

# Something about Straw Broom

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Before the invention of vacuum cleaners, brooms are the only tool to sweep the endless dirt inside and outside a house coming from farming, road dust or soot from the fireplace. A large variety of materials can be made into brooms, both man-made and natural. Plastic and synthetic bristles are common broom materials in modern society. Bamboo or tree twigs, stiff grasses, hay or corn husks are often used as the natural broom materials. Natural-material brooms are considered superior to artificial ones in that plastic brooms only sweep dust around whereas straw brooms actually absorb dirt and resist moisture. As a result, straw brooms are more expensive than their plastic counterparts.

Broom making is still a handmade production with the help of simple machines even in a time when science and technology is developed. Although some changes have taken place in manufacturing straw brooms during the past decades, these changes are subtle and minor. As a matter of fact, the technique changed a little.

Brooms bear superstitions in numerous cultures. People in ancient China believed that brooms can only be used for cleaning the house floor or ceilings but not for household god or altar because that is regarded disrespectful. Those items are often cleaned with a cloth. For three straight days from the New Year's Eve of Chinese New Year, the use of broom is prohibited as it is thought of that it sweeps away the good luck of the coming year. In some African countries, brooms are usually used in marriage ceremony to symbolize a union.