



COMPETITION PREPARATION

- Mane & Tail Braid Tutorial -

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PREFACE

All European Brabant Registry of America (EBRA) Members who are participating in inspections, exhibitions, shows, competitions, and/or challenges are encouraged to follow the following horse grooming guidelines. Those Members who wish to accrue annual show points within the Registry, must adhere to the presentation standards. After all, the public presentation of every European Brabant should reflect positively on the entire breed. These standards will help us all put our best horse forward.

The animal should be bathed and groomed before entering any competition.

A horse's sensory hairs around the eyes and muzzle, as well as inner ear hair, are functional to the animal, therefore the EBRA permits the handler to choose whether to trim or leave these hairs natural. Additionally, the European Brabant boasts a thick winter coat. When shown during colder months, a clean, groomed, full winter coat is permitted. However, the handler may choose to trace clip, blanket clip, strip clip, or full-body clip their horse for competition.

Leg feathers shall be clean, combed, and free flowing. Handlers may remove feathers by clipping with a #10 Course Cut Blade at their own discretion. Scissor cutting or partially trimmed feathers are not permitted. It is all or nothing.

Manes shall be thoroughly washed, combed and neat in presentation. The mane may be presented with double-sided braids, with three skein yarn (any color combo) and natural-colored raffia embellishments. There are two techniques for the double-sided braid: The overhand "Belgian way" or the underhand "Dutch way." Alternatively, manes may be presented down and natural, pulled between four and six inches or roach-clipped with a #10 Course Cut Blade.

Tails shall be thoroughly washed, combed and neat in presentation. The tail may be presented with a single, centered hunt-style braid with raffia twill or left down and natural. Acceptable lengths are full, bobbed above/at the hock, or banded at the chestnut. While the EBRA does not condone or promote tail docking, Brabants with pre-existing docked tails are permitted and shall be presented in a braid.

NECESSITIES

PREPARATION

- Shampoo
- Comb, brush, scissors, and thinning shears
- Preferably two of everything in different formats
- Step bench / stool
- Clippers (optional)



BRAID

- Wool
- Raffia
- Optional: paracord and rubber bands



PREPARATION

HEAD and BEARD

- The horse has tactile hairs around the nose, mouth and eyes. The horse uses these hairs to feel. These hairs therefore have a function that makes it best to leave them alone as much as possible. Optionally, you can trim the hairs that stick out very far from the rest.
- There are also hairs in the inside of the ear, which protect against noise on the one hand, but also against penetrating dirt. You can update the ear by folding the pinna lengthwise and trimming the hair that sticks out. To cut, use rounded scissors and cut towards the tip of the ear to avoid cutting into the ear or the tip of the scissors hitting the eye should the horse pull away unexpectedly.
- The beard refers to the long hairs below the jaw and beyond the throat and neck. Especially in winter these hairs are very long. To give the horse a more elegant look, they can be clipped or shaved.

MANE

Before braiding, the mane must first be thinned or pulled. Before you start, make sure the mane is well combed out.

- Thinning can be done with a thinning comb. However, if your horse has a very thick mane, it is recommended to pull the mane. The easiest way to do this is to use a comb. Take a thin section of hair at a time, comb the top hair upwards and then wrap the bottom one around the comb. You can then pull them out by the root. Work from the ears to the withers.
- The mane should remain approx. four to six inches (the width of a palm).
- Make sure the mane is equally thick and long throughout.
- Do not scissor cut.
- Pulling a mane is a time consuming task, don't wait until the last minute. It also depends on horse to horse, but in some cases this still causes some irritation and it is therefore recommended to do this at least three days before the competition. Therefore the horse no longer experiences any discomfort or itching on the special day itself and thereby won't be shaking its head.
- Washing manes shortly before braiding will cause them to be too soft and make the wool come loose more easily. So wash the mane one to three days prior if you plan to braid.



