

X is for flax. Did you know that you could make a shirt from a plant? What? In colonial times, the fibers were spun into a linen thread, which were woven into cloth used to make a shirt! When flax was harvested, it was retted, or soaked in water, to loosen the stalk and soften the fibers. A flax break was sometimes used to break the hard outer stalk. Once the stalk was removed, the silk-like fibers were combed through a block of thin sharp spikes called a flax hatchel, or hackles. Once they are combed smooth, the fibers were ready to be spun into thread on a flax wheel like the one shown below.

