



## Spinning Karakul by Letty Klein

I've been raising Karakul sheep for almost 40 years. Karakul fiber comes in many colors; it is a coarse strong double-coated rug wool that felts in the blink of an eye! In fact, I think this fast-felting trait is half the problem people have when washing a raw Karakul fleece. It is not next-to-skin soft and it's not meant for use in a blanket, unless a saddle blanket. Karakul is rug wool from perhaps the oldest breed of sheep, think Persian Carpets; they have worn well for hundreds of years.

Photo 1 Color possibilities



**Spinning from roving:** Just draft a bit, treadle slowly, don't over-spin, and practice your long-draw! So many possibilities to cherish, work with the color variations. The yarn on the left has orange noils carded into the roving; this was the warp in an award-winning woven rug.

Photo 2 Yarn variations

**Spin-in-the-grease**, my favorite: Tease the raw locks apart with your fingers, just fluff it; then let the wheel pull the fibers in as they come. If a lamb fleece, leave the little birth-curls on the ends of the locks to stick out adding a unique texture and color variation to the yarn. *If the wool seems a little sticky*, a few seconds in the microwave will soften the grease, a tip told me by the late Glen Eidman.

Photo 3 Spinning-in-the-grease



**Washing a raw fleece:** Be careful, no agitation and no water temperature changes! For a small amount just lay the locks in a salad spinner strainer, immerse in hot soapy water for a few minutes, then spin out. Move the basket to rinse water of the same temperature, spin again and dump onto a towel to dry.