CARIBBEAN KISKADEE

This is a kite plan provided by **Dennis Ische** from a book he has. It shows a very easy and quick method of making a fighter kite. The pages of the kite making instruction are in landscape mode so set your printer for landscape when printing them.

The 'wicker' or 'rattan' referred to in the instructions may be difficult to find. A good substitute is 'matchstick' bamboo. This style of bamboo is easy to find in the form of 'matchstick' bamboo shades or blinds. They are typically available at stores such as Home Depot and Pier One.

One 'matchstick' bamboo shade has hundreds of pieces of matchstick bamboo in it. The shades come in a variety of widths, just choose the width that fits your needs. The width will be the length of each piece of matchstick bamboo. Just cut the strings that bind them together and you have hundreds of instant bows and spines for these kites.

These bamboo sticks are easy to cut with wire cutters or just bend and break to the lengths you need.

One aspect of these is that each piece has a different degree of flex or stiffness and the flex is usually not uniform along the length of the piece. When making the kite, select the pieces that have more uniform flex or bend for the bow and the stiffer pieces for the spines.

These are good flying kites and are fun, quick and easy to make.

I often use 'bleeding' colored art tissue papers for the skins because they are beautiful kites in the sky! All you do is stack a few different colored pieces of tissue on top of each other and drop water on the top layer and allow the 'bleeding' inks to create beautiful patterns and colors on the tissue papers under the top layer.

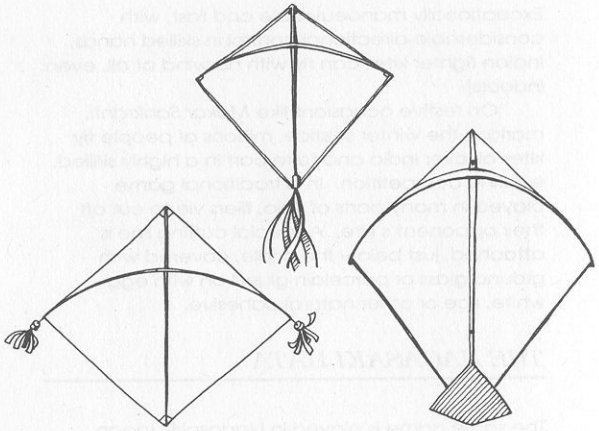
I like the way the fighter kites fly that have tissue paper for the skins, but you can use plastic shopping bags, garbage bags or almost any other lightweight material for the skin. The general technique of construction can be applied to almost any fighter kite plan or design you want to make. The matchstick bamboo creates a practical size limitation. You can experiment with it, but I find a kite with a spine about 16” long and a bow about 23” long is the maximum size.

BigGrins, Bruce

THE CARIBBEAN KISKADEE

The Kiskadee is a simpler variant, sharing with the Indian fighter kite and Japanese *hata* a common lineage and similar square shape, long central spine and curved flexible cross-spar.

A product of East Indian influence in the Caribbean, its long tail makes the Kiskadee the most stable and easy to fly of all three fighter kites



Kiskadee, hata and Indian fighter

MAKING A KISKADEE

Wind rating; light, fly when the leaves are barely moving on the trees.

Easy to build and fly, the Kiskadee is the simplest fighting kite to construct and excellent as a first kite project to make with children.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

SAIL
25 cm (9") square of any light material: paper, newsprint, plastic...

TAIL
2.3 m (90") strip of paper or plastic 2.5 cm (1") wide. This can be strips taped together, or ribbon, cash register tape, etc.

FRAME
Two sticks of wicker or rattan, one 32 cm (12 $^{1}/_{2}$") long, and one 14" long. Both of relatively even diameter.

BRIDLE
Heavy-duty linen thread. You could use polyester or nylon, but the bridle line should be heavier than the flying line.

FLYING LINE
spool of button thread (or crochet thread)

Packing tape
Sewing needle
Scissors

CONSTRUCTION

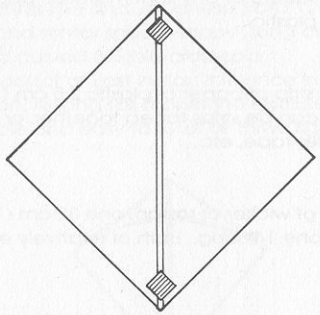
PREPARING THE SAIL AND THE TAIL

1

Refer to *Section 5, page 39* for ideas, and paint, decorate or dye your 32 cm (9") square of paper or plastic. If you're using a long paper strip for the tail, dye it at the same time.

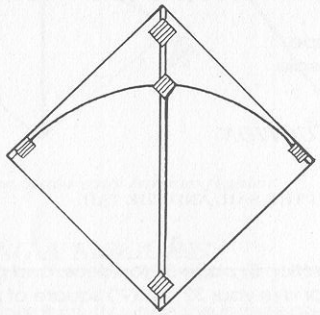
2

Lay the 32 cm (12 $^{1}/_{2}$") piece of rattan exactly in the centre of the sail as shown and tape in place at the top and bottom with packing tape.



3

Gently curve the 35 cm (14") piece of rattan and position for the cross-spar. Tape one side, then the other. Finally, place another piece of packing tape over the point where the spine and spar cross.

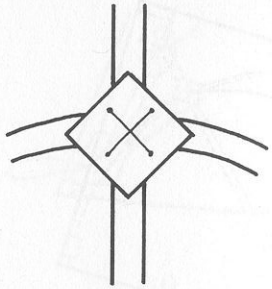


4

To make the bridle, cut a piece of heavy linen thread one metre (38") long, or about two and a half times the length of the kite. Thread through the needle and knot one end.

