



Issue 126 July 2021

BUSTLE & SEW
LOVE TO SEW AND SEW WITH LOVE
MAGAZINE



Floral Bee Hoop



Summer Banner



Ravishing Radish Cushion



In Full Leaf Hoop



Toad Softie



Beard Bouquet Hoop



Meet the Maker: Erica Biggs Art
Looking after your Sewing Machine
Preserving Summer's Beauty in Dried Flowers
A (very) Little History of the Sewing Needle

Plus: Poetry Corner, July Almanac, Summer in the Garden
The Countryside in July, Swan Upping and much more besides

A Bustle & Sew Publication

Copyright © Bustle & Sew Limited 2021

The right of Helen Grimes to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, without the prior written permission of the author, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Every effort has been made to ensure that all the information in this book is accurate. However, due to differing conditions, tools and individual skills, the publisher cannot be responsible for any injuries, losses and other damages that may result from the use of the information in this book.

First published 2021 by:
Bustle & Sew
Station House
West Cranmore
Shepton Mallet
BA4 4QP

www.bustleandsew.com

Welcome to the July Magazine



Hello everyone!

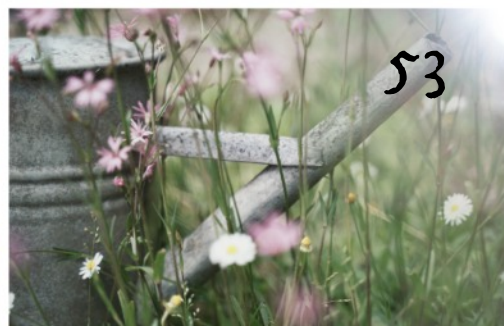
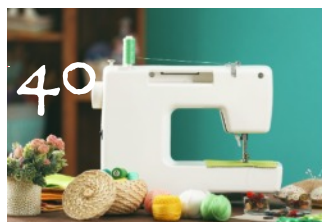
July, and it's high, high summer. Although the longest day is behind us now, there's plenty of summer still to come, and now that restrictions will soon be coming to an end (here in England at least we hope, and are keeping everything crossed) there will be lots of long-postponed events and gatherings to look forward to. The countryside is heavy with leaf as the pale delicate tints of early summer give way to the more robust hues - the brightest of bright geraniums in terracotta pots, crimson flowers on my broad bean plants (and crimson radishes too, celebrated in my Ravishing Radish cushion cover) and plenty of the Engineer's favourites, roses in the front garden.

This month's edition has a real summer feeling too, with summer recipes, tips for the garden, buzzy bees and trees in leaf, and much more besides, including a very talented Maker, Erica Biggs who paints the most delightful images on, of all things, oyster shells!

I hope you enjoy this issue and the August Magazine will be published on Thursday 29 July. Until then I hope you have a lovely month, with lots of time for stitching in the garden!

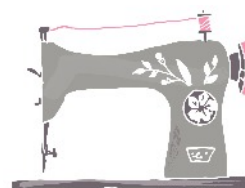
Very best wishes





Between this month's covers ...

July Almanac	Page 5	Meet the Maker: Erica Biggs	Page 51
Floral Bee Hoop	Page 7	Summer in the Garden: Water	Page 53
A (very) Little History of the Needle	Page 11	Lovely Idea: Paper Leaf Philodendron	Page 55
Lovely Idea: DIY Mosquito Candles	Page 13	Will it Rain? Some Weather Lore	Page 56
The Countryside in July	Page 14	Ravishing Radish Cushion Cover	Page 58
In Full Leaf Hoop	Page 16	Time and Tide...	Page 61
A (very) Little Guide to Embroidering Text	Page 19	Embroidery Stitch Guide	Page 63
Preserving Summer's Beauty	Page 20	In the Kitchen: Conversion Tables	Page 64
Swan Upping	Page 24	Templates	Page 65
Summer Banner	Page 25		
In the Summer Time	Page 27		
Toad Softie	Page 38		
Looking after your Sewing Machine	Page 40		
July Printables	Page 44		
Restoring the Shine	Page 46		
Beard Bouquet Hoop	Page 47		



July

July brings the peak of our short English summer - and it sometimes feels as though these lazy hazy days will never end. Tree canopies are in glorious full leaf and everyone wants a taste of the outdoor life. Children are making the most of the long school holiday that begins this month, whilst adults too head for the garden or coast whenever time allows. The growing season has reached its peak and though the days are shortening already, for the moment at least the change is almost imperceptible.

In the Roman calendar, more than 2,000 years ago, the name of this month was changed from "Quinctilis" or fifth month to Julius to honour Julius Caesar. In English this was rendered as "July" which until the middle of the eighteenth century was pronounced to rhyme with "truly". July is considered to be the height of summer, but it is a much more violent month than June. Nature is truly red in tooth and claw this month as stags fight, buzzards hunt down young rabbits and the corn is cut down by the harvester. Most significantly however, the month of July is characterized by thunderstorms.

The month of July in 1808 was so hot that one publication reported that at least 7 people died from the extreme temperatures. That heat wave finally came to an end on 15 July with such ferocious thunderstorms that one of the pinnacles of Gloucester Cathedral was destroyed and violent hailstorms devastated the south west of England with jagged fragments of ice up to 12" long falling from the sky.

The countryside is transformed once again this month as crops begin to ripen and fields turn slowly from green to gold. Soft fruits, such as strawberries, raspberries

**"St Swithin's day, if thou dost
rain,**

For forty days it will remain

**St Swithin's day, if thou be
fair,**

**For forty days 'twill rain no
more"**

Traditional

and blackcurrants are available in abundance - on garden bushes, in shops and supermarkets and at pick your own fruit farms, and enthusiastic jam makers can sometimes be spotted slaving over their hot preserving pans late into the evening to make the most of this summer bounty.

Trees now take on a deep green colour as chlorophyll levels change in their leaves whilst in towns the common lime tree becomes festooned with dropping heads of blossom. Its sweet perfume is

designed to attract the bees and hoverflies needed for pollination and so intoxicating is its nectar that bumblebees can fall helpless to the ground. Later in the season these limes become infested with aphids which exude a mist of sticky honeydew onto cars parked beneath.

The dog days of summer begin on July 3 and last until August 14. They were given this name by the Roman soldiers who, almost two thousand years ago, occupied much of England and Wales. In the time of their occupation British summers became much hotter as the world's climate generally warmed. Far from enjoying the clear blue skies and sunshine of their Mediterranean homes however, the occupying legions were subjected to sultry sticky heat punctuated by thunderstorms. They believed these were caused by the effect of Sirius the Dog Star who rose at dawn in July adding, the soldiers supposed, to the uncomfortable effects of the sun's heat.



July brings the beginning of the holiday season and though it's one of the hottest months of the year, weather lore seems to be preoccupied with rain - most famously on St Swithin's Day which falls on the fifteenth of the month.

Swithin was bishop of Winchester from around 854, and his feast commemorates the anniversary of his remains being moved from a grave outside the cathedral to the interior in 971. However Swithin had particularly chosen his burial spot to be outside the cathedral as an act of humility and apparently he (posthumously) objected so strongly to his remains being moved that he caused to rain for forty days until his grave was returned outside.

Here at home, there seems to be an unending supply of salad leaves to pick fresh from the garden - amply rewarding the small effort of sowing a few packets of seeds earlier in the year. It's hugely satisfying to be able to wander outside to gather the contents of a summer salad from your own plot, serving to family and friends within the hour - almost while they're still growing! Even the best organic produce purchased from a shop can't compete with the vibrant taste of food this fresh, whilst soft

fruit varieties, grown for their flavour rather than shelf-life or eye-appeal can be a revelation.

It's now an almost unbelievable 36 years(!) since one of the most ambitious and successful fundraising events of all time, the Live Aid concert at London's

**“Then came hot July, boiling
like to fire,
That all his garments he had
cast away;
Upon a lion raging yet with
ire
He boldly rode, and made
him to obey:
Behind his back a scythe, and
by his side
Under his belt he bore a
sickle circling wide.”**

**Edmund Spenser, The Faerie
Queen (1609)**

Wembley Stadium and at the JFK Stadium in Philadelphia took place on July 13 1985. The event was organised by the rock singer Bob Geldof to raise money for the starving in Africa. The concert featured stars such as Status Quo, Dire Straits, Queen, David Bowie,

Paul McCartney and Elton John at Wembley, and the Beach Boys, Duran Duran, Bob Dylan and Madonna in Philadelphia. Phil Collins performed for the London audience at around 3.30 pm and then flew across the Atlantic to reappear on-stage at the JFK Stadium at about 1.00 am UK time. Donations made or pledged to famine relief during the course of the event amounted to £30 million.

Towards the end of the month the cornfields are nearly fully ripe and across the countryside the golden fields are edged with blue scabious and purple knapweed, whilst the hedgerows bloom with willowherb, yarrow and other wild flowers. Purple thistles are also blooming, and are much in demand by goldfinches which love their seeds.

Having raised their young, garden birds are ceasing to sing and are going into moult, but the chirping of the meadow cricket provides an evocative background sound for lazy summer afternoons, whilst on lakes and rivers you will see solemn processions of fluffy grey-brown cygnets paddling along behind their graceful and majestic parents. Summer is here and it seems for a few short weeks nature is on “pause” while we make the most of it.



Blossom Bee Hoop

The buzzing of bees in the flower garden- the quintessential sound of an English summer's afternoon. But bees are, as we know, an endangered species - and a species vital to our own continued survival due to their efforts as crop pollinators. So this month I have re imagined my floral bee as a hand embroidery project in homage to these incredibly useful insects. The wings and body remain applique, but the body is over stitched in couched filling stitch and she has a fluffy turkey stitch tail.

Shown mounted in 6" hoop.



Materials

- 10" square cotton, linen or other fabric suitable for embroidery - I chose a nice dark leaf green cotton.
- 6" x 3" white fabric or felt for the wings
- 4" x 3" black fabric or felt for the body (the legs are not applique)
- DMC stranded cotton floss in colours 156, 310, 600, 725, 727, 741, 963
- Bondaweb

Method

Use two strands of floss except where otherwise stated.

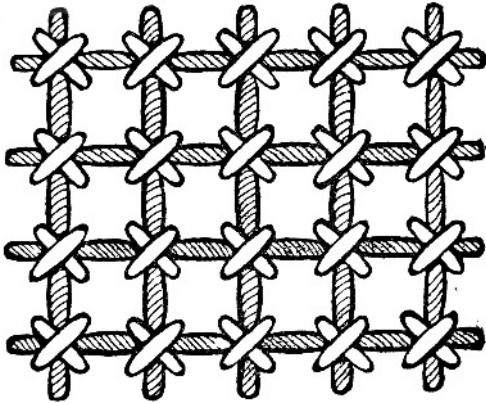
- Iron your background fabric well before beginning.
- Stitch design in accordance with guide on following pages.
- When finished press lightly on the reverse being very careful not to flatten your turkey stitch especially and mount in hoop for display.



- Trace the applique shapes for the wings and the black part of the body onto the paper side of your Bondaweb. Cut the wings in one piece as indicated on the template. The legs are NOT applique so do not include them in your tracing. Also do not include the fluffy tail area.
- Cut out the shapes roughly and fuse to your fabric/felt. Cut out carefully and peel away the paper backing. Position on your fabric, placing the wings first and the body on top using the template as a guide. When you're happy with their positioning fuse into place using a hot iron.
- Now work the embroidery. The floss colours are given above.
- The wings are stitched in a single strand of black (310) floss using backstitch. Work around the edge of the applique shape and then the veins.
- The black body is overworked in couched filling stitch. This gives a lovely texture to the body, but doesn't completely cover the fabric beneath which is why it's necessary to work it over the black applique shape. For guidance on working this stitch see the following page.
- The flowers are all worked in radiating straight stitch with either a single (for the smaller flowers) or cluster of small (single twist) French knots at the centre.
- The legs are worked in 310 long and short stitch.
- The antennae are worked in 310 back stitch.
- The tail is worked in turkey or ghiordes knot stitch using three strands of floss. For guidance on working this stitch please see following page.

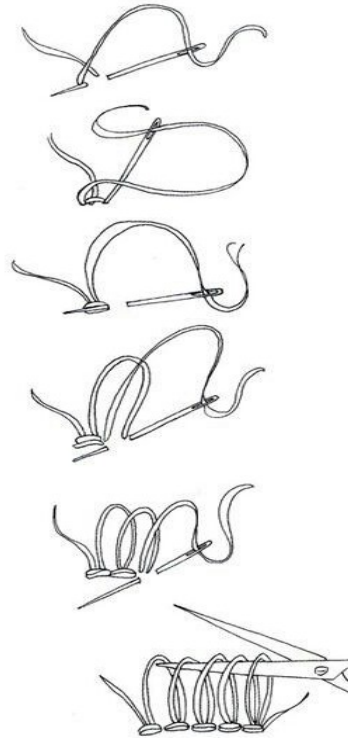
Couched Filling Stitch

Couching refers to tying down long stitches with shorter ones - in this case the point where the long stitches intersect are couched with small cross stitches.



Work long horizontal stitches from side to side of the body at a distance of about $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch (2mm) apart. Then cross with vertical stitches placed at right angles to the first ones. These long loose stitches should then be "tied" or "couched" down at each junction with a small cross stitch.

Turkey (Ghiordes Knot) Stitch



This is worked as shown in the diagram above by making small stitches - the first leaving a loop on the surface of the fabric and pulling the second one securely to secure the loop in place. When the area is covered trim the loops and fluff the ends of the thread with your needle.







A (very) Little History of the Sewing Needle

The very earliest evidence for clothing fabrication comes from an unlikely source: lice. Between 80,000 and 100,000 years ago, head and body lice became separate species. “This is an indication that individuals started wearing skins,” says Sarah Wurz, an anthropologist at the University of the Witwatersrand, “The lice lived in these, and therefore evolved into a separate species.” These skins would have been stitched together through holes made by sharp bone awls - the precursor to the needle with an eye.

Our modern sewing needle is the direct descendent of the flint or bone needle (awls) used by humans thousands of years ago. The first needles would have most probably have been made by using a flint tool. Splinters of bone would have been cut out and trimmed roughly into a pointed shape. The crude needle would have been polished smooth with sand, water and a soft stone rubber. Finally, the needle’s eye would have been created with rudimentary stone ‘drill’.

The development of the needle in what is now Siberia and China around 45,000 years ago would definitely have allowed for the development of more complex clothing. Animal skins, garments, fabrics or other coverings worn by early man and sewn with a bone needle would have allowed for ‘clothes’ to be layered and made to fit.