Mane Pulling

TAIL

With a long tail, it is important that it is regularly maintained. Start brushing out section by section from below and work your way up slowly. For shows, there are countless ways to braid long tails, if necessary the side can be shaved off.

LEGS

The feathers on the legs are typical features, so no **clipping is necessary**. However, handlers may choose to clip feathers using a #10 Course Cut Blade. No scissor cutting or partial cutting is permitted. It's all or nothing.



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DON'T

SCISSOR CUT

Mane, pluck, crown edge **and** avoid using scissors! Straight cut hair gives an unnatural look.

TO SHAVE

the European Brabant boasts a thick winter coat. When shown during colder months, a clean, groomed, full winter coat is permitted. However, the handler may choose to trace clip, blanket clip, strip clip, or full-body clip their horse for competition.



© France Trait



DO

While handlers are permitted to show their horses with full length natural tails, trimming the tail up to the bobbed or banded length to reveal so the heel is recommended. This allows the judges to better assess the horse's movements.

For people who prefer to keep their horse's tail longer and therefore do not wish to cut it to that height, there are several ways to keep the tail 'under control'.



WOOL & RAFFIA

In the European tradition, mane braiding on Brabant horses is done with wool and raffia. You are free to choose the color of the wool. For the tail, only raffia is used - no yarn. There are countless ways to braid, the basis is of course always the same, but everyone lays out their own detail or gradually develops their small skills. In this tutorial we therefore only discuss one of the options that can and may of course be deviated from.



The wool is two strands (one for each side of the neck) with three skein colors of wool each. The length is about 6 feet for an adult draft horse and 5 feet for a foal.



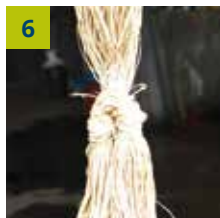
There are several ways to braid the raffia. Usually two or three bunches of raffia with a total length of about 4 feet are used, tied together in the middle and then folded in half.

The raffia can simply be braided in between as shown in the photo above right or it can be pre-braided at the end of the mane as below:



1 *Fold one bunch of raffia in the middle*

2 *Put the second through and pull the end through the loop put on well*



5+6 *Then divide the top bussel in two*

7 *The left part is braided at the end of the left half of the mane*



8+ *Tie a knot on it after you have braided about 6 inches*

11 *Then do the same on the right side*

ATTACH WOOL

When braiding you can “just start” or you can tie the wool to the mane by means of paracord or twine. Some also tie the wool to the head stall, but since this still has some freedom of movement, the wool can / will often come loose.



- 1 Take a thin cord and make two loops



- 2 Place the right loop over the left

- 3 You can now easily put on the loops

- 4 Slide them over a tuft of mane in the front of the neck (where you want to start braiding) put on well

- 5 Divide the tuft of mane into two parts

6

- 7 Tie a double knot

- 8 Put the tuft of mane forward

- 9 Tie a double knot again (possibly then put the tuft to the back and tie a double knot again)

- 10+ Take your strand and tie it as short as possible against the neck with the cord

- 12 Ready to start!

BRAID: UNDER HAND

Underhand braiding, the "Dutch way." This braid looks like it's on top of the mane. For this, you use the underhand braiding technique. Below we continue with the way in which the yarn is attached by means of a cord. This is not necessary, you can also start braiding like this.



1 Divide the yarn in three. At the bottom (in this case the red) you take a tuft of mane (e.g. the tuft with which the yarn is attached), at the middle (yellow in this case) nothing yet, and at the top (black) the next tuft of mane

2 Then you can start braiding. You start by crossing the top one (black in this case) under the middle one (yellow).

TIP

Hold the middle strand up with your thumb, that way it's easier to get the other strand underneath.

With each stitch you do, pull the mane tuft as you push the wool towards the mane comb. This way you ensure that your wool comes as close as possible to the mane comb.

