills a huge gap in the spinning literature available and no one who is serious about spinning should be without it.

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