



Materials Needed: Reed Forming

If you're a beginning reed maker and don't have any tools, it would be best to start off with a complete reed making kit from certain sellers. All double reed specialist stores have a few versions, but the one I would recommend most for quality and price is Nexus Woodwinds. Buying all of these tools individually, or trying to find another kit that is similar from another seller will cost around \$300+. This one is a steal!

[Nexus Woodwinds "Ultimate" Reed Making Kit: \\$175](#) (all you need to buy with this kit to make my list complete is a hand knife, precision blades, twine, glue, sandpaper and metal files.)



I also recommend an electric water boiler, but it's more for convenience. I use one so I can avoid multiple trips back and forth from the kitchen, and the wait time of boiling a pot or kettle of water. It's up to you if you'd like to invest in one; they're usually around \$25-40. ([iFedio boiler on Amazon: \\$25](#))



As you're buying tools, here are a few specialty double reed suppliers who will provide most of what I'm recommending in this handout.

[Bocal Majority \(Texas\)](#)

[Midwest Musical Imports \(Minnesota\)](#)

[Miller Marketing \(Pennsylvania\)](#)

[Forrest's Music \(California\)](#)

[Nexus Woodwinds \(New York\)](#)

[Edmund Nielsen Woodwinds \(Arkansas\)](#)

[Otter Creek Double Reeds \(Maryland\)](#)

[Hodge Products \(Virginia\)](#)

[Crook and Staple \(UK\)](#)

[Rieger Bassoon tools \(Germany\)](#)

What you'll need:

Hand Knife (a sharp pocket knife works)

[New Opinel Knives at MMI are \\$20](#)



Plaque (These come in different colors. Any color works. This one is important so you don't chip or crack the reed when scraping)

[Rieger Plaques at MMI are \\$4 each](#)



Mandrel (NOT a forming mandrel)

[Solution mandrel at MMI is \\$20](#)



Pliers (simple needlenose pliers work, otherwise these Rieger forming pliers are specialized for reed making)

[Solution Pliers at MMI are \\$27](#)



Reamer (there are two kinds: spiral and diamond. Get a spiral reamer first!)

[Rieger Bassoon Reamer at MMI is \\$97](#)



Easel

[Fox 130mm easel at MMI is \\$19](#)



Wire (I use 24 gauge Rieger wire; the bigger the gauge, the thinner/more flexible the wire. You can use 22, 23, or 24.)

[.06mm Rieger wire at MMI is \\$25/spool](#)



Glue (I use Duco Cement)

[Duco Cement: avg. \\$6 for one, with discounts on multiples on Amazon](#)



Tip Cutters

[Pliers: \\$30 at Nexus WW](#)

[Rotating machine: \\$145 for Solution by Patrizzi](#)



Cotton Twine (2-3mm)

found at any craft/hobby store, about \$3



Drying Rack

[30 pins at Nexus WW \\$35](#)

[Custom colors and sizes at Happy Haley Co \\$25-\\$45](#)



Sharp blades/ Exacto Knife/ Utility Knife

Any super sharp precision blade will do. I like these Pittsburgh utility knives with replaceable blades because they're CHEAP! \$5 for both at a small hardware store.



And as always: **A PENCIL!**

[Blackwing Bassoon Pencils](#)



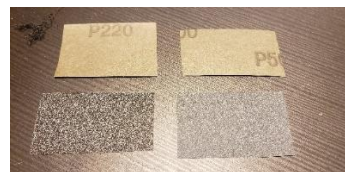
Thread (either FF Nylon or cotton crochet thread size 10)

[FF Nylon: Squirrely Stash \\$8.25/roll](#)

Cotton Crochet thread: any hobby or craft store, about \$2/spool



Sandpaper (220 – 500 grit) : you can get a mixed pack of sandpaper for about \$5 at a hardware store. Cut them into rectangles about 3x2 inches. I use 4 different kinds of sandpaper, but you can get away with one or two.



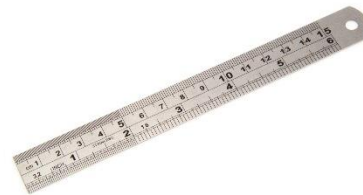
Small Metal files (assorted; pattern or diamond type)

You can find packs of 10-12 of these at a small hardware store for \$5.



Metal Ruler (w/ mm AND in) – avg. \$3

[\(amazon pack of 12: \\$12\)](#)



Buying Cane

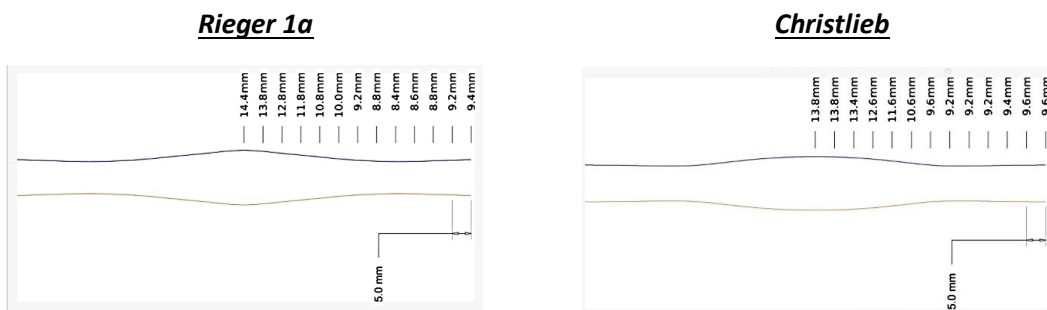
A little explanation: there are MANY different types to buy. *I use Rigotti cane and a Rieger 1a shape.*

Forms of cane:

In the processing of cane, the steps are (not in exact order): gouging, shaping, and profiling. The most raw form of cane you can find is tube cane, then there is **gouged**, **gouged and profiled**, and **gouged, shaped and profiled (GSP)**. If you're a reed maker who only has the tools listed above, you'll want **GSP** cane. Once you have access to other, more expensive tools like shapers and profiling machines, you can feel free to buy **gouged** and **gouged and profiled** cane.

Shapes of cane:

If you look at a double reed store's website, you'll find about 20 different shapes of cane. Shapes are based on the dimensions of the width of the reed, and how far apart the arches of the sides are. For example, here is Rieger 1a shape compared to Christlieb shape, as per [Barton Cane's](#) website. You can see they are quite different just looking at the outline of the shape of the cane in the middle.



Types (growers) of Cane

Reed Cane (*Arundo Donax*) is sourced from all over the world. It is usually grown in warmer, humid climates. Different climates will grow cane with different properties, and like any plant, some crops are better than others. Something we talk a bit about is **density**. Density makes cane "harder" or "softer" based on how close the molecules/grains of cane grow to each other. One batch of cane from one grower may have many different densities, but usually have an average "hardness." I use that term loosely because I don't believe in labeling reeds based on hardness, since there are SO many different factors that go into what feels "hard" and what feels "soft" to any given player. Experimenting with types of cane is the best way to find what you like. I personally use Rigotti cane because I find it has good consistency of sound for the way I make my reeds. I have also used Gonzalez in the past. Other popular cane types are Medir, Lavoro, Donati, Danzi, and Glotin. Barton Cane has biographical and location information on these cane growers on their [website](#).

You can find GSP cane at any of the double reed specialists listed on the first page of this document, as well as many other reed makers' websites – some of them process and sell GSP cane directly. GSP cane is typically sold at \$5-\$6 per piece.

For experimentation and beginning blank forming, I would recommend [Barton Cane's factory seconds](#). 10 pieces of cane at \$2.50 a piece. Still good cane with minor imperfections.