3+4 Now lay the middle strand (yellow) upwards and take a tuft of mane with it, pulling the yarn as short as possible against the mane comb.

5 With the thumb of your right hand, push the middle strand (now black) up and bring your third strand (red) under it.

6+7 The red strand is now in the middle, you bring it up with the thumb of your left hand, after which the top yellow strand goes under it.

8+ And so on!



13 This is how you braid up to and including the last mane pick.

14 Then there is only the braided raffia left; you take this in the same way as the mane pluck at the yarn strand that comes up (red in this case).

18+ With the next strand of yarn that comes on top (black in this case), take some raffia with the yarn.

How far you continue to braid depends on where the horse's withers are, but usually it will be 3 to 4 stitches that you need to continue braiding.

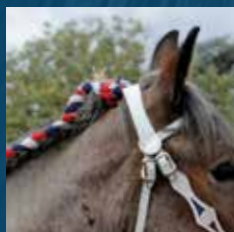
23+ When you have come to the end, take some yarn threads that you twist around the whole and by means of tie a bow.

27 Finished!

TIPS



Start braiding far enough forward (against the ears)



When you tie the wool to the head piece, there is a chance that the first stitches will come loose and the wool will be pushed up.



Pull the wool well back when you put a girth on.



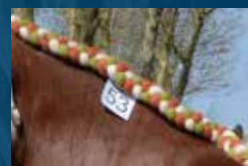
Sometimes a part is shaved in the middle of the mane.



Braid all the way to the wither.



Use any three color combination of yarn.



Example of yarn and raffia being too short.



Example of yarn and raffia being too long.



Example of yarn to short and raffia too thick.



Foals can be braided with raffia.

BRAIDING: OVER HAND

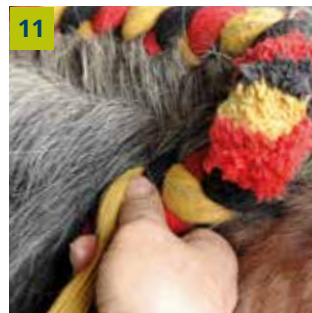


The basic overhand braid, the "Belgian way," is when instead of going under the middle strand, you now go over/above it. In the example below, we immediately start braiding, without attaching the yarn.

LINKS



RECHTS



1 Make sure that the mane is parted well in the middle and that they are well combed.

2+ Divide your yarn into three strands per color... and get started! At the bottom (red in this case) and the top (black in this case) you take a tuft of mane.

You put the black over the yellow after which it comes up and you also take a tuft of mane that you always attract as best as possible. Then the red over the black.. etc.

TIP

"I always start with the red strand as 'first' (= left hand on the left side of the mane), then the color order is according to the Belgian flag in this case."

Make sure that the tuft of mane that you take each time is about the same thickness as your skein of yarn. That way you get the most even braid and you don't get any 'bumps'.

TIP

5+ You do the same on the right. Here it is easiest to start with the red strand in your right hand and have the black one on top again.

Start by bringing the top (black in this case) over the middle (yellow). Then red over it. etc.



13+ About a hand's breadth in front of the withers, add the first bunch of raffia.

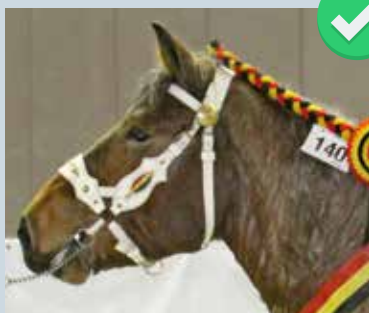
15 At the next skein of yarn that comes up, the second...

16 ... and possibly a third (depending on how thick you make the bunches of raffia).

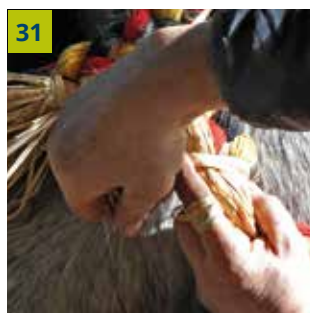
17 How far you continue to braid, just like with underhand, partly depends on your horse, here too this will usually be 3 to 4 stitches.