As people acquired skills in working metal materials, needles were also made from metal (Bronze Age approximately 7000 BC), first from copper, later from iron or bronze. Although there is no positive evidence as to the precise design of these needles, excellent pieces of embroidery from the pre-Christian era suggest that they were probably fashioned almost to perfection. Unfortunately, the articles made with these needles were only partially preserved and there are barely any traces of the needles themselves. This is largely explained by the effect of oxidation, which destroys metallic needles after a short time. Even needles made during the 19th century are now rarely found intact.

Having said this, there are still numerous archaeology sites where varying sizes and types of needles have been found, in particularly, Turkey, Iraq, Greece and Britain. Famously, it is the Roman who have left us with elaborate traces of their sewing ingenuity. Roman needles came in any forms where both bone and metal needles were used.

It is believed that bone needles were preferred over metal as a sewing tool because metal tended to rust and stain the fabric it was used on. Most early sewing needles were generally used for heavy work and were never intended for fine sewing. Steel needles were first made in China and spread to the Middle East, where Damascus and Antioch became centres for fine needle work during Roman times. By the middle ages needles were treasured items and were kept in safe places. Coincidentally, as a result sewing needles are hard to come by in archaeological digs. They were also more expensive and valuable than a pin because people had fewer of them.

Metal needle making was perfected by Muslims in Spain in the 11th century. Spanish Muslims were some of the most advanced medical doctors in the world at the time, and had pioneered many surgical techniques that required needles for suturing. When the Muslims were driven out of Spain in the 15th century, they took the knowledge of needle making with them to Arab lands. Muslims returned to needle making, and Arab

traders took them to Europe. Before this metal needles were made in Europe by the local blacksmith, which resulted in very crude needles.

Metal needles were handcrafted before the industrial age. The process began with cutting wire long enough to make two needles. Then points were ground on either end of the wire, the wire was flattened in the middle and eyes punched out. The needles were then separated. This operation is still followed today, but machines now do the work instead of humans.

Around 1850 needle making machines began producing needles and turned needle making from a cottage industry into an industry done in factories. By 1866 there were 100 million needles being made in England a year.

The English town and district of Redditch in central England became the centre of the world's needle production in the 19th century. The craftsmanship of the needles made there was so great that a foreign manufacturer sent a hypodermic needle to Redditch claiming that it was smaller than Redditch needle makers could produce. The needle was sent back to the manufacturer with a needle made by Redditch craftsman so small that it was able to fit inside that of the foreign manufacturer!



Look!

a lovely idea

DIY Mosquito
Repellent Candles



With ingredients like lemon, lime, water, and essential oils these DIY mosquito repellent candles are not just for pretty decoration but work to ward off unwanted pests in your yard.

Free Tutorial from Crafts by Amanda : [Mosquito Repellent Candles](#)

The English Countryside in July

July is a time of little events, many and intimate, hidden under the quiet routine of village days. Go through the village street at twilight when thatched roof and lean-to are blurred against the silver sky. The cottage gardens are dotted with squat, headless ghosts, white against the dusk. Lean over the fence and peer closely and you will see no phantoms, but harmless, old lace curtains swathed round ripening fruit bushes, against the ravaging of birds. For the soft fruit harvest has come again.

Throughout the long evenings of July, the village women bend low in their gardens over raspberry cane and currant bush, gooseberry and loganberry. Time after time, baskets of shining fruit, purple currants and red and yellow gooseberry globes are taken into the gloom of the cottage kitchens. The gardeners care for their rule-straight rows of vegetables, staking the swelling peas and beans, watering, hoeing and weeding. Allotments gleam with lines of pale green salads, contrasted with tossing plumes of darker carrot tops; the pods of peas range up and down their staked plants like crochets on a page of written music. Soon will come the time for the Annual Village Show, when the pick of the vegetable gardens for mile around will lie in state, washed and trimmed, under marquees in the Rectory Meadow, and lucky bunches of giant onions or clumps of scrubbed potatoes will proudly bear the blue card of First Prize.

But it is not only the fruit and vegetables that call just now.

The cottage flower garden is the most essentially English thing of our countryside, and this month it flames with blossoms. Bees tumble among the rainbow colours of the herbaceous borders and roses smother cottage porches and darken casement windows. This love of flowers is so strong, that in his cabbage patch the farm labourer will sacrifice some of the limited space



to them, and splashes blue and crimson bloom among onions and beans. Even the village railway station glows with flowers, and the old stationmaster hoes between his rose bushes as he awaits the arrival of the uptrain to London.

It is summer's turning point and everything is full and lush, be it rush of flowers in the gardens or fling of convolvulus over the hedges in the lane, or the milky stream of meadowsweet in the ditches. The sunny days are hot and heavy with the sound of bees, while the lanes are full of fledglings that as yet know no fear, while the air is broken by young swallows learning to fly.

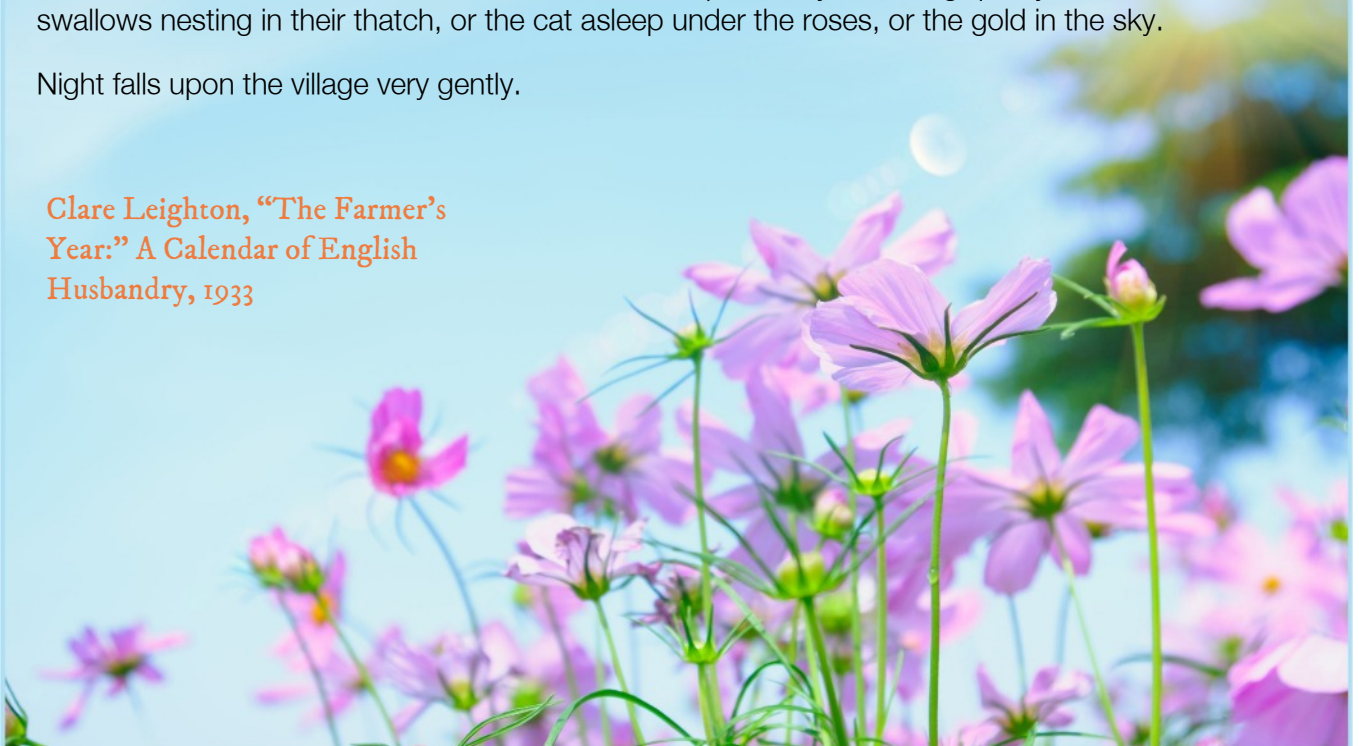
Through the afternoon the cows laze in the sloping meadows. But now it is milking time. They sleepily turn their heads as they hear the cowman lift the latch of the gate. He calls to them across the field. "Frump; Daisy and Moth; Flossy and Snowdrop; Dapple." They swing themselves round like heavy ships and move in orderly line across the meadow. Slowly they saunter over the dry caked mud of the farmyard and each cow goes to her ordained place in the coolness of the whitewashed cowshed.

As the month goes on to its close there is a feeling that the stage is being set for the drama of the harvest. The faint scent of wheat in flower is perceptible no longer, and the fields of grain stand high and firm. The oats are turning silver and there is a warm flush on the wheat. But there is still time to pause and dally, and on these lengthy summer evenings the youth of the village is free. The lanes are heavy and secret for courting, and as the farm lads walk out with their girls in the long shadowed light, the leafage bends low to hide them. Their murmuring is broken by shouts from the village green, where the local cricket team is playing a neighbouring village. Under the bordering elms the old men sit to watch the game.

The evening air grows cooler. Outside their cottage doors sit the aged people. In the dusk their white aprons and white shirtsleeves show in the gardens like clumps of white blossom. Silently they sit, hour after hour, with tired hands at rest on their laps and eyes looking quietly around them at the swallows nesting in their thatch, or the cat asleep under the roses, or the gold in the sky.

Night falls upon the village very gently.

Clare Leighton, "The Farmer's
Year:" A Calendar of English
Husbandry, 1933



In Full Leaf Hoop

This hoop shows a young English oak tree in full leaf, just as you find them in hedgerows and woodland across the country at this time of year. It uses just two stitches - straight stitch for the trunk and a myriad of French knots for the leaves. I must admit that French knots are one of my favourite stitches, I love the textures you can create by massing them together, but if you're not a French knot fan, then you could use short straight stitches instead.

Shown mounted in 7" hoop.



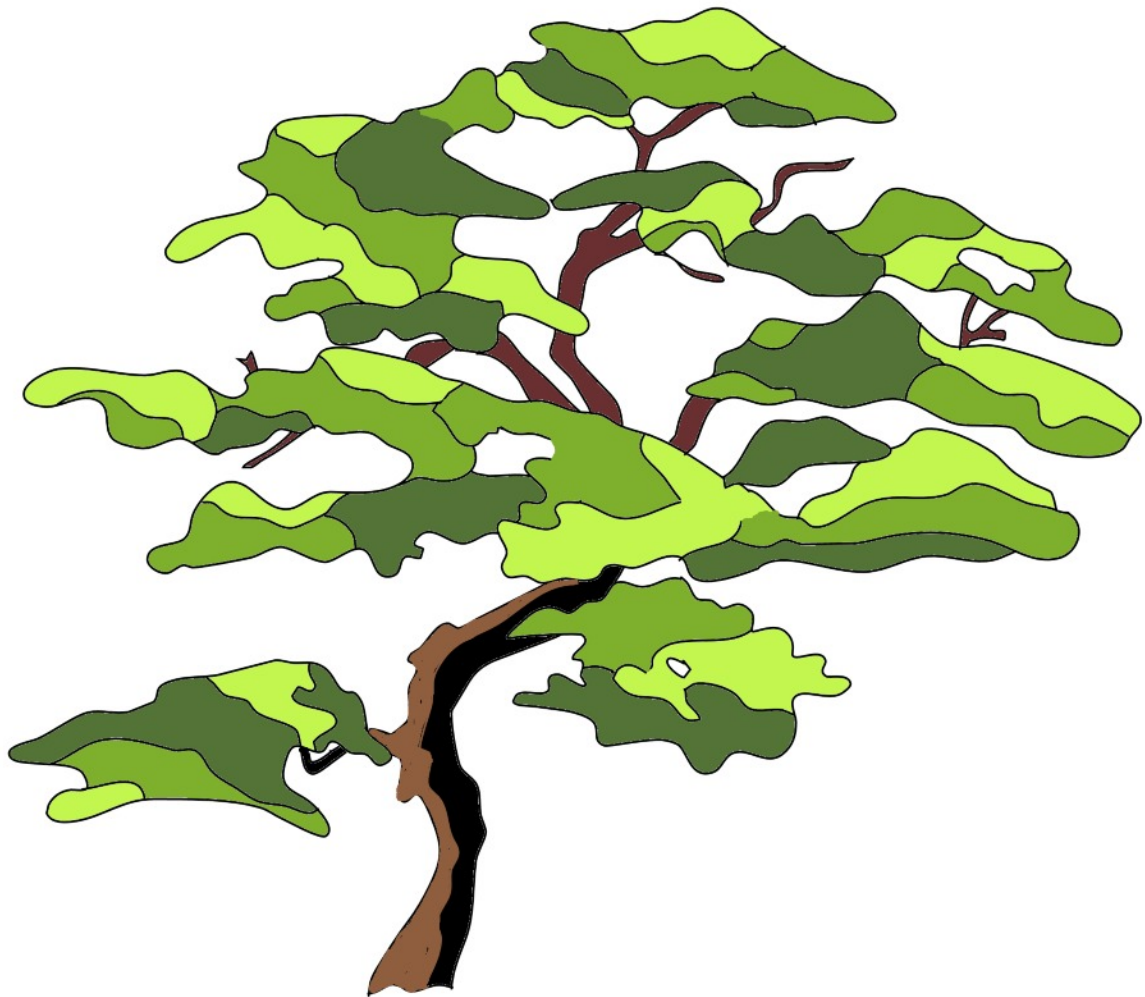
Materials

- 10" square cotton, linen or other fabric suitable for embroidery
- Three shades of green floss - light, medium and dark. I used DMC 469, 471, 935 and two browns, dark and medium. I used DMC 779 and 3031 but the exact shades aren't so important as how they work together.

Method

Use two strands of floss except where otherwise stated.

- Iron your background fabric well before beginning.
- Stitch design in accordance with guide on following pages.
- When finished press lightly on the reverse being very careful not to flatten your French knots especially and mount in hoop for display.



Stitching Guide

- The image above is intended as a guide to placing the colours and you don't need to follow it absolutely - don't get too hung up about exactly where the various shades begin and end.
- The trunk is stitched in straight stitch that follows the line of the trunk, Don't try to stitch regular straight lines, but place stitches at slight angles to one another and let them overlap a little so they resemble the bark of a tree. You can see what I mean in the photograph on the next page.
- The leaves are all French knots. Cluster some groups closely together and then space others a little apart to resemble the airiness of the leaves at the ends of the tree's branches. The secret of a successful French knot is to keep your thread taut as you make the stitch.





