

# *Beginner's Guide to Embroidery and Needle Painting*



*Create Your Own Nature-Inspired Designs with 18 Projects*



Sarah Godfrey

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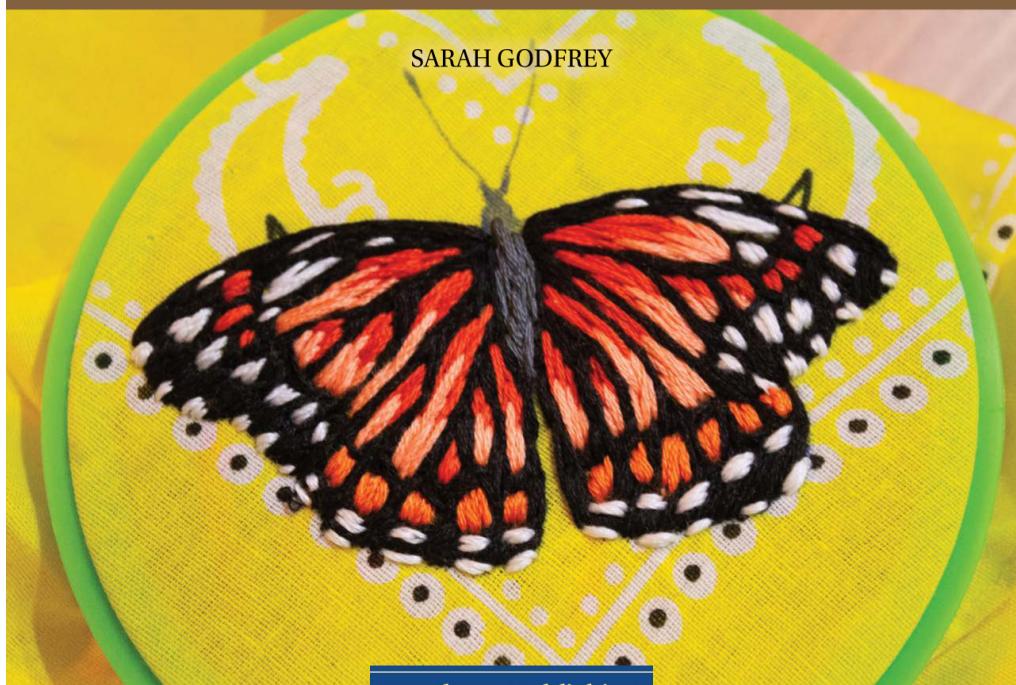
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SARAH GODFREY



Landauer Publishing

## ***Beginner's Guide to Embroidery and Needle Painting***

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## Introduction

I've always loved the accessibility of embroidery. The tools are readily available and quite affordable, there is a wealth of books and videos to teach techniques, many artists share their work for inspiration, and there is an endless number of kits and patterns to explore. If you don't have a lot of drawing experience, it needn't hold you back—you can choose from the thousands of gorgeous patterns available to stitch.

With that being said, what makes me most excited about embroidery is the lifestyle and ritual you can create around the craft. I find so much joy in the process—from choosing fabric, to selecting floss colors, to stitching next to a mug of my favorite warm drink, to my favorite part of all: designing my own projects.

The best source of inspiration for my projects is mother nature. It gives me so much peace to go for a

walk in the woods with my camera and capture the details I think would make a great embroidery project. My artistic process has also given me a new perspective—I am very in tune with the simple joys and beautiful moments the world around me has to offer.

If you enjoy embroidery and delight in the creative process, this book has everything you need: 18 gorgeous, nature-inspired projects with clear step-by-step instructions as well as an in-depth look at the embroidery design process. Follow the beautiful project patterns as practice (and for the sheer pleasure of stitching), while also learning how to create your own unique designs.

The book begins with an outline of the tools and materials you need to get started, how to choose color palettes, which fabrics work best for embroidery, and how to organize your supplies.

The next chapter walks you through finding inspiration and designing your own projects. It has taken me years to develop my style and hone my craft, and I hope to help you improve your skills and narrow in on your tastes so you can design projects that express who you are.