18+ To secure your braid, take a few strands of raffia or wool that you wrap around the whole and pull through that loop.

TIP



Braid over the headpiece/halter, otherwise you will 'break' the neckline, as it were.



25+ On the right side you braid the raffia strands that are already braided in on the left.

29 Also just like the left, continue braiding another 3 to 4 stitches...

30+ ... before you secure the braid by twisting a string of raffia around it.

33+ You then tie the strand of raffia on the left and right sides with the help of a knot. a tie together.

35 Finished!

TIP

VIDEO'S

Videos of the different braiding methods covered in this tutorial, in which the different steps are performed, can be found at:

www.trekpaard.net/vlechten



THE TAIL

Only raffia is used to braid the tail. A little raffia is first made into a tail that is then braided. Again, there are hundreds of ways to do this and you are free to use your own method. The tail is the same for a short or long tail, only in the latter case the raffia used for braiding will be longer.

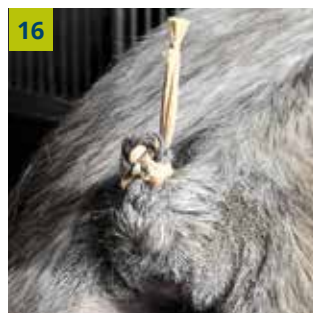
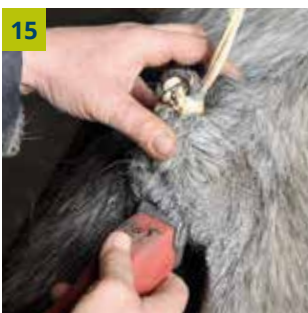
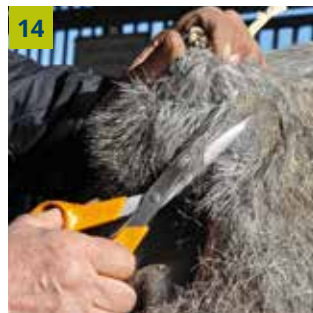
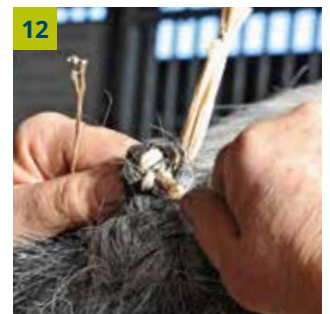
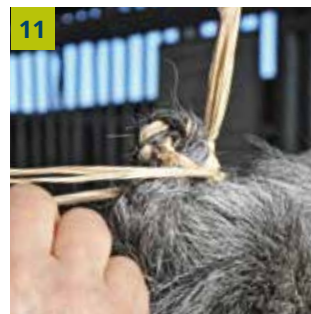


- 1** Take some raffia (it doesn't have to be that long for a short tail).
- 2** Tie a knot around the bussel with a few strands of raffia.
- 3+** ... and then twist these wires around the whole.
- 7+** At the end (after about 2 inches) tie a double knot.
- 9** Cut the top straight.
- 10** Finished!



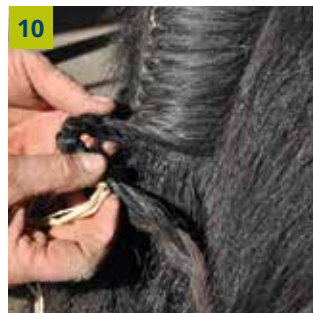
There are also many other ways to make pigtails. An example of another 'shape' above: At the bottom of the bunch of raffia a knot has been made and at the top they are tied with one raffia.