A (very) Little Guide to Embroidering Text

The thought of embroidering text can sometimes be a little daunting, though I am pleased to say that the little quirks and wiggles arising through hand stitching do, in my opinion, add a little extra individuality to the piece of work. But it's true to say that there comes a point when quirkiness simply becomes poor workmanship, and I hope that you'll find the hints and tips below useful when stitching text, whether lines from a poem, a dedication, monogram or sampler.

When choosing your textile and thread, keep in mind what the article you're making will be used for. Cotton is great for sheets and other linen, whilst embroidery floss or cotton thread is best for linen, sheets, clothing or any article that has to be frequently washed. You can wash wool embroidery gently by hand, as you would lambswool or cashmere, but it really is best not to simply chuck it into the washing machine! The choice of stitches for text is endless. Padded satin stitch is the traditional choice for monograms because it is slightly raised and clear cut, but simply outlining the letter with chain, stem or back stitch can be effective, whether the outline is then filled or not.

Stem or back stitch are great stitches to choose for text, and for the smallest letters you are best to use back stitch as it gives the finest line. Whatever stitch you choose, be sure to reduce the size of the stitches slightly as you go around curves, this will make the letters much smoother in appearance. Sometimes it is better to overlap one stitch over the other where two lines meet. This makes a sharper point than when you bring both stitches together into the same hole. Be precise about keeping angles clear-cut and straight lines really straight.

Sometimes moving a stitch just one thread to the left or right can make all the difference to the accuracy or legibility of small size letters. Be sure to consider the shape of your letters and the best way to stitch them before you begin. Think about how the components fit together and, particularly if you are stitching on lightweight fabric, avoid carrying threads across the back. It's much better to fasten off and begin again than to have threads showing through to the front of your work. If you find this too much of a pain, then try arranging your text so that the letters join, eg by using a cursive script. Then you won't have to worry about carrying threads.



Preserving Summer's Beauty ...

As lovers of floss, thread and fabric we love to save our memories of summer's beautiful flowers by stitching them into our favourite pieces of work whether applique, embroidery or perhaps crochet, cross-stitch or tapestry.

But it's fun too, to save the "real thing" by preserving the flowers we see all around us at this time of year to enjoy in our homes over the dark winter months until the days lengthen and summer returns once again.



Air Preserving - or drying flowers

This is the easiest and most popular way to preserve many flowers and leaves and is probably the method most people have used. But before you start gathering you should keep two things in mind - firstly that your stems, leaves and flowers should be in perfect condition and free from any excess moisture, and secondly that you have somewhere to dry your harvest that is dark, cool and dry, but where air can circulate freely.

If you tie your plants in large bunches, the moisture won't be able to escape from those in the centre and they'll become spoilt by mildew, so it's best to make up small bunches, hanging them so the flower heads are downwards. This will result in straight stems - if you want curving stems then stand the plants in a tall container in the same cool, dry shady place.

Not all plants are suitable for this method and it's hard to say how long each type of plant will take to dry as they all vary - it's all a matter of experimenting. Many grasses dry very well indeed if you pick them around now - that is to say in early summer - as they come into flower and before they begin to drop their seeds. Seed heads of poppies, globe thistles, teasels, hollyhocks and delphiniums all work well. Seeded heads of rhubarb, leeks, honesty, pennywort gypsophila, achillea, sedum, sea holly and rose bay are all very attractive, together with any of the annual everlasting flowers - easy and cheap to buy packets of seeds and sow them yourself.

You can also dry tiny fir cones from cypresses and from larches, Scots pine and spruce - ready in time for Christmas!

I love to gather great bunches of lavender from my garden, and after drying, either harvest the flower heads for lavender bags and pot pourri or stuff handfuls into vases and jars around the house to enjoy the last lingering fragrances of summer through the autumn months.

Glycerine Preserving

You can preserve many leaves, grasses and even plants in a mixture of glycerine and water which preserves them whilst keeping them soft and pliable. As always, choose plants in good condition and always gather them on a fine dry day. You should start the preserving process as soon as possible after they've been picked.

Mix one part of glycerine to two parts of very hot water, beating well until they no longer separate. Then pour the mixture into a small container, such as a coffee mug to a depth of about 4". If your plant material is tall and at risk of toppling over, then stand your mug or small pot in a larger container, this will hold the tall stems together so they don't fall over. (see the diagram on the next page).

Keep the plants standing in the mixture away from direct sunlight and monitor the depth of the glycerine mixture to ensure it doesn't get too low, topping it up if needed.

Pressed flowers

You can press flowers between heavy books, or if you think you'll be doing this often then it's easy to purchase or make a simple flower press.

To make a simple press take two pieces of square plywood of the same size, clamp them together on a bench or old table and drill holes in each corner. Then slip long bolts in the holes. Cut some cardboard to fit between the protruding bolts (six layers is good) then put the top board over the bolts and screw it down firmly with four wing bolts.

Pressed flowers are lovely and old-fashioned and can be incorporated into many projects. I saw a lovely idea once where someone had stitched them into pockets on a sheer voile curtain. Once you have your press, or an assortment of books(!) the rest is easy-peasy.

Choose a selection of single blooms or sprigs of flowers - a handful will go a long way when you use them individually in projects.

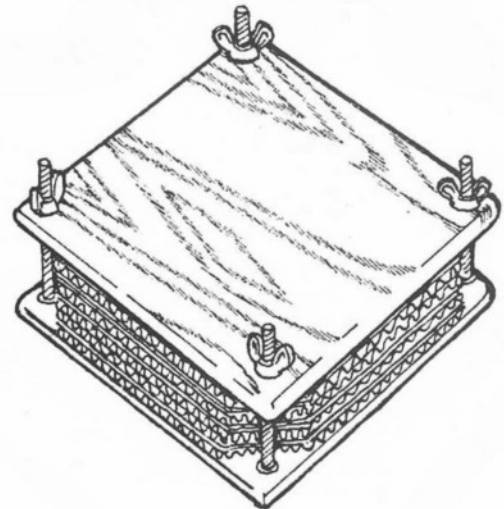


Stand the plant material in a small vessel of glycerine. This is placed in a larger container to support the stems

The time taken to preserve different materials will vary. Small leaves may only take a few days whilst harder materials can take up to a month. Evergreens take longest, but are worth the effort (think of Christmas again!). When the foliage is soft to the touch, without being sticky it's ready. If there is glycerine on the actual leaves then you've left them in the mixture for too long they should feel silky rather than greasy. You can obtain paler shades by standing your material in the light whilst it's still in the glycerine mixture.

There are lots of materials suitable for preserving this way - they will lose their natural colour, but will turn a lovely golden shade. Choose grasses, box, eucalyptus and oak leaves, as well as rosemary, catkins, camellias and ferns.

A flower press



Place your material on a single sheet of blotting or other absorbent paper, then cover it with a second piece. The blotting paper sandwich is then placed in the flowerpress, or between the pages of a heavy book with another weight on top. Keep your material as flat and as evenly distributed as possible, and leave it for two or three weeks to dry.

You'll discover that some flowers will press better than others - if they're too thick for example - you won't be able to achieve good results. Many leaves, ferns and grasses press well, so gather these, as well as the single petals of larger flowers such as peonies and hollyhocks as well as the more usual pansies and daisies.

Once your pressed flowers are ready you can begin crafting with them.

An easy project to begin with is a simple card or book mark. Use thin card - white, cream or pastel shades are the best background to show pressed flowers. You can purchase pre-cut and folded cards from craft

shops, but it's really easy to make your own - just be sure that you cut and fold your card accurately so that it fits the envelope you wish to use.

Arrange your pressed flowers in a design that you like with a pair of tweezers and don't stick them into place until you're totally happy with your design. Diluted PVA glue, or a Pritt stick are great to do this. And don't forget to apply a little glue to the stems of the plants as well or they may break and become lost.

Your card will last much longer if you cover it with self adhesive transparent film, though you don't need to cover the whole card. A nice idea is to take plain notepaper and add a dried flower arrangement in one corner perhaps. Then cover it with a square or circle of film - and you have some very expensive designer-looking paper.



Swan Upping

Ever since it was introduced to Britain in the thirteenth century, the swan has always been a royal bird. Swans cannot be owned by anyone without the express permission of the Crown - and this would have been a valuable favour at a time when swans were a regular item on the banquet table. Permission to keep swans on the River Thames was granted to the worshipful Company of Vintners in 1473, and at about the same time, to the Dyers as well. These grants are still in force so any swans on the Thames are regarded as belonging either to the Queen or to one of these two companies.

Once a year, towards the end of July, the swan keepers of each of the companies meet with the Royal Swan Keeper and together they journey down the river, from London Bridge to Henley, catching and examining around six hundred birds. They mark the beaks of all the young birds they find - one nick for the Dyers and two for the Vintners - according to their parentage. Any brood of mixed parentage is split equally. The Queen's swans are left unmarked, on the principle that she owns all the unmarked swans in the country. This process, known as swan-upping can today take several days to complete, though in the past, when more birds were kept, it could take up to two weeks.



Summer Banner

The last in my series of four seasonal banners, summer is full of colour - and luscious fruits too! The banner is backed with a floral fabric and hung with lovely orange twine - for that perfectly tropical feeling.

This is an easy project as both the applique and embroidery is very simple so would suit a beginner.

Finished banner measures 8 ½" long (approximately)



Materials

- 12" x 6" main fabric
- 10" x 6" backing fabric
- Scraps of felt and fabric for applique
- Stranded cotton floss in dark blue and other colours that work well with the fabrics you have chosen to attach your applique shapes
- Small round beads for the strawberry pips.
- Bondaweb
- 6 ½" long wooden dowelling
- 12" twine for hanging
- Temporary fabric marker pen



Method

- Transfer the pattern to your main fabric positioning it centrally vertically and with the bottom of the letter “R” 2 ½” up from the bottom edge.
- Using the REVERSE transfer trace the applique shapes onto the paper side of your Bondaweb and cut out roughly. Fuse to the reverse of your fabric/felt and cut out carefully as any jagged edges will show. Using the transferred design as a guide, position the shapes on the main fabric and when you’re happy with their positioning fuse into place using a cloth to protect your work from the hot iron.
- Attach applique shapes to the main fabric using two strands of floss and short straight stitches worked at right angles to the edges of the shapes, except for the pear which is blanket stitch.
- Work the rest of the embroidery as follows:
 - The leaves on the dragon fruit are long and short stitch and the pips in the centre are short straight stitches worked in black floss.
 - The pear is secured with blanket stitch and the pips in the centre are French knots worked in the same brown as the text.
 - The sprig of thyme is detached chain stitch worked along a back stitch stem.
 - The strawberry pips are a scattering of small beads.
- When you have finished the embroidery press lightly on the reverse being careful not to flatten your stitches.
- With your temporary fabric marker pen mark a point 3” up from the bottom edge on each side of the banner. Draw a straight line connecting each mark to the centre point of the bottom edge thus creating the point. Cut along the line.
- Mark and cut the backing fabric in the same way.
- Place the backing fabric and main fabric right sides together and stitch around sides and bottom with a ¼” seam allowance leaving the top edge open for turning.
- Turn right side out and press. Machine zigzag along top edge to cover raw edges of fabric
- Fold over 1 ½” to the reverse along the top edge of the banner and press.
- Slip stitch ¾” edge to reverse of banner to form a pocket for the rod.
- Insert rod into pocket. Tie twine to ends and cut away excess.



In the
summertime,
when the
weather is fine...



From cottage gardens to country lanes, hedgerows and banks, the bright acid greens of spring have given way to the deep rich hues of summer. Bright flowers nod their heads as busy insects collect nectar and pollinate the plants, leaving setting fruits in their wake.

Along the railway line, cherry trees have swapped their spring blossom for a covering of fruit. Sweet cherries are best eaten fresh, whilst the sour ones make tasty tarts. Other quintessential summer fruits include fresh raspberries and strawberries, both best eaten as soon as possible after picking, bringing the taste of summer to puddings and bakes. For after all, July is the highest of high summer. A month when we can realistically hope for long hot days, followed by balmy golden evenings, perfect for beaches, barbeques and all kinds of outdoor activities. Although the longest day of the year, Midsummer's Day on June 21 has already come and gone, the best of the summer season is (we hope!) still stretching out in front of us.

July is bumper harvest time in gardens and allotments and our shops and markets are overflowing with fresh, locally grown produce. We're spoilt for choice this month, and for the next few months too, so putting together a meal made entirely of local, home-grown or foraged seasonal ingredients should be a relatively simple, but still rewarding, challenge.

This is usually the hottest month of the year, so light fresh dishes, often portable for picnics, are what we desire and so this month's selection of recipes includes a number suitable to pack and take along on a summer's expedition. July, after all, brings with it the very best of our all too short British summer, in all its sunny golden glory. So whether you're planning to build sand castles on the beach, picnic in the park, or just staying home with paddling pool and garden sprinkler, now is the time to get outside and make the most of all the season has to offer.



Scotch Eggs (the perfect picnic food!)

Ingredients

Makes 6

- 6 eggs
- 750g of sausage meat
- 50g of Dijon mustard
- 5g of parsley, chopped
- 5g of chives, chopped
- Salt and pepper

For the coating

- 2 eggs, beaten
- flour
- breadcrumbs

Method

- Boil the eggs for 5 minutes then refresh in cold water to stop the cooking process. Set aside for about 20 minutes. Peel and dry the eggs – be very careful when doing this as they will be soft and fragile
- In a large bowl, combine the sausage meat, mustard, herbs and seasoning. Divide the mixture into even portions, roll into balls and space out on a sheet of cling film. Lay another sheet on top. Flatten out into round patty shapes using a rolling pin until the patties are around 1cm in thickness.
- Dust the boiled eggs with flour and place each onto a patty. Wrap the mix evenly around the egg so it is completely sealed. Place in the fridge for about 1 hour to firm up. Once set, roll in flour, then beaten egg, then breadcrumbs. Make sure the eggs are evenly coated
- Preheat a deep-fryer to 180°C. Carefully lower the scotch eggs into the fryer and cook until golden and crisp. This should take about 5–6 minutes. Drain on kitchen paper and season with sea salt.