The Stitch Guide covers all the stitches you need to know to complete the projects in this book. These are my favorite stitches; the ones I regularly use to create a variety of textures and details. I also share thread painting tips and tricks so you can create eye-catching pieces with realistic flair.

The final chapter walks you through 18 projects organized in order of difficulty. Each includes step-by-

step photography and instructions so you can recreate the pieces with precision.

So go and brew your favorite coffee or tea and get ready to go on an embroidery journey with me!



# Tools and Materials

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This chapter covers the essential tools you need to design and stitch your embroidery projects and set up your work space. Embroidery continues to grow in popularity every day, so it's easy to purchase these tools and materials at local craft stores and online.

## Camera

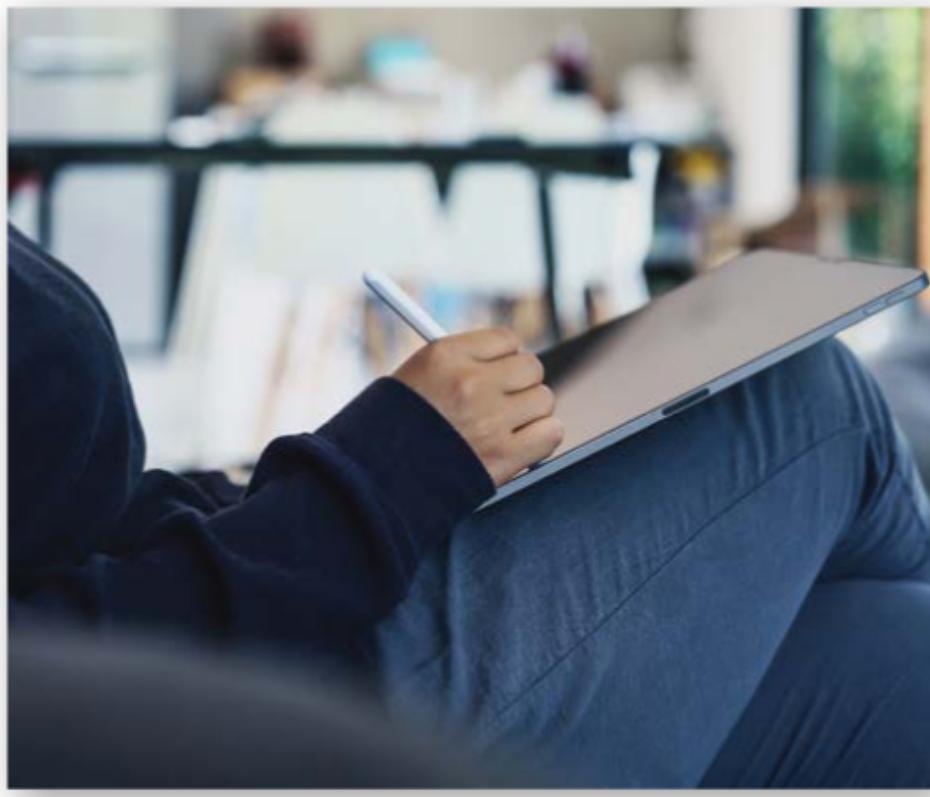


You don't need the most state-of-the-art camera and lens to get started. Your cell phone camera is really all you need for shooting reference and step-by-step photos. When I began my embroidery journey, I photographed everything on my iPhone, including all

the images I used on Instagram while building my following.

I still shoot most of my reference photos on my phone, but I now take my step-by-step photos with a Canon DSLR. Either way, to take the best shot possible, make sure everything is in focus, that you have the best possible lighting (without undesirable shadows), and that the background isn't too busy. This last point is more of a concern when shooting step-by-step photos—I like to make sure that my surface is clean and free of clutter, so the embroidery can be the star of the show.