DOCKED TAIL



- 1+** Divide your ponytail into 3 and start braiding (overhand).
- 4** Braid until you have about 5 to 6 inches.
- 5+** Tie the end with a string of raffia. Cut the end straight (not the strands of raffia you tied the end with).
- 7** Hold the end up and roll it down.
- 8+** Tie the rolled-up part with the string of raffia.
- 10+** Fold the whole thing up and bring the strand of raffia behind the tail, after which you tie it under the rolled part with a double knot.
- 13+** Cut the strings and trim the tail and/or use the clippers for this.

LONG TAIL



- 1 Start by brushing out the tail.
- 2 For this way of braiding, make sure you have thoroughly combed the sides.
- 3+ Braid the tail overhand, each time adding some hair from the sides.
- 6 Braid until you have about 8 inches
- 7 Continue braiding the hair from the end.

OPTION 1

- 8 Tuck the end in and secure with a rubberband.

OPTION 2

- 9 You can also tie the end together with a raffia.
- 10+ Tuck the end in and use the raffia to tie the bun.
- 12 Cut the ends.

LONG TAIL



For the second method of braiding a tail, part of the tail is shaved: the sides, the tail down and in the middle. The final braided tail will be in the middle, so by shaving the hair under it, you can pull the braid closer to the tailbone.

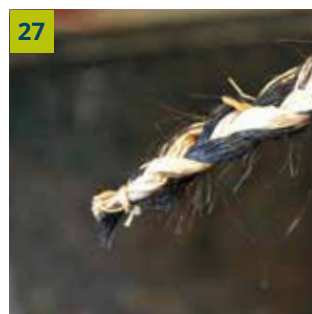
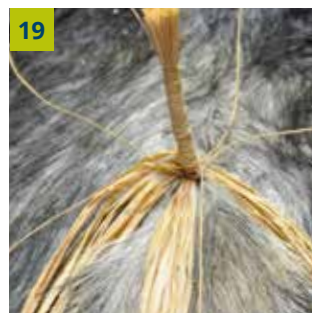
2+ Shave the sides, bottom,...

5+ Make sure you keep a good section of hair at the top. Make sure you don't shave it off when you shave a line in the middle.

Comb the remaining hair again.

10 In this method, the ponytail is tied in the same way as the wool.

12+ Take a piece of string in which you make two loops (see earlier in the booklet) and place it over a tuft of hair at the top of the tail. Tighten well and tie some knots on top.



16 Divide your tail into three parts and place it against the tail. Knot the string over the middle part.

18 Take a second string (longer than the tail) and attach it to the top of the tail.

20 Place it downwards, in the shaved middle part of the tail.

21 Start braiding the tail (overhand in this case). Make sure you don't braid any of the strings!

24 Continue braiding until you reach the end of the tail.

25 Use the long string behind the braid to tie the braid. Make sure you don't pull the string down.

27 Cut the end of the raffia/tail straight.

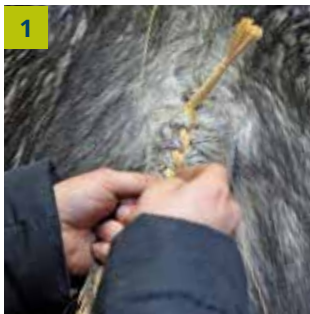
28 Tuck the end of the tail in and up (between the braid and the tailbone) while pulling the string at the top, pulling the end behind the braid.

29 Tie the string to the tail at the top.

30 Trim the tail if necessary.

DOCKED TAIL

In the same way as you started with a long tail on previous pages, you can start for a short tail: shave, tie to the top hairs and tie the raffia tail with this string (see up to step 17 on previous pages).



1 Braid the tail overhand.

3 Fold the end up and tie it with the string.

5 Fold the top part (part above the string) back to the bottom and tie it at the top.

6 Just below this one you tie off the rest.

7 Trim the sides of the tail as needed.



Feel free to be creative when braiding tails!

♥ SPECIAL THANKS TO ♥



AND