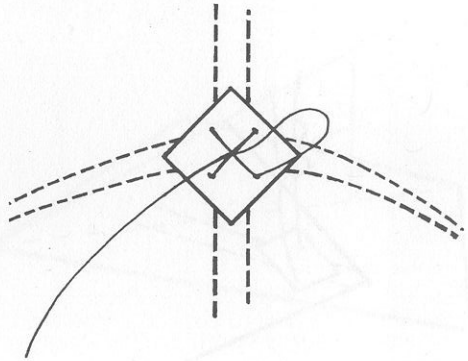
5

Where the curved spar crosses the spine, pass the needle through the tape from the back. Make a stitch over the intersection, through to the back again, then bring the needle up from the other corner and make another stitch, forming a cross over the intersection.



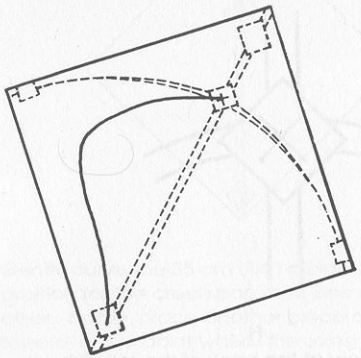
6

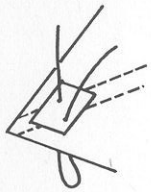
The needle is now at the back of the sail. Bring it to the front again through one of the stitches and loop it through the centre of the cross.



7

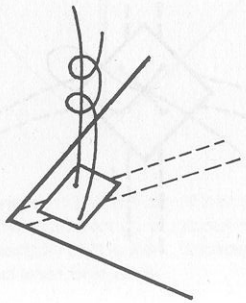
Now attach the bridle to the bottom of the spine. Pass the needle and thread through the sail and the tape on the back, around the spine and back out to the front.





8

Tie off the thread with a double knot, leaving 15–20 cm (6"–8") of thread to make a loop for the tail.



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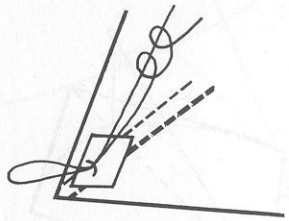
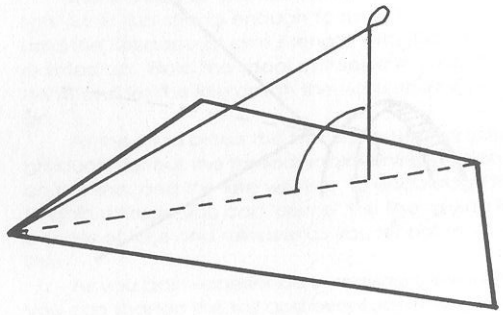
Make a loop by passing the needle through the bridle attachment stitch, then remove the needle and tie off the thread with another double knot. Trim off the inch or so of excess thread.



10

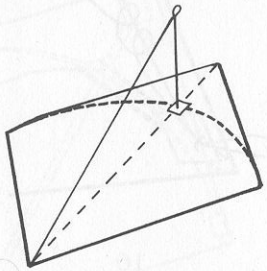
Now we're ready to set the tow point. For this kite the ideal tow point will set the top leg of the bridle at 90 degrees to the sail.

Lay the kite flat and pull the bridle straight up as shown, until it forms a right angle with the sail at the upper bridle point. Pinch the thread, forming a loop, and knot. This loop will act as the tow point.



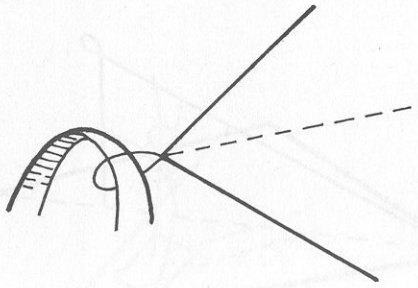
11

Check the balance by suspending the kite by the tow point. Does it tip to one side or the other? If so, then it is out of balance. Correct the balance by adding a small piece of tape to the higher side. Repeat if necessary, until the kite hangs flat when suspended.



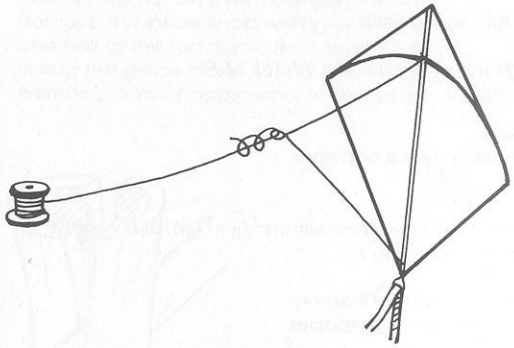
12

Finally we can add the tail. Pass the strip of paper or ribbon through the loop at the base of the spine until you come to the centre.



13

Now we just attach the flying line (sewing thread) by tying to the tow point loop, and our Kiskadee is ready to fly.



LAUNCHING AND FLYING THE KISKADEE

The Kiskadee is a good introduction to manoeuvrable kites. The tail helps compensate for inaccuracies in the construction and also makes the kite slower and less skittish in the air.

This is a very simple kite to launch and fly. In a light wind, just strong enough to rustle the leaves, hold the Kiskadee at arm's length with the nose pointed up. Hold the spool of thread in your other hand and let the kite catch the wind, then let it go.

As the wind blows the kite out in front of you, gradually let out the thread, maintaining tension on the line, and the kite will rise. To encourage it to gain altitude you can "pump" the line, giving it a series of tugs and releases as you let out more line.

As you gain experience in making these kites you can shorten the tail and eventually move on to trickier fighting kites like the Indian fighter.