## Sketchbook or Digital Tablet



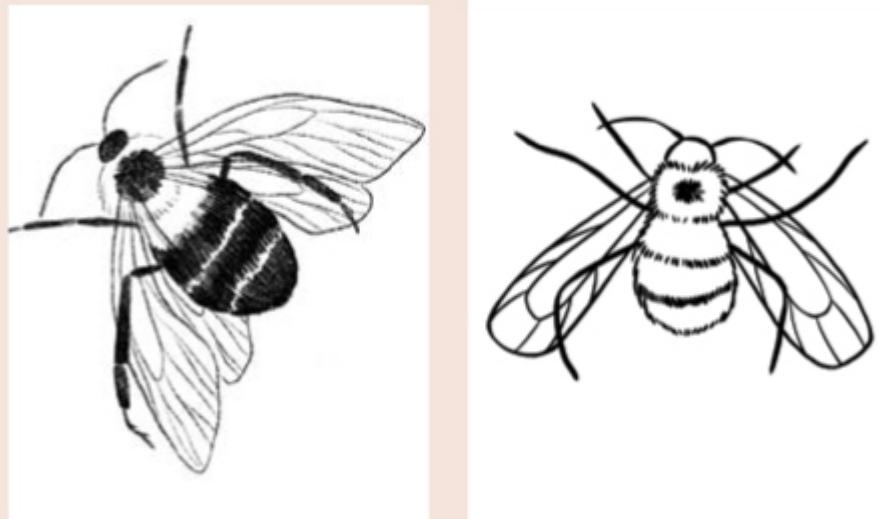
I use both a sketchbook and an iPad to draw, and I love both. I enjoy traditional drawing on paper because in some ways I feel like I have more control, and I like the

tactile feel of pen and pencil on high-quality paper. In some ways, digital drawing is much more efficient—I can work in layers and easily erase mistakes without wasting paper or art supplies. I can also store my files in my cloud storage and not have to worry about drawings getting damaged. I use an Apple Pencil to draw on the screen, so the process feels intuitive and similar to traditional drawing. The biggest adjustment I had to make was drawing on a slippery surface. Drawing on glass is much harder on my hands—there is less resistance, so I end up gripping the Apple Pencil much tighter to compensate. I highly recommend looking into paper texture screen protectors and pencil grips to make the stylus more ergonomic.

I have a few sketchbooks on the go at any given time, one for rough sketches, one for illustrations, and one specifically for embroidery patterns. For embroidery patterns I prefer something nice and thick like watercolor paper. The more rigid paper is helpful for tracing onto fabric or thinner tracing paper (for experimenting with other concepts).

### Digital versus Traditional Sketching

There is no right or wrong choice when it comes to deciding between digital or traditional drawing. Both are wonderful and I'll never abandon my sketchbook just because of the convenience of digital creation.



**My initial sketch (on the left) includes much more detail. I boil the design down to the simplest elements when creating the digital template (on the right).**

## Fabric



There are so many textile options for embroidery, but I have a few favorites. All of the hoop projects in this book are stitched on my top fabric choice—linen!

There are tons of colors to choose from, and I love how buttery soft linen can be. The texture is gorgeous and because the weave is quite open, the needle and floss pass through very easily. This makes it gentler on the hands because you don't have to struggle to pull your thread through.

Linen blends and simple cottons (without stretch) also work well. When I want to create something more daring and intriguing, I work with sheer organza (to learn more about this process, see my first book, *Organza Hoop Art*).



I much prefer selecting fabric in person than online. I like to be able to see the weave up close and feel the weight and texture to make sure it will be ideal to work with. I tend to purchase about  $\frac{1}{2}$  yd. (45.7cm) at a time, which allows me to make several hoops. If I am testing a fabric for the first time or if I know I don't need much of a certain color, I purchase about  $\frac{1}{4}$  yd. (22.9cm) instead. Cut your fabric at least 2"-3" (5.1–7.6cm) larger than the hoop you're using.

## Marking Tools

You will need marking tools for drawing your patterns and transferring them onto your fabric. Here are my favorite options:



**Erasable Colored Pencils**—I use Prismacolor Col-Erase Colored Pencils. I prefer blue because it is a bit softer than black and erases easily. The texture is also beautiful to work with.



**Black Permanent Markers**—I use Sharpie® markers with ultrafine and fine tips for tracing over my pencil lines, depending on the line weight I am trying to achieve.



**Heat-Erasable Fabric Pens**—Pilot FriXion® Erasable Pens are my favorite for tracing patterns onto light-colored fabrics. I love that you can easily remove the markings with a blow dryer (the heat erases the lines). Water-soluble markers run out too quickly, don't create a fine enough line, and aren't dark enough to be super visible.