Italian Meatballs in Tomato Sauce

Ingredients

Serves 4

- 2 tbspn olive oil
- 350g onions, peeled and chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 2 x 400g chopped tomatoes
- 1 tspn salt
- 1 tbspn cider vinegar
- ½ tspn ground cinnamon
- 450g lean beef mince
- 2 tbspn chopped basil
- 1 tspn dried oregano
- 75g fresh breadcrumbs

- 1 egg plus 1 egg yolk, beaten
- 2 tbspn chopped parsley, plus extra to garnish

Method

- Heat the olive oil in a shallow flameproof casserole, add the onions and two-thirds of the garlic, fry gently until beginning to soften, about 5-7 minutes. Add the tomatoes, cider vinegar and cinnamon. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 20 minutes.
- Place the beef mince in a bowl with the basil, oregano, breadcrumbs, remaining garlic, egg, egg yolk, parsley and 1 tbspn Parmesan. Season with salt and pepper. Work the ingredients together with your hands until evenly mixed.
- Shape the mixture into 12 even sized balls. Place in the casserole on top of the tomato sauce. Cover and cook at 180C for about 45 minutes or until cooked through.
- Scatter with the remaining Parmesan and plenty of chopped parsley. Serve with rice or pasta.

Goat's Cheese Filo Parcels

Ingredients

- 125g spinach leaves
- 2 tbspn sunflower oil
- 1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 large garlic clove, peeled and chopped
- 250g soft goat's cheese
- 270g pack filo pastry
- 50g butter

Method

- Plunge the spinach into a pan of boiling water, bring back to the

boil and bubble for one minute, then drain and run under cold water. Once cold, squeeze out all excess liquid and chop finely. Put to one side.

- Heat the oil in a pan, add the onion and garlic and cook for 7-10 minutes until softened and translucent, then allow to cool.
- Put the spinach, onion mixture and goat's cheese into a bowl and mix well, seasoning generously with salt and pepper.
- Cut the filo pastry into 24 x 5" squares. Brush one square with melted butter, cover with a second square and brush with more melted butter. Put to one side and cover with a damp cloth to prevent the pastry drying out. Repeat with the remaining filo squares, making 12 sets in total.
- Put a dessertspoonful of the filling in the centre of each square and gather up the filo pastry over the filling. Press together to seal and brush with a little more butter.
- Bake the filo parcels at 220C for about 8-10 minutes or until the pastry is crisp and brown.





A Victorian Tea Garden

Charles Dickens 'London Recreations' 1835

The heat is intense this afternoon, and the people, of whom there are additional parties arriving every moment, look as warm as the tables which have been recently painted, and have the appearance of being red-hot. What a dust and noise! Men and women - boys and girls - sweethearts and married people - babies in arms and children in chaises - pipes and shrimps - cigars and periwinkles - tea and tobacco. Gentlemen, in alarming waistcoats, and steel watch-guards, promenading about,

three abreast, with surprising dignity - ladies with great, long, white pocket-handkerchiefs like small table-cloths in their hands, chasing one another on the grass in the most playful and interesting manner, with the view of attracting the attention of the aforesaid gentlemen - husbands in perspective offering bottles of ginger-beer for the objects of their affections, with a lavish disregard of expense; and the said objects washing down huge quantities of 'shrimps' and 'winkles,' with an equal disregard of their own

bodily health and subsequent comfort - boys, with great silk hats just balanced on the top of their heads, smoking cigars, and trying to look as if they liked them - gentlemen in pink shirts and blue waistcoats, occasionally upsetting either themselves, or somebody else with their own canes.

Some of the finery of these people provokes a smile, but they are all clean, and happy, and disposed to be good-natured and sociable.



Red Onion and Parmesan Tarts

Ingredients

Makes 6

- 350g shortcrust pastry
- 4 medium red onions, peeled
- 1 tblspn lemon juice
- 15g butter
- 1 tblspn olive oil
- 200ml crème fraiche
- 1 tblspn chopped thyme, plus extra to garnish
- 50g grated Parmesan cheese

Method

- Cut the onions into fine wedges and toss in the lemon juice. Melt the butter with the olive oil in a frying pan. Add the onions and saute gently for 15 minutes. Put to one side.
- Divide the pastry into six. Roll out each piece on a lightly floured surface and use to line 6 greased 11cm loose-based individual tart tins. Prick the bases with a fork. Put on a baking sheet, cover and leave to rest in the fridge for 20 minutes.
- Line the pastry shells with greaseproof paper and baking beans and bake at 200C for 10-15 minutes. Remove the paper and beans and return to the oven for 5 mins to dry the pastry bases.
- Increase the oven temperature to 230C. Mix the creme fraiche and thyme together in a bowl and season well.
- Divide half the onions among the pastry cases, spoon over half the crème fraiche and sprinkle with half the Parmesan. Top with the rest of the onions, crème fraiche and Parmesan. Bake for 5-10 minutes until golden. Serve garnished with thyme.



Tastes of the Season: Raspberries

For some reason the raspberry doesn't seem to be nearly as popular as that other summer berry, the strawberry. Yet these delightfully tart, luscious and juicy fruits deserve to be loved just as much as their larger cousins.

The reasons for their comparative lack of popularity may be that they are just too soft and delicate to transport easily when ripe, and also because they spoil so quickly. These two factors combined make them a supply and distribution nightmare for supermarkets and greengrocers.

There is a way around this problem though - you could visit a pick your own farm and gather your own punnet of berries on the day you're planning to eat them. Or why not try growing your own? They're relatively easy to grow in any sized garden as they work well in containers if you only have a limited space.

Pick your raspberries on a dry day if possible when they'll be at their fragrant best. Wash them as little as they need, and only ever under a very gentle trickle of water. Eat in various ways - including very simply with just a little sugar and cream to mellow their tartness - the perfect taste



Raspberry Trifle

Ingredients

Serves 8

- 4 large egg yolks
- 100g golden caster sugar
- 2 tblspn cornflour
- 300ml whole or semi-skimmed milk
- 1 vanilla pod, split lengthways, or 1 tspn vanilla extract
- 8 trifle sponges
- 4 tblspns raspberry conserve
- 50ml sweet sherry or framboise
- 250g raspberries
- 450ml double cream

Method

- First make the custard. Put the egg yolks, sugar, cornflour and 2 tblspns milk into a bowl and mix well. Put the rest of the milk in a pan. Scrape the seeds from the vanilla pod and add them to the milk with the empty pod. Slowly bring to the boil. Turn off the heat and remove the vanilla pod. (Alternatively, add the vanilla extract at this stage)
- Pour the hot milk onto the egg mixture, stirring constantly. Pour back into the pan and cook over a medium heat, stirring constantly until the custard is thick and smooth. Pour into a bowl and cover the surface with wet greaseproof paper to prevent a skin forming. Leave to cool for 30 minutes.
- Slice the trifle sponges in half and spread with the raspberry conserve. Use to cover the base of a large serving bowl and drizzle with the sherry. Scatter the raspberries on top, reserving a few for decoration.
- Pour a third of the cream into a bowl and whisk until thickened. Whisk the custard to loosen it, then whisk in the whipped cream. Pour on top of the raspberries.
- Pour the remaining two-thirds of the cream into a clean bowl and whisk until soft peaks form. Roughly spread over the top of the trifle and decorate with the remaining raspberries



Raspberry Jam

Ingredients

Makes about 2.4 kg (5lbs)

- 1.8kg raspberries
- 1.8kg golden caster sugar
- Knob of butter

Method

- Put the raspberries into a preserving pan and simmer very gently in their own juice for 15-20 minutes, stirring carefully from time to time until soft.
- Remove the pan from the heat and add the sugar, stirring until dissolved, then add the butter and

boil rapidly for 20 minutes, or until setting point is reached.

- Take the pan off the heat, remove any scum with a slotted spoon, then leave to stand for 15 minutes.
- Pour into warm, sterilized jam jars (this reduces the chance of the glass cracking) filling them almost to the top. Immediately cover with a waxed disc while the jam is still warm.
- Leave to go cold and then cover the jars with dampened cellophane and secure with an elastic band. If you seal them while the jam is still warm then mould is likely to grow on the surface. For long term storage, cover the jam with a screw top as well. Label and store in a cool dry place for up to six months. Once opened, store in the fridge or a cool larder.

Florentines

Ingredients

Makes 12

- 65g unsalted butter, plus extra to grease
- 50g golden caster sugar
- 2 tbslpn double cream
- 25g sunflower seeds
- 20g chopped mixed candied peel
- 20g sultanas
- 25g glace cherries, roughly chopped
- 40g flaked almonds, lightly crushed
- 15g plain flour
- 125g plain dark chocolate, in pieces, to finish

Method

- Melt the butter in a small heavy based pan. Add the sugar and heat gently until dissolved, then bring to the boil. Take off the heat and stir in the cream, sunflower seeds, peel, sultanas, cherries, almonds and flour. Mix well until evenly combined.
- Put heaped teaspoonfuls of the mixture on two lightly greased baking sheets, placing well apart to allow room for spreading.
- Bake at 180C for about 6-8 minutes until the biscuits have spread and the edges are golden brown. Using a large round metal cutter, push the edges into the centre to create neat rounds. Bake for a further 2 minutes or until deep golden. Leave on the baking sheet for 2 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool.
- Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water, stir until smooth. Roll the edges of the biscuits in the chocolate and put on a sheet of baking parchment until set.



Toad Softie

Amphibians are, in my opinion, under represented in the world of softie making and so I thought it would be nice to include Mr Toad in this month's edition . When I lived in Devon I used to have a large fat toad living in the old well beneath my house so this pattern serves me as a nice reminder of those days. Mr Toad is stitched from felt, and there is just a little machine stitching to form his neck and belly, but you could always use a short stab stitch if you would prefer to sew him completely by hand. His mouth is a line of chain stitch and he has two black beady eyes.

Toad measures around 5" tall when sitting.



Materials

- 8" square of dark and light green felt
- 2" square or less of gold felt
- Black and green embroidery floss or cotton pearl thread
- Toy stuffing
- Two ¼" black beads

Notes

Use two strands of floss except where otherwise stated.

Apart from the dart and centre seam at the front all the pieces are joined by hand using two strands of floss and cross stitch. This gives a nice strong decorative finish.

To do this place the pieces to be joined with wrong sides together. Stitch half cross stitch in one direction, then return the opposite way to complete the stitch.

Method

- Cut out all pieces in accordance with the templates
- Join the two front pieces from A to B and from A to C by machine with the WRONG sides together. Use a 1/8" seam allowance. You join them like this as you don't want a ridge running right down the middle of his chin and belly.
- Now stitch the dart from A to A in the same way. This forms his chin.
- With RIGHT sides facing and using cross stitch join the back and front pieces together round from D to D.
- Stuff the body before the gap gets too small. Make the stuffing quite firm, but not too much so as you don't want to put excessive strain on the under-chin dart.
- Join arm and leg pieces. Each limb comprises one light green and one dark green piece. Begin joining them from the middle of the bottom edge, and stuff as you go - the limbs are quite thin and will be hard to stuff if you wait until you're nearly done.
- You will find a stuffing stick is really useful for pushing little pieces of stuffing into the ends of the limbs. Just break the pointed end off a bamboo skewer and fray the end so it "grabs" the stuffing as you push.
- Stitch arms and legs to the sides of the bodies. Note the upwards direction marked on the template - Mr Toad's limbs have a definite "up" and "down" side.
- Still using cross stitch, attach the eyelids to the eyes, joining the STRAIGHT edge of the green eyelid to the CURVED edge of the yellow eye (it feels wrong I know, but trust me!)
- Stitch the curved edge of the eye into place on the top of the head. Stuff lightly (you will really need your stuffing stick here), then stitch down the front of the yellow eye piece using short straight stitches.
- Stitch black beads into place for eyeballs, pulling slightly so that they sit firmly against the yellow eyes.
- Work a line of chain stitch around the curved edge of the head to represent the mouth.
- Your toad is now finished.





Looking after your Sewing Machine

Filled with excitement and enthusiasm for your latest piece of work, it's easy to forget about taking care of your essential sewing workhorse - your machine is a piece of equipment that's often taken for granted even though it can easily be the most expensive item in your workspace. Follow these easy steps to keep your machine running smoothly so it's always ready to take on another new project. And if things do go a bit wonky check out our hints and tips to get you sewing again.

The simplest and easiest thing you can do to help keep your sewing machine in good shape is to make sure you cover it when it's not in use. This will stop dust, lint and (especially in my home) pet hair from penetrating into the mechanics of your machine. Most machines come with a cover, though these are usually less

than inspiring and it's fun to make your own to suit your personal tastes.

Ideally you should clean your machine every so often, especially if you've been using textured fabrics as the main problem is lint - the short threads that are shed from the fabric you're working with. Lint

can easily build up and will attract dust too, clogging up the workings of your machine so it won't work as efficiently and may even, if not brushed away regularly, contribute to long term damage.

Along with regularly brushing away any build up of lint, you should also change your

needle regularly. It's a fact that most sewing machine stitching issues are caused by the needle. Continuing with a bent or blunt needle is very likely to result in skipped stitches, broken thread, or large loops in the stitches. It may also damage your fabric and even your machine.

My mum always told me to change my needle after every project - this is a bit excessive I think and I usually aim for every eight hours of sewing. Be sure to choose a needle that's right for the fabric you're using. You should also change your needle if you change to a different kind of thread. This is because thread wears a groove in the needle eye and different brands will affect the needle in different ways.

It's also important to use the bobbin type recommended by your sewing machine manufacturer so that it runs smoothly in the case. Don't be tempted to wind a new thread onto an already partially filled bobbin as this will create extra thread tails that can jam your machine. Sadly (I say sadly as I really *hate* winding bobbins), it's best not to use pre-wound bobbins unless the manufacturer states this is OK. I have been tempted by them, but have never achieved good results.

Ideally, if you use your sewing machine regularly you should

have it serviced annually by a qualified technician. He or she will check and adjust the tension and timing as well as professionally cleaning the parts of the machine the user can't access. Your machine will also be checked for wear and tear and any parts replaced as necessary. This should keep your indispensable asset running smoothly.

Sometimes, in spite of all your care and attention, you will experience problems with your machine. If your machine isn't working properly, then here's a look at some of the most common problems and how to fix them

Nest of tangled thread

This usually happens when you haven't threaded your machine properly. Even though the tangled mess is on the lower or bobbin side of your work, don't assume the problem is with your bobbin. Raise your presser foot and unthread, then rethread the machine paying particular attention to the route the thread should take, using your sewing machine manual as a guide if you're at all unsure.

