



An Aboriginal woman impresses designs into bark with her teeth. **Birchbark biting** was first practised by the **Algonquian-speaking people** — the Ojibwa and Cree — and passed down from mother to daughter. In some areas, elm bark is used. Thin pieces of bark are folded many times. Then the artist imagines her picture and bites the bark to form a pattern.

Years ago, people of the Shield used bark for things they needed every day: canoes, shelters, toys, and baskets for carrying and heating water and food.

Baskets were often decorated with porcupine quills or dyed split spruce roots. Plants for dyes are plentiful in the boreal forest. Blueberries, cattails, lichens and mushrooms make rich dark colours and are still used for these traditional crafts.

Other decorative artworks are made with **beadwork** and **thread embroidery**. Bright beads and threads are sewn onto tanned animal hides and items made from cloth, especially woollen.

**Bb**

Betty bites bird and butterfly designs onto birchbark.