**White Gel Pens**—When working on dark fabric, it's best to trace the pattern with a white gel pen. White gel ink does not wash off easily, so be careful.

# Hoops



Embroidery hoops come in several different sizes and materials, giving you lots of variety for your projects. I have used 3" (7.6cm) up to 10" (25.4cm) hoops for my work depending on the detail and complexity I am trying to achieve. If I plan to keep the final piece in the hoop, I like to use a wooden one because you can paint them to match your project. When I am working on clothing, I prefer using plastic hoops because they have some slip to them and are gentler on the fabric.

# Embroidery Floss



To stitch your patterns, you will need embroidery floss. The flosses I use are made by DMC (but see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 99). Embroidery floss comes in skeins with six strands of floss. You can use all six strands if you want a fluffier look or use fewer if you want to be more precise and detailed. We will be doing both in this book! DMC floss is available online and in craft stores.

## Needles



My favorite needles are DMC's size 3–9 embroidery set because the sizes suit a range of different fabrics. When I am using all six strands, I opt for a larger needle so I can fit the floss through the eye. When I am using fewer strands, I prefer something smaller. DMC needles are also available online and in craft stores.

## Embroidery Scissors



A good pair of embroidery scissors is important. They are small and feature supersharp blades, so you can neatly and precisely trim your thread. They're also handy for clipping out areas you might want to restitch without damaging the fabric. They come in a wide range of shapes—from simple to whimsical—so it can be a delight adding new pairs to your collection.

## Stabilizer/Transfer Materials



While I mostly draw or trace my patterns directly onto my fabric, you might prefer using stabilizer and transfer material such as Sulky® Stick 'n Stitch™. You can trace your pattern or print directly onto this material, cutting away any excess and sticking the design directly to your fabric. Then you stitch directly through both the stabilizer/transfer material and the fabric. Once you're done, you gently wash away the transfer material with warm water. These types of products make pattern transfer a breeze and because they also work as stabilizers, they support your stitching and make your fabric sturdier and easier to work with while embroidering. If you are working on dark fabric and can't directly trace your design onto it, this is a perfect tool for the job.

## Storage



When you get into hand embroidery, you will end up with many small bits and pieces to keep track of. You have small needles, new floss and floss scraps, scissors of various sizes, pieces of fabric, pencils, pens—and they all need a place to go! I have to keep my materials organized, otherwise they will end up everywhere.

I like to use organizing tubs so I can keep fresh skeins of floss, scrap pieces, drawing supplies, and cutting tools separated. If you want to take floss organization a step further, you can wind each skein

onto a bobbin and label each bobbin with the shade number. Clothespins are also useful for organizing the floss colors for individual projects.

## Lighting

Good lighting is essential when stitching. As a busy mother, I tend to do most of my embroidery work at night—and one too many times I have chosen a floss color in poor lighting only to realize come morning that my beautiful dark green was actually a deep purple. As a result, I typically choose my color palette in bright or natural light before working in the evening.

I currently have bright overhead lighting at my professional worktable, but when I am embroidering for fun on the couch, I make sure I have a bright lamp beside me. Embroidery involves close work, but you shouldn't have to strain your eyes to focus on the details.

# Finding Inspiration

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One of the biggest challenges as a creative, particularly when you are just getting started, is finding inspiration. As a young artist, I used to struggle with this quite often—and even when I finally had an idea of what I wanted to make, my skills hadn't always caught up to my tastes just yet. If you are struggling to find ideas, don't get discouraged. I've finally reached a point where my inspiration is so overwhelming that I can't keep up with my ideas, but it took years of practice.

In the past, I felt pressured to have my style figured out right away. The reality is that for most artists, finding a style takes years of practice and experimentation. There are, of course, some creatives who figure it out at an early stage, but many of us don't and that's ok.

I tend to work in series—I become intrigued with a certain theme and create several pieces around that concept. This gives me some time to work out my unique approach, test and develop new skills and techniques, and build on ideas. In the end, it is very satisfying to look at the progression of these complementary works. If I end up liking a particular artistic direction, I keep making more in that style. If not, I move on and test new ideas. There is no right or wrong in art—follow your heart and learn through trial and error.