Uneven stitching

If your row of stitching has large loops on one side of the work and is too tight on the other then you may think that

the thread tension setting on your machine needs altering. You might be right, but before you begin ~~playing around with~~ adjusting the tension setting, take a look at your bobbin as this is more likely to be the cause of the problem. Take the bobbin out of the case and check you've inserted it the right way round. This is usually with the thread unwinding in an anticlockwise direction, but do check your manual if you're at all unsure as it could be different. The bobbin itself might have been unevenly wound or you may not have pulled the thread through the groove in the bobbin case. If you've checked the bobbin and this isn't causing the problem, then try adjusting the tension dial and test stitch on a scrap of the same fabric you're experiencing problems stitching until the stitches are even on both sides of the fabric.

Skipping stitches

Back to the needle again! The likeliest reason for your machine to skip stitches is that you're using the wrong needle for the fabric your sewing. Needles come in different weights for different fabric - that's the easy part - but they also come in different shapes for different fabrics/techniques. Check you're using the right needle for your project!

Machine needles are classified into three types of point:

- Regular – this is the finest point, for piercing the threads of woven fabrics
- Chisel point – these are for stitching leather
- Ball point – used for knitted or stretchy fabrics. This type of needle reduces cut threads by pushing them out of the way rather than piercing them.

Most major brands of needle are colour coded to show the type of point and they come in sizes 9 (thinnest) to 18 (thickest).

Fabric not feeding through or is getting stuck

Depending upon the make and model of your machine both the presser foot and feed dog may have different settings. Without enough pressure on the fabric from the presser foot, won't be able to work properly. On the other hand, having the presser foot set too low may cause too much pressure or prevent the fabric from feeding through, causing jams. Check that the feed dog is in its raised position when sewing normally (as opposed to freestyle quilting or applique). If the feed dog seems to be jammed, it may be due to lint and debris. You should consult your sewing machine manual before making adjustments or attempting to clear it.

The other cause of this problem is the actual fabric itself. If, for example, your fabric is too heavy for your sewing machine or presser foot, or you have chosen a fabric that needs a bit more help to move through the sewing machine like oilcloth or fur you are likely to find yourself experiencing this problem.

In this case you can try using a specialist foot or if you're working with oilcloth then consider sandwiching it between a couple of sheets of tissue paper so the feed dogs don't mark your oilcloth and it will slide through much more easily.

Thread keeps breaking





Thread that continually breaks may be an issue with the quality of the thread you're using or simply that your machine doesn't "like" that brand of thread. Don't laugh - it happens - I remember my mum's machine only worked properly with Sylko thread - neither of us had any idea why, but simply had to go with it!

Alternatively there may be obstructions within the machine. Inexpensive, bargain threads typically shed more lint, contain knots, and break more often than good, quality threads. Lint and knots can obstruct the thread from feeding through the machine.

Also check the path the thread travels through, including the bobbin and needle, is free from

burrs, nicks, or any sharp points that may cause a break or snag. If you're confident then you could try polishing these areas yourself with steel wool or fine grade sandpaper, or if not, then it's time for a visit to the sewing machine technician. Some fine threads used for embroidery may be more prone to breaking; it is best to use a specified embroidery needle for these threads.

Bobbin not winding evenly

Check you've placed the thread correctly around the bobbin winding tension spring. If you think all is in order then it's worth trying wrapping the thread around the tension spring for a second time - this often does the trick!

The needle keeps falling out

This is caused by vibration, so check your machine is sitting on a nice firm surface and isn't wobbling around as you stitch. Alternatively if you're using a ruffler foot or a walking foot this may cause your needle to drop out as their extra moving parts create a lot more vibration.

Usually it's fine to tighten the screw that holds the needle in place by hand but if you are experiencing problems then try gently tightening it a little further with the small screw driver which is normally supplied with the sewing machine. If that doesn't solve the problem then it's likely that there's an underlying problem either with the needle or the screw.







Restoring the Shine

Now that the summer is here we'll all be hoping for lovely sunny weather to entertain in our gardens - through pleasure and choice rather than because of government restrictions. And whilst we all enjoy a good barbecue, nobody enjoys cleaning the messy charred-on remains from the grill afterwards. Though the barbecue grill can be difficult to clean, some simple natural kitchen ingredients can be surprisingly effective in restoring its shine.

First heat your grill (if it's gone cold after the event) and spray it with a light mist of white vinegar to help shift the worst of the grime. Then use one half of a peeled onion, skewered onto a long fork to scrub the bars. The acidic juice of the onion will help to remove any remaining charcoal debris after which the onion can be dropped onto the hot coals or added to your compost bin after use.

Beard Bouquet Hoop

It's summertime, and time for fun - and what could be more fun than this jolly man with his floral beard that combines a simple black backstitched image with a riot of colourful florals?

The man is stitched in back stitch, whilst the flowers use French knots, bullion knots, lazy daisy stitch and straight stitch. The man's cheeks are padded satin stitch.

Shown mounted in 6" hoop.



Materials




- 10" square cotton, linen or other fabric suitable for embroidery - I chose a nice sky blue linen.
- DMC stranded cotton floss in colours 34, 163, 309, 310, 333, 341, 604, 726, 740, 3817

Note: these are the colours that I used but do feel free to substitute - this would be a great project for using up leftover floss.

Method

Use two strands of floss throughout.

- Iron your background fabric well before beginning.
- Stitch design in accordance with guide on following pages.
- When finished press lightly on the reverse being very careful not to flatten your stitching and mount in hoop for display.

	309
	740
	726
	604
	34
	333
	341
	3817
	163
	310



Stitch Guide

Stitch in accordance with the colour chart above.

The large flowers are radiating straight stitch with clusters of French knots at the centre.

The flowers marked "BS" are worked in bullion stitch - each flower is made up of two bullion stitches worked side by side.

The flowers marked "FK" are a grouping of small (single twist) French knots.

The daisies are small straight stitches worked around a central small French knot.

The sprigs of leaves are lazy daisy stitch with a central line of back stitch.

All the other flowers are satin stitch

The lines of the face and hair are back stitch - do be careful to work this accurately ensuring that your needle enters and leaves the fabric in the same place to make a nice smooth line.

The sides of the hair are French knots

The eyebrows are filled with small straight stitches

The pupils are vertical satin stitch

The cheeks are padded satin stitch.



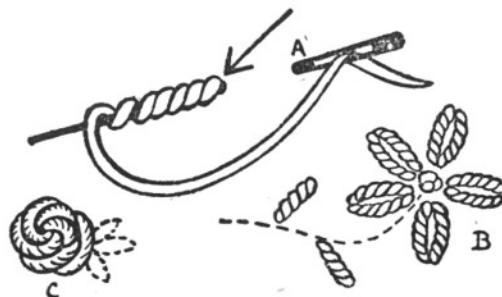
Bullion Stitch

Bring your needle through your fabric at the point indicated by the arrow on the diagram above. Insert your needle back through your fabric at the required length of the stitch and bring it out exactly at the arrow again.

Don't pull your needle right through, but leave it lying in the material as in the diagram and twist your thread around it close up to the emerging point. Six or seven twists are an average number, but this can be varied according to the length of stitch you want to make.

Place your left thumb upon the twists and pull your needle and thread through your fabric and also the twists as carefully as possible. Now pull your needle and thread away in the opposite

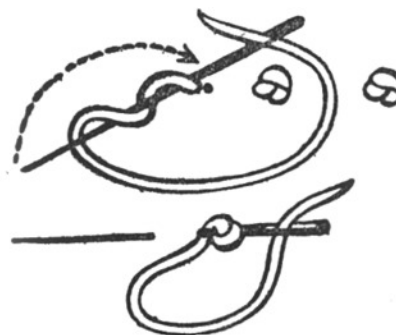
direction. This movement will force your little coil of thread to lie flat in the right place. Tighten it up by pulling your working thread, then reinsert your needle at A. This should also be the end of your bullion knot if you've chosen the correct number of twists to fill the space.



French Knot

Bring your thread through to the front of your fabric at the place you want to place your knot. Hold it down firmly with your left thumb and first finger and twist your needle two or three times around the held thread as shown by the upper needle in the diagram above. Then, with your twists pulled fairly tightly around your needle and the thread still held firmly in your left hand, turn your needle around and push it back through your fabric very close to where it first emerged, still keeping your thread tight with your left thumb. Pull your thread through firmly and the knot will be left on top. If you're having problems check

that you're twisting the thread around the needle in the same direction as the diagram above and keeping your thread nice and taut. The secret of successful French knots is in the correct twist of the needle and the tautness of your thread.





“I wish I’d known how hard owning a business really is!”



ericabiggs

Erica talks to us about where she finds her inspiration, involving her children in her design process and how she started her business, **Erica Biggs Art**



Based in North Carolina, Erica is constantly inspired by the beautiful creations of the coast. After working in a variety of mediums, she has become fascinated with acrylics and painting coastal themed images.

I start each of my oysters by hand painting an image. Usually I start with a quick draw/paint and build from there. Once I come up with a design I love, I spend the time to perfect the painting!

How did you get started?

Where do you find inspiration?

It started during my senior year of high school when I took an art class and loved it so much that I ended up going to college to study Graphic Design. I have always loved creating and have done a lot of projects for family and friends. I finally decided to jump all in and start my own business.

I love creating with my kids and listen to them when I want to be inspired. I also love being in nature and find a lot of my inspiration there.

Can you please tell us a bit about your typical working day?



Your products are so unique, can you tell us a bit about your design process?

My typical work day consists of getting organized (I cannot create in clutter!!) then trying to do all my painting in steps. I paint a bunch of oysters at a time and then the next day I resin them all, then add the gold after that. I try to work in sections to be efficient with my time!



Is there anything you wish you had known before you started your own business?

Before starting my business I wish I would have known how hard owning a business really is! Making the product is the easy part; it's the marketing side that is hard for me!

Do you have a favourite product you've made?

My favorite thing to make? Oh boy. I love it all! I would have to say that my absolute favorite to paint are my lighthouse oysters.

What has been your proudest moment so far?

My proudest moments are when customers write to me and tell me how an order was special to them. I love being

able to recreate personal memories for people.

And your biggest challenge?

So far, my biggest struggle has been time! I work full time as a 6th grade science teacher. Having time to do both teaching and art has been hard but I am making it work!

Do you have any advice for someone wanting to start their own business?

If you want to start a business, DO IT! Don't wait for the perfect time because it won't come. Work on your passion now while you still can!

And finally, what are your plans for the future?

My future plans are to continue to grow my business. I would love to make it a full time venture one day. I also plan to continue incorporating my children as long as they enjoy doing it with me!

Do be sure to pop over to Erica's [Website](#) to see all of her gorgeous creations. You can also find her on [Instagram](#) too!





Summer in the Garden: Water

Here in England, July is the hottest month of the year and very few of our garden plants will be able to survive the long warm days without extra water to supplement rainfall. Watering is hard work though, so here are a few hints and tips to help you make sure all your efforts don't go to waste.

If at all possible, avoid watering in full sunshine on a hot day. Any droplets that splash on a plant's leaves will act as mini magnifying glasses, focusing the sun's rays and scorching the leaves. Additionally, most of the water will then evaporate, increasing the humidity around the plant, producing ideal conditions for fungal spores of diseases such as powdery mildew and grey mould to germinate and multiply.

The cool of the evening has always been the traditional time to water your plants, whether they're planted in the ground, or in planters and pots, as the water is less likely to evaporate and has more chance to be taken up by the roots. But recent research has shown that these very conditions, whilst of benefit to plants, also

encourage slugs and snails to come and graze on your precious seedlings, whilst those watered at the beginning of the day suffer less damage. It's certainly worth investigating with early morning watering, even if only when the plants are small and so less able to withstand the onslaught of slugs and snails.



When you're watering your garden it's all too easy to wash away the surface soil, so leaving delicate roots exposed, especially if you're using a hose or a full watering can. When planting new specimens, prepare in advance and reduce the risk of this happening by firming the soil at the base of the plant into a shallow depression. When you water, this trough will hold the water close to the plant, letting it gradually penetrate to the roots rather than washing away the soil.

It's always better to give your plants a good drink on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, rather than a light sprinkling everyday. Insufficient watering will encourage the roots to grow close to the surface as that's where the water is. This will cause the plant to become stressed as the roots will then be vulnerable to being exposed or even uprooted in strong winds. To direct water down to the roots of thirsty plants such as tomatoes, bury a plant pot up to its rim in the soil next to each plant when you're putting them in. Then pour the water into the pot rather than onto the soil. The water will go straight through the pot's drainage holes right to where it's needed and won't evaporate or wash any soil away.

When water is scarce you need to keep weeding your garden because weeds will compete with your plants for precious supplies. When it's hot the best method is to hoe the weeds off at ground level, thus severing the leaves from the roots without digging them up. Turning over the soil to pull out the roots risks losing yet more water by exposing the damp top soil to the heat of the sun's rays.

If the weather is particularly hot you may need to water your container-grown plants more than once a day. Although terracotta pots look good, plastic pots are actually more practical as they will retain more water, whilst moisture evaporates quickly from the permeable terracotta. In a really hot spell you might want to consider moving your pots to a shadier part of the garden until the weather turns cooler again.

If a plant that has finished flowering is looking rather tatty, with scorched and damaged leaves, you might consider cutting it right back to ground level and giving it a good soaking - at least one full watering can full. Within a few weeks it should put out fresh new growth and be an attractive border specimen once more. This technique works particularly well on lungworts (*pulmonaria*) and hardy geraniums.





Look!

a lovely idea

Paper Heart Leaf
Philodendron

If you need a touch of green to brighten a dark space... Welcome, paper heart leaf! Even the name, “heart leaf” endears us to her. You can craft this dear-heart-leaf in an afternoon!

Free Tutorial from The House that Lars Built : [Paper Heart Leaf Philodendron](#)



Summer's here but will the sun shine?

A look at some English Weather Lore

Here in the UK we love talking about the weather because it's nothing else if unpredictable! It's not unusual to experience all four seasons in the course of a single morning - and I often walk the dogs wearing a waterproof jacket with my sunglasses in my pocket - confidently expecting to use both!

The weather in England is so changeable because we sit on the crossroads between a number of different air masses, all of which jostle for position over our heads, meaning no two days are ever the same. Hopefully by the time you read this summer really will have arrived in England - though of course nothing weather-related is certain!

Long before Admiral Robert Fitzroy, Superintendent of Britain's Meteorological Office, coined the phrase "weather forecast" in August 1861, farmers, seafarers and country folk had been relying on handed down

weather lore to foretell the weather. In fact the Ancient Greeks began the science of meteorology, relating day-to-day weather to wind direction. The first weather forecaster's manual was called "On Weather Signs" and was written in the 4th century BC by Aristotle and his pupil Theophrastus.

The roots of weather lore lie in early religion and its first exponents were priests or wise men who decided the best dates for sowing and harvest. Fertility of the crops on which their survival depended meant accurate interpretation of weather signs was vital. Seafarers also became experts in weather forecasting because failure could lead to certain death - this means much of their traditional lore is very reliable. Consider "before the storm, the swell..." An oncoming gale can set up a rolling swell which travels rapidly ahead, giving warning of bad weather to come before any other indicators such as cloud and rain. I'm not quite so sure about the accuracy of their traditional belief that a new moon on a

Saturday or a full one on a Sunday foretell bad weather. The combination occurring in succession is thought to be the worst sign of all.

Clouds may also indicate weather changes, "mackerel sky, twelve hours dry". This sky, dappled with small fleecy white clouds actually does mark the end of unsettled weather. Looking at the movement of upper layers of clouds can tell you of an imminent change in the weather if their direction is very different from the winds blowing the clouds beneath them. There is a famous Moroccan legend that locusts know where it will rain in the Sahara. In fact the swarms will fly downwind until they arrive at an area of converging winds, where rain is most likely.

Many country sayings about the weather haven't been scientifically proven but, based as they are on centuries of observation, are very often reliable indicators. If a candle won't light easily, or if the down flies off coltsfoot, dandelions or thistles when there is no wind, then these are signs of rain on the way. According to a rhyme said to be by the 19th century judge, Baron Charles Bowen:

"The rain it raineth every day Upon the Just and Unjust fella But more upon the Just because The Unjust stole the Just's umbrella!" Many people anxiously watch the weather forecast on St Swithin's Day (July 15th) for "If on St Swithin's it do rain, then forty days it will remain." Fingers crossed for a dry day on the fifteenth of this

month then! American friends from Oregon told me that trees such as poplar and silver maple will turn up their leaves when it starts to rain, a fact that's well known in Europe too. The moon also features in weather lore and a well-known saying around the world is that a ring around the moon means it will rain the following day.

And finally, "when rooks build low, it's a sign of a wet summer to come". We regularly pass a large rookery on our walks up the valley and home down the old sunken bridleway. They are quieter now, but in the spring the air is full of their raucous squawks and screeches. I'm pleased to report, that this year their nests seem to be high up in the old oak trees, so am hopeful of a fine summer ahead. This isn't scientifically proven though as rooks' flight patterns are usually better weather forecasters than their nest-building habits.

Rooks are sociable birds that return to the same place year after year and because rookeries consist of many abandoned, and some renovated, old nests as well as some new ones, it's almost impossible to link nest height with the coming weather. But there is a way to forecast the weather from these comical birds. When they "tumble" through the air it's said that rain is on the way, whilst rooks that twist and turn after leaving the nest are believed to forecast storms. Weather observers give these forecasts a 70% reliability rating - which seems to me to be a lot more accurate than some of the TV or radio forecasts we all tune into so regularly.



Ravishing Radish Cushion

I love my garden, and in particular over the last 12 months I have fallen in love with my vegetable plot, having had great success with carrots, beans, cabbages, cauliflowers and more (don't mention the sweet corn that was stolen by some pesky badgers!) This year I'm broadening my scope to include some new crops - including sweet crunchy radishes, and it is they that have inspired this machine applique cushion.

Cushion cover is sized to fit 12" x 18" pad



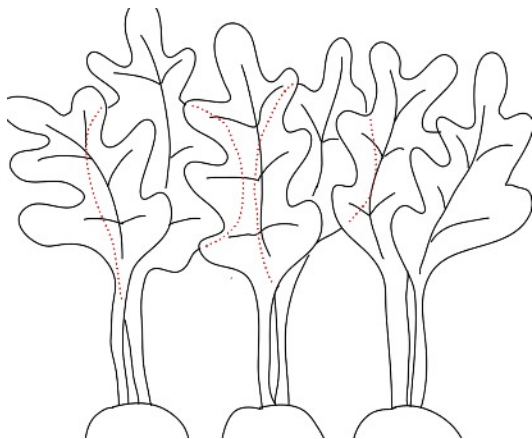
Materials

- 12" x 18" black felt or fabric for front panel of cushion
- Two 12" x 12" squares of the same fabric (or of your choice) for the reverse of the cushion.
- Scraps of light, medium and dark green felt for applique shapes - I used shades of yellowy olive greens
- Purple-red felt for radish roots
- Dusty pink and cream stranded cotton floss or cotton perle thread to stitch roots
- Bondaweb
- Embroidery foot for your sewing machine
- Temporary fabric marker pen



Method

- Trace the applique shapes onto the paper side of your Bondaweb allowing extra for the leaves at the back so they can be overlapped by the further forward leaves. I have tried to show this with dotted red lines in the diagram below:



- Cut out the shapes roughly and fuse to your felt. Cut out carefully (any jagged edges will show) and peel off the paper backing.
- Take the front panel of your cushion and fold into quarters. Press with your hands. This will help you position your radishes.
- Position the applique shapes with the central radish on the vertical fold line and with tops of the radish roots on the horizontal fold line. Pay careful attention to overlapping the leaves.
- When you're happy with their positioning fuse into place by pressing with a hot iron. You may wish to protect your work with a cloth and be careful to simply press and hold your iron - don't move it backwards and forwards as though you were ironing clothes as this may cause the shapes to slip out of place.

- With your temporary fabric marker pen draw in the veins on the leaves and the shading on the radish roots.
- Fit the embroidery foot to your sewing machine and drop the feed dogs. With black (or a very dark green) in your needle and a paler colour in your bobbin go around the edge of each shape twice. Don't try to be too neat, you are aiming for a sort of scribbled effect. Using the two different colours, does, I think, make for a less solid, more attractive line.
- Stitch the shading on the roots and the veins on the leaves in the same way.
- Now work the tails of the radishes. With three strands of pink floss work five horizontal straight stitches, beginning with wide stitches and tapering down to narrow ones. Leave a gap between the last two stitches. Use cream floss to work another horizontal stitch to fill that gap, then a couple more straight stitches, finally tapering into stem stitch for the end of the root.
- Press your work lightly on the reverse.
- Hem one edge of each of the fabric squares.
- Place your panel right side up on a clean flat surface and place the squares right side down on top, aligning the side seams so that the hemmed edges overlap at the centre. This will form your envelope closure. Press and clip corners.
- Insert cushion pad. This will be a snug fit to begin with as the pad is the same size as the cover, but the pad will compress with time and use. Making a snug cover will stop your cushion going limp and floppy.
- FINISHED!



Time and Tide ...

I'm sure almost everyone is familiar with the saying "Time and tide wait for no man" and you may be familiar with the old English tale of King Canute proving to his nobles that nobody, not even the seemingly all-powerful king, could hold back the waters once the tide had turned. I lived by the sea for most of my life and so knowing what the tide was doing was a very important part of my daily routine, determining whether walks on the beach, picnics and rock-pooling would be a possible activity that day - and if so when the tide would be low enough for us to pack everything into large canvas bags and set off down to the beach.

If you're visiting the seaside on holiday it's equally important to know what the tide is doing as, even if all you want to do is visit the beach to build sand castles, if it's high tide when you arrive there may be no sand showing - and you may have a car full of disappointed youngsters into the bargain. And here also a note of caution - if all is well and you're happily settled in for an afternoon, or even a whole day, at the beach, do please bear in mind that it's always safest to go swimming or out in a boat when the tide is coming in. So if the worst happens you'll be washed back to land again, not further out to sea.

When you arrive at your holiday destination it's always a great idea to pick up a local tide table - most small shops and post offices seem to stock them in holiday areas. You will find that there are



















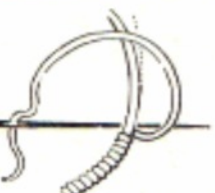

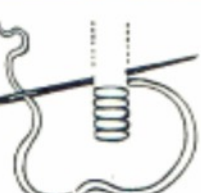



two low and two high tides (usually) in every 24 hour period. Each tide averages just over six hours, so high and low tides will be at slightly (50 mins approx) times each day.

Tides are caused by the gravitational forces of both the sun and the moon acting upon the mass of sea water. The strongest pull is when the sun, Earth and moon are in alignment at both full and new moons. This causes spring tides that are extra high and extra low. Conversely, neap tides when the level of water varies by much less, occur when the moon is waxing or waning. The strongest tides of all occur at the spring and autumn equinoxes in March and September each year. We used to love to visit our favourite beach at these times, to go right out to the water's edge where there were all sorts of discoveries to make, as well as seeing "our" beach quite differently as rocks and other features were uncovered by the unusually low water.

Do be sure, however, to keep an eye on the tides when you're exploring on the beach. The tides around the British coastline are strong and can advance very rapidly indeed - in some places an incoming tide can come in faster than you can escape it. A seemingly small depression in the sand can turn into an impassable deep pool once the tide comes in, and you don't want to find yourself stuck on the wrong side!

Exploring the seashore is safest on a falling tide, so your route back to land is always secure. Do be sure to make a note of the timing of low tide and keep checking the time and sea levels from time to time - then enjoy all the fun of adventuring on the beach!

EMBROIDERY STITCHES QUICK REFERENCE

 <p>RUNNING STITCH</p>	 <p>BACK STITCH</p>	 <p>COUCHING</p>	 <p>CHAIN STITCH</p>	 <p>KNOT STITCH</p>	 <p>RUN OR WHIP STITCH</p>	 <p>EYELET HOLE</p>	 <p>LINK STITCH</p>	 <p>FRENCH KNOT</p>	 <p>RAISED ROSE STITCH</p>	<p>WELDON'S EMBROIDERY STITCHES PRACTICAL NEEDLEWORK No. 12 PRICE 4d., BY POST 4½d. gives full directions for working over 70 stitches.</p> <p>When pressing all transfers on to materials having a hard or hairy surface, it is advisable to put a strip of tissue over the back of the transfer, press quickly with a hot iron and remove tissue and transfer at once.</p>	 <p>STEM STITCH</p>	 <p>BUTTONHOLE STITCH</p>	 <p>BUTTONHOLE STITCH</p>	 <p>LAZY DAISY</p>	 <p>OVERCAST STITCH</p>	 <p>STRAIGHT STITCH</p>	 <p>SATIN STITCH</p>	 <p>SINGLE STITCHES</p>
 <p>APPLIQUE</p>	 <p>APPLIQUE 2.</p>																	

Conversion Tables

Volume

Weights		Imperial	Metric
		2 fl oz	55 ml
		3 fl oz	75 ml
		5 fl oz (¼ pint)	150 ml
		10 fl oz (½ pint)	275 ml
		1 pint	570 ml
		1 ¼ pint	725 ml
		1 ¾ pint	1 litre
		2 pint	1.2 litre
		2½ pint	1.5 litre
		4 pint	2.25 litres

Imperial	Metric
½ oz	10 g
¾ oz	20 g
1 oz	25 g
1½ oz	40 g
2 oz	50 g
2½ oz	60 g
3 oz	75 g
4 oz	110 g
4½ oz	125 g
5 oz	150 g
6 oz	175 g
7 oz	200 g
8 oz	225 g
9 oz	250 g
10 oz	275 g
12 oz	350 g
1 lb	450 g

Oven

Temperatures

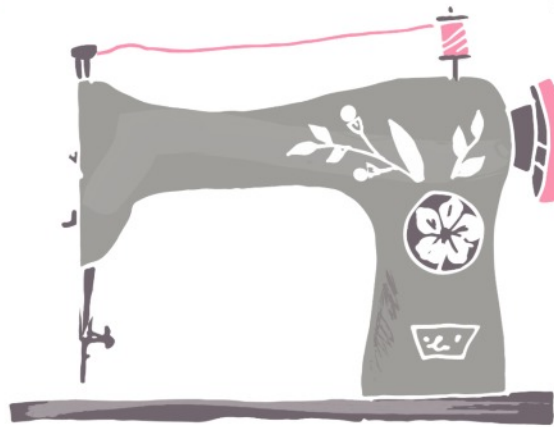
Gas Mark	°F	°C
1	275°F	140°C
2	300°F	150°C
3	325°F	170°C
4	350°F	180°C
5	375°F	190°C
6	400°F	200°C
7	425°F	220°C
8	450°F	230°C
9	475°F	240°C

American Cup Conversions

American	Imperial	Metric	Imperial	Metric	American
1 cup flour	5oz	150g			
1 cup caster/ granulated sugar	8oz	225g			
1 cup brown sugar	6oz	175g	½ fl oz	15 ml	1 tbsp
1 cup butter/margarine/lard	8oz	225g	1 fl oz	30 ml	1/8 cup
1 cup sultanas/raisins	7oz	200g	2 fl oz	60 ml	¼ cup
1 cup currants	5oz	150g	4 fl oz	120 ml	½ cup
1 cup ground almonds	4oz	110g	8 fl oz	240 ml	1 cup
1 cup golden syrup	12oz	350g	16 fl oz	480 ml	1 pint
1 cup uncooked rice	7oz	200g			
1 cup grated cheese	4oz	110g			
1 stick butter	4oz	110g			



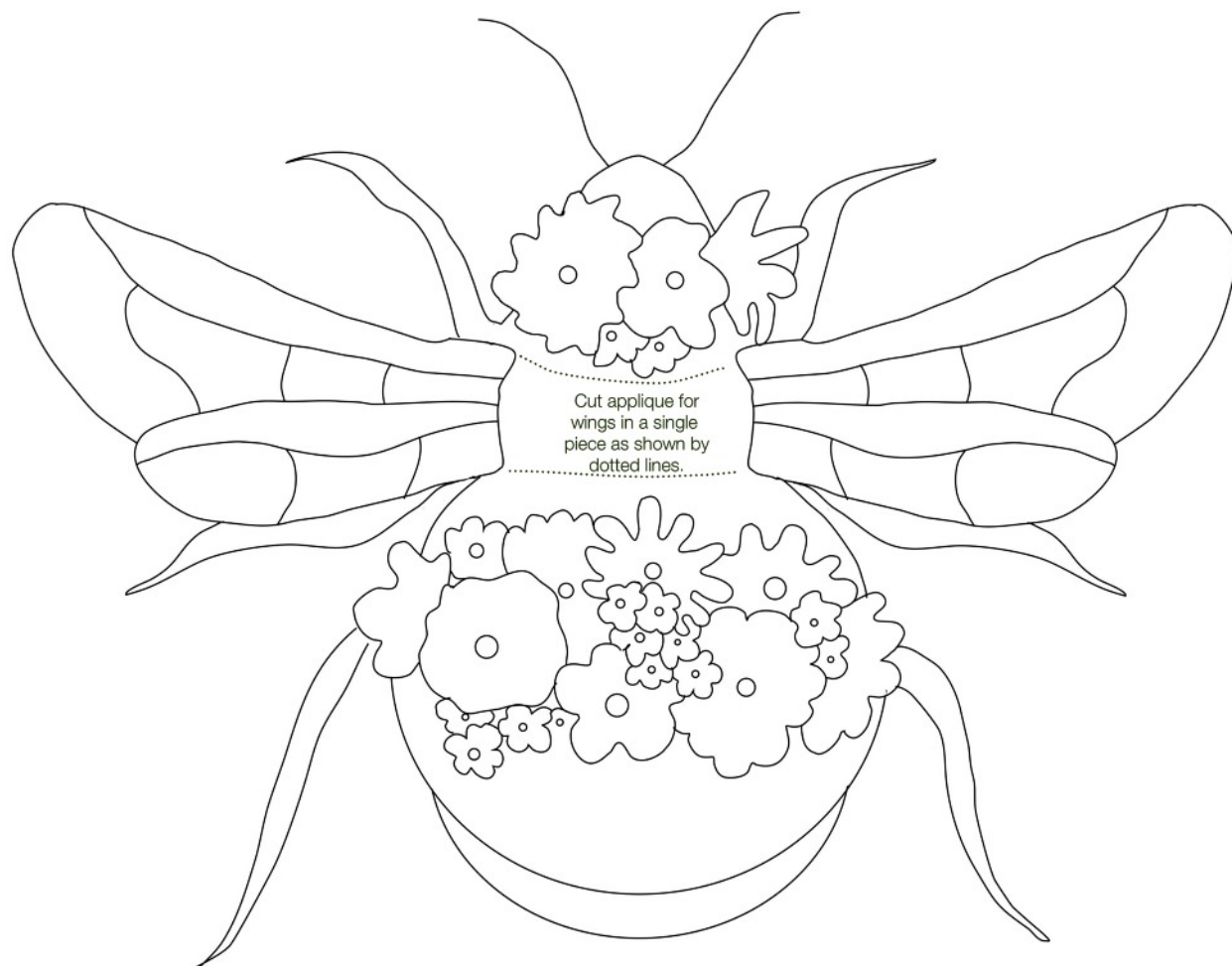
Note: A pint isn't always a pint: in British, Australian and often Canadian recipes you'll see an imperial pint listed as 20 fluid ounces. American and some Canadian recipes use the the American pint measurement, which is 16 fluid ounces.

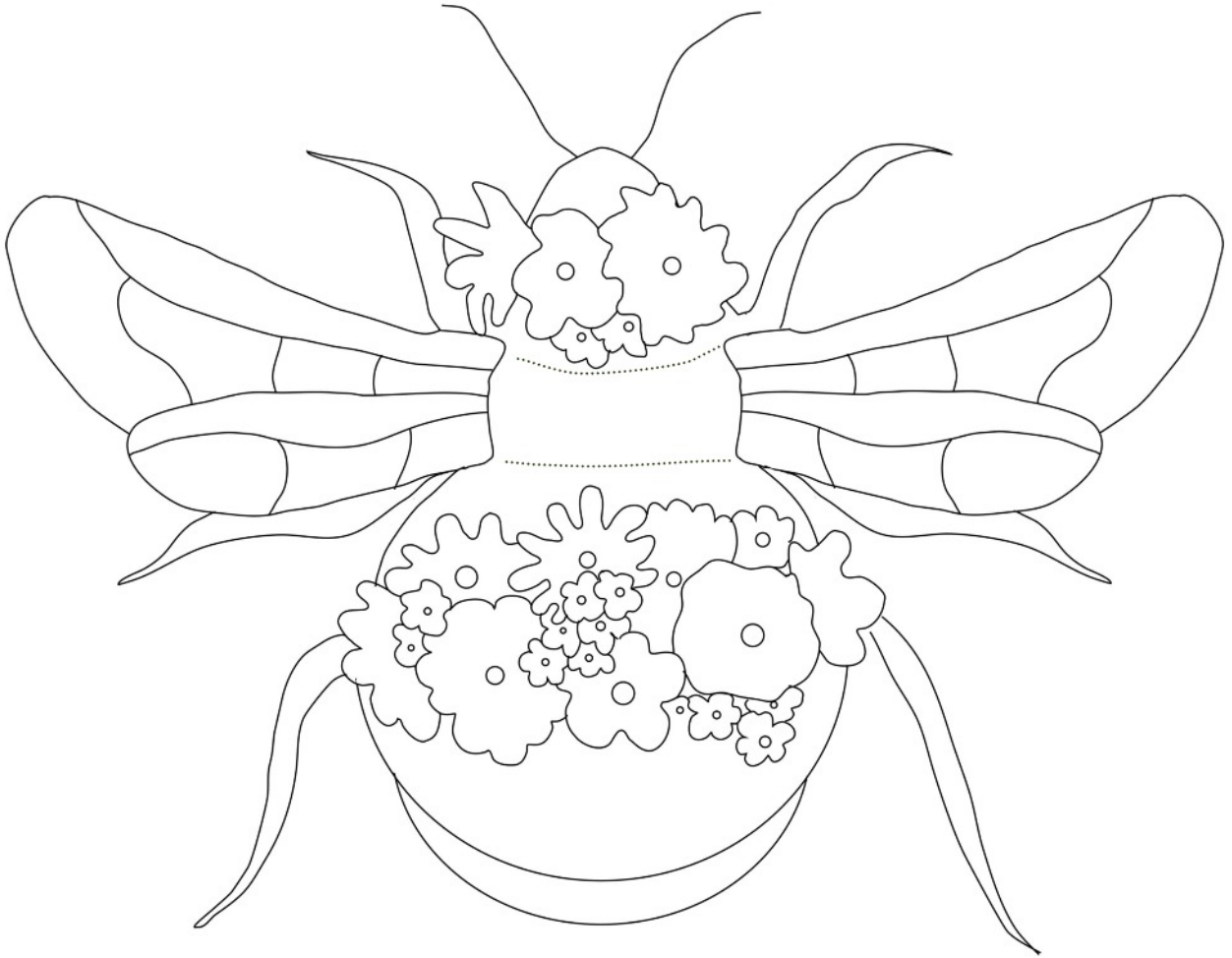


TEMPLATES

Blossom Bee Hoop

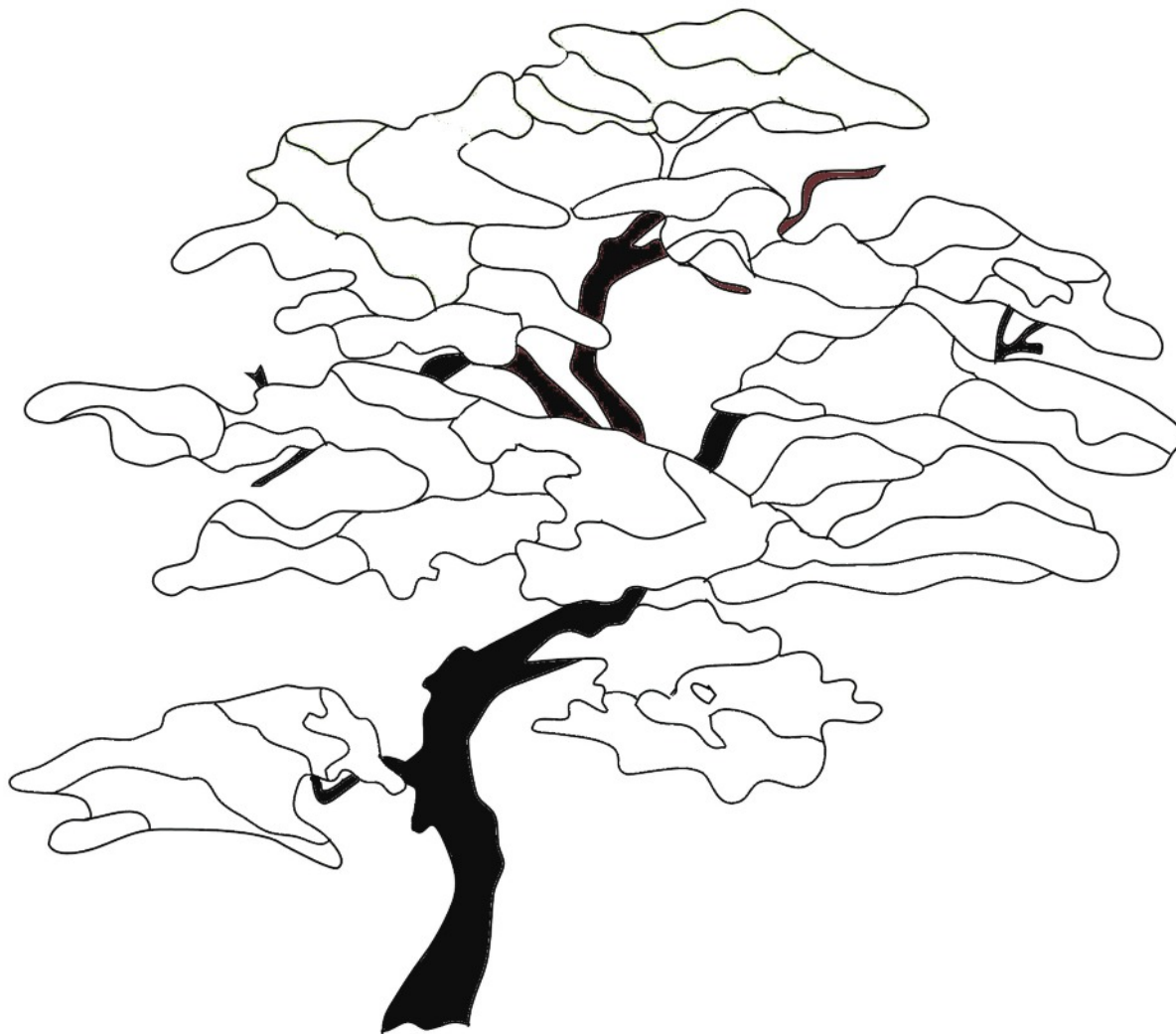
Pattern is full size and reversed. The wings are identical so you can use either version to trace your applique shape

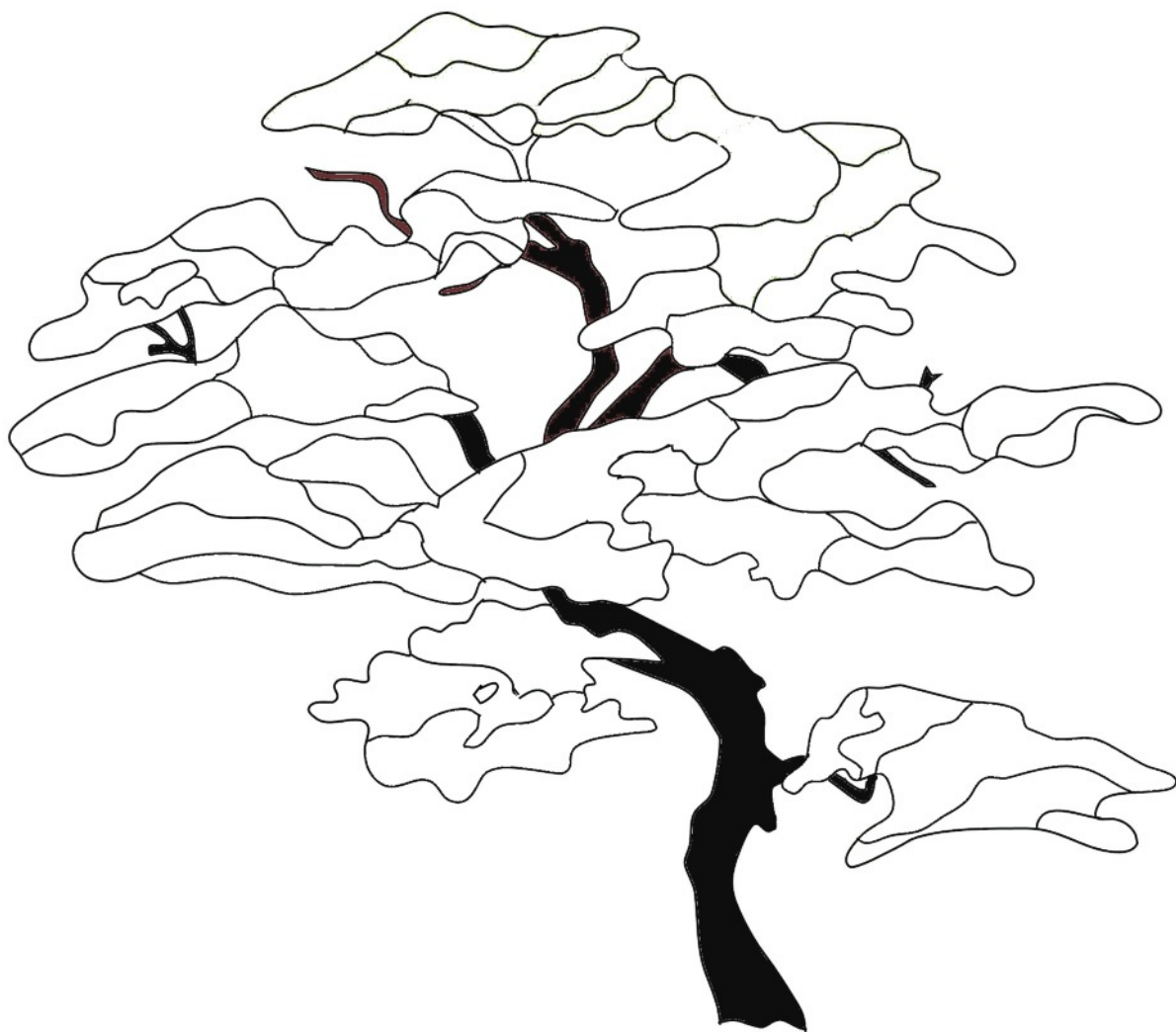




In Full Leaf Hoop

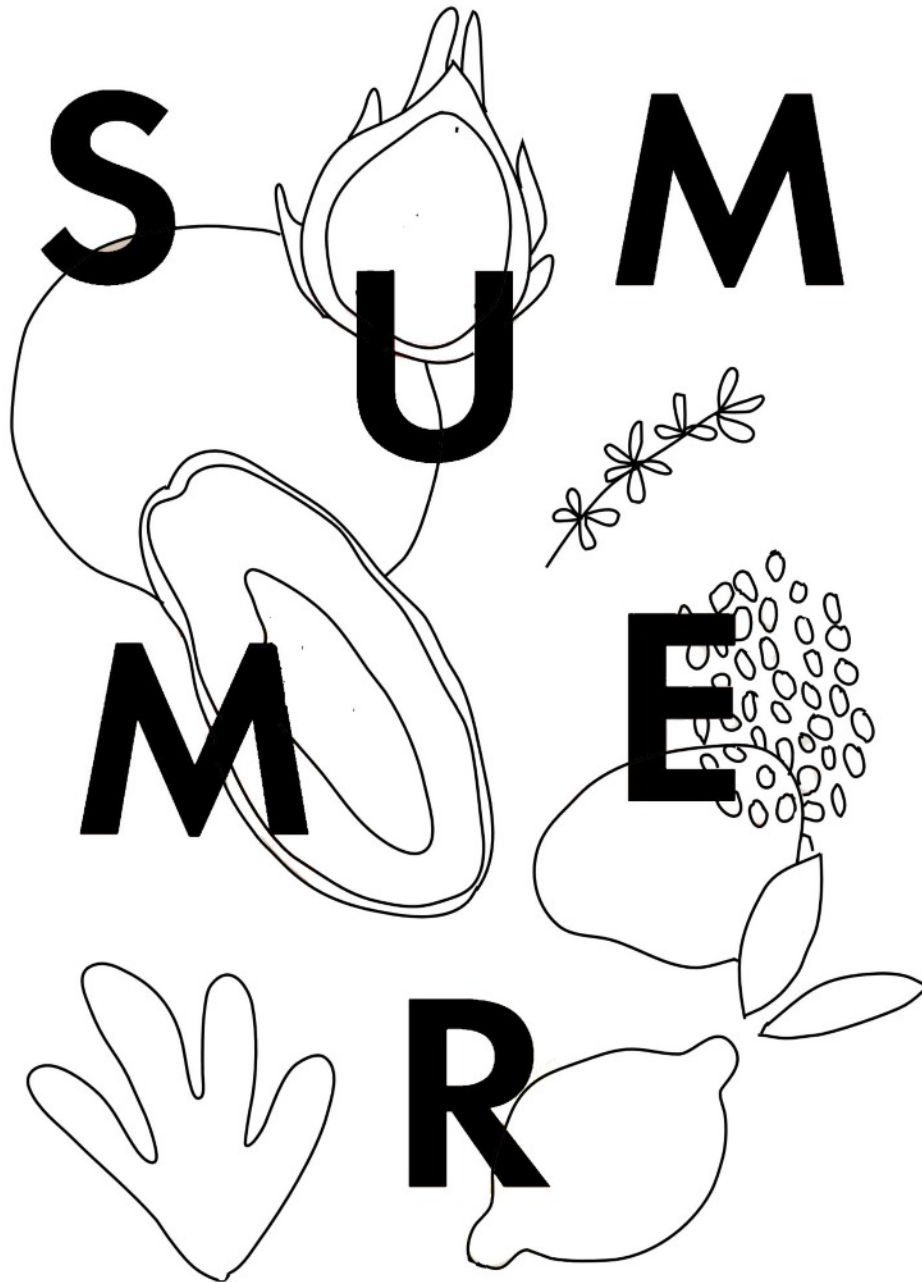
Pattern is full size and also reversed to suit your preferred method of transfer.

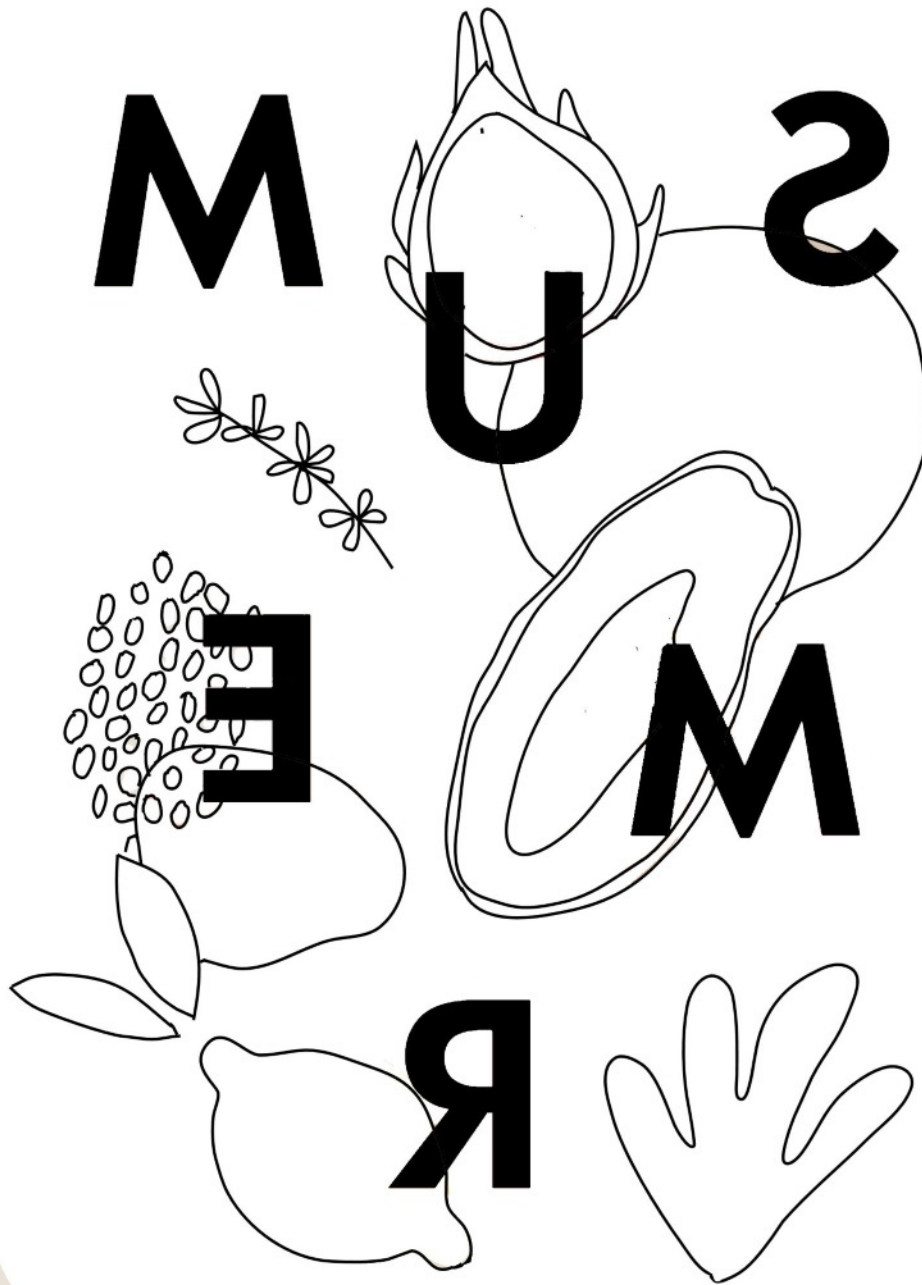




Summer Banner

Pattern is full size and also reversed to suit your preferred method of transfer. Be sure to trace the applique shapes from the REVERSE transfer





Beard Bouquet Hoop

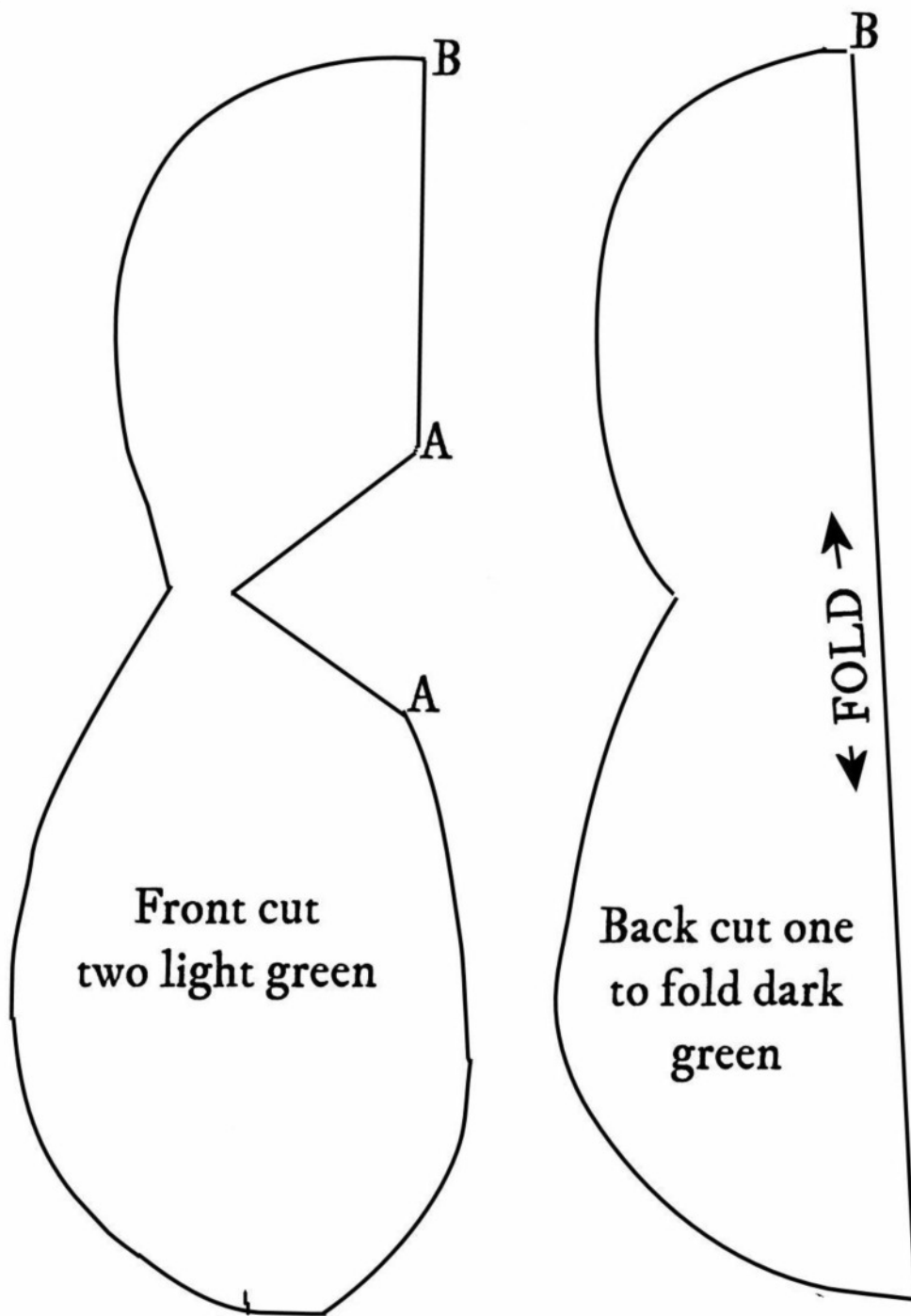
Pattern is full size and also reversed to suit your preferred method of transfer.



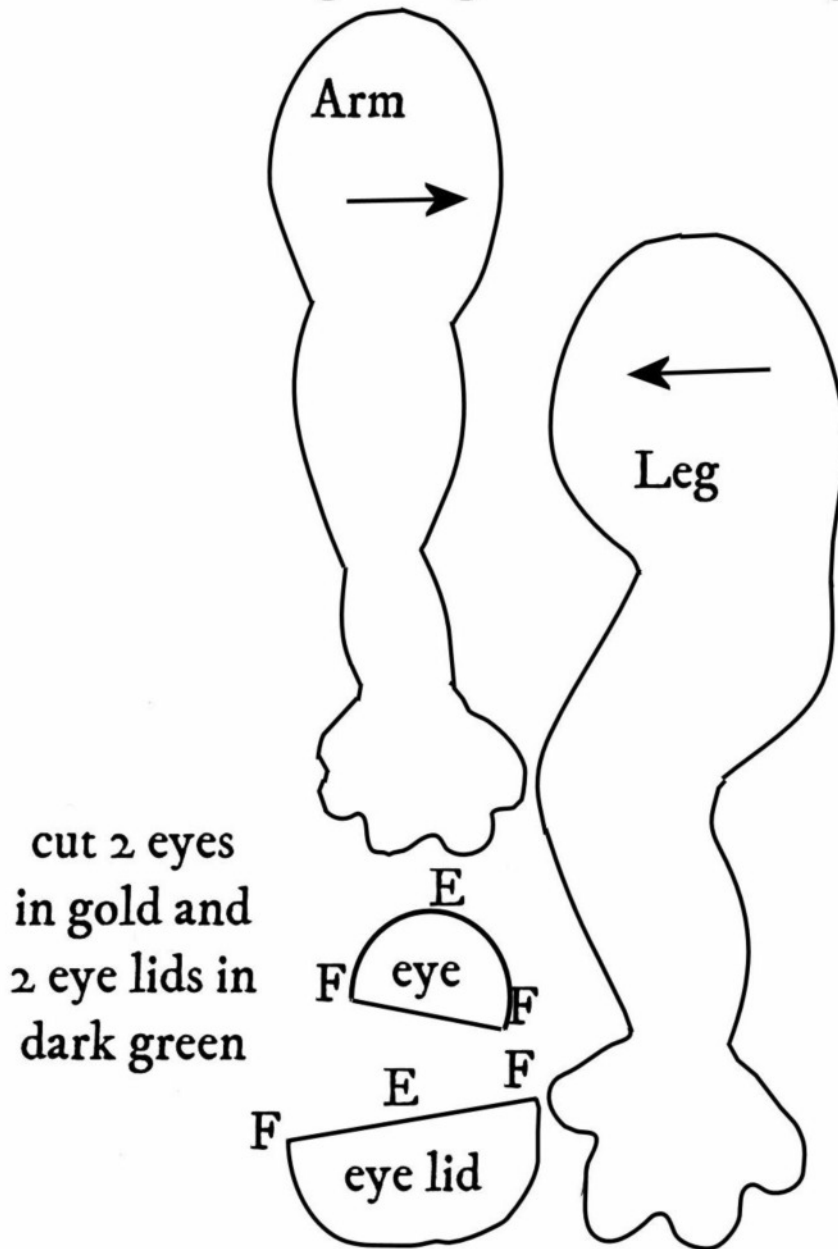


Toad Softie Template

Full size . You do not need to add seam allowances



Cut 2 arms in light and 2 in dark green
Cut 2 legs in light and 2 in dark green



Ravishing Radish Cushion

Pattern is full size and also reversed for tracing onto the paper side of your Bondaweb.