The common thread through most of my work is my love of nature. It is my greatest source of inspiration and where I go to escape and find peace. One of the best ways to find inspiration for embroidery projects is to take a close look at the world around you. Step outside, spend time in your backyard, at the park, or on a local trail and record what you see. Small details—a wild mushroom, an intriguing leaf with an unusual shape, a tiny wildflower bloom—could be all it takes to spark your next design. You don't have to have the most expensive camera or the fanciest art supplies—your phone and a sketchbook and pencil are all you need to take reference photos and record rough sketches.

Here are a few tips for gathering inspiration for your patterns:



**Take Photos on the Go:** It is now a reflex for me to pull out my phone and take photos when I am on a walk. I look for interesting foliage, eye-catching florals, wild mushrooms, birds, beautiful scenery, butterflies—and anything else that speaks to me and my interests. You may have totally different inclinations from me and that's the beauty of making art. Follow your creativity and start documenting anything you feel could become an embroidery pattern.

My biggest photography tip is to err on the side of taking too many photos rather than too few. I always take several shots of my subject from multiple angles and different focal lengths. In the moment, I likely

won't have a specific composition in mind, so the different photos give me more options when I get home and start to draw. I set myself up for success by capturing every detail I could possibly need to plan the best pattern and stitch technique. For example, if I am photographing a flower, I try to capture close-ups of the center, petals, stem, and foliage, and then I step back and take some wide shots to capture how it grows from the ground. When I get home, I choose a single main inspiration photo and reference the whole series once I get to the stitching stage.

Of course, sometimes I grab a photo in a split second and I don't get every shot I want, but I usually review the photos before walking away so I know I will have everything I need once I begin sketching. My phone can get quite cluttered with images because of this process. I back everything up in my cloud storage and clear space from my phone regularly. When I have time, I go back and delete photos I know I won't need.



**Keep a Journal:** Another great way to keep inspiration flowing is to keep a journal. I like to use a sketchbook for this and keep it very simple. Note a few interesting things you saw during your day and include small practice sketches of these natural features. Write down any concepts you might have for embroidery projects so you can return to them later and develop them into patterns. It's never a great feeling when you have an idea and end up forgetting it—this has happened to me too many times!



**Practice Daily Sketching:** I draw every single day to keep my skills sharp. Even if it's only for a few minutes, that regular practice has made a huge difference to the development of my style and the way I approach design. It has made my process feel much more natural. I can now flow through my process fairly seamlessly, where I used to get frustrated with my drawing and have to start over completely or even abandon a project because I felt discouraged.

My biggest issue was that I needed to hone my craft and gain experience. I would sit down and not know what to draw because I hadn't fully discovered my strengths and weaknesses as an artist yet. This is a very common part of an artist's journey and because I pushed through it with regular practice, I understand myself more fully as a creative and my ideas flow freely. I know the way I like to draw, what design elements I like to put together, the level of detail I want to achieve, and how I prefer to balance a composition.

**Share Your Work:** If you are comfortable, share your work! This could be on social media or just with trusted friends and family. I have found this so encouraging and inspiring. It is a wonderful feeling when someone appreciates something you have made—it's a huge motivation for what I do. It is also a great way to receive feedback that might improve your technique. A fresh set of eyes can catch things you didn't notice or offer suggestions you haven't thought of yet.

Personally, sharing my work on social media has brought exciting opportunities my way and introduced me to many amazing artists. Additionally, by following other artists and makers I have picked up new

techniques, discovered new supplies and materials, and found new sources of inspiration.

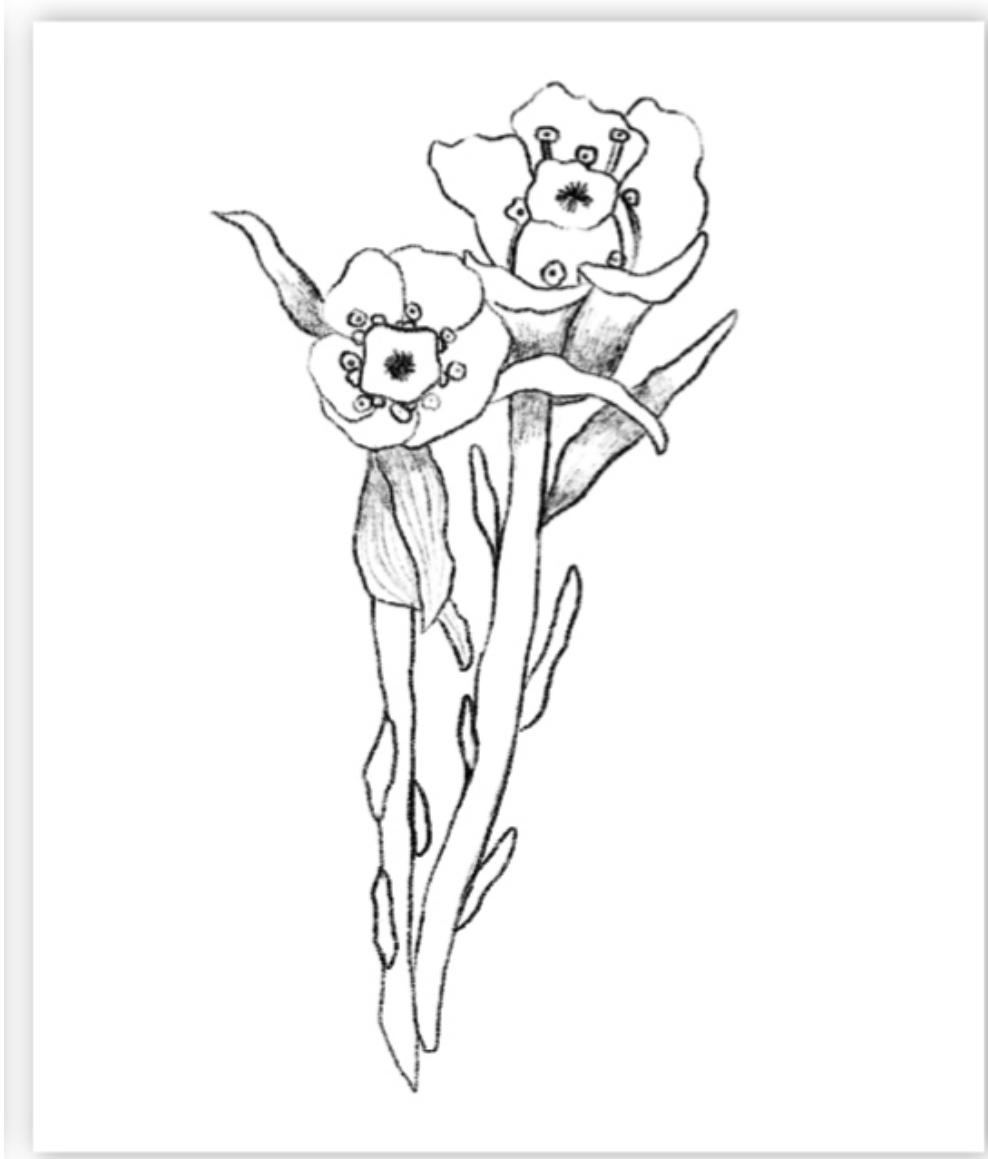
# How to Design Your Own Patterns

The way you draw an embroidery pattern is quite different from how you would approach a detailed illustration. When I create an illustration, I start with a sketch, add the outlines of my shapes, and then carefully detail with shading and texture. I use different line weights and colors, all within that single image. If you're concerned about your drawing ability, don't be —drawing pattern designs is much simpler. All of the detailing happens once you start stitching.

Here are the designs steps I follow when creating a pattern:



- 1 Choose your reference photo (or photos).**  
Choose the best photo or set of photos to use as inspiration for your pattern. Consider the embroidery stitches you'll want to use to recreate the natural element before you start to draw—different stitches will influence the size of the project. For example, if I want to use satin stitch for a flower's petals, I need to keep the design small enough that I can achieve the ideal stitch tension.



**2** **Begin with rough sketches.** Warm up first in your sketchbook or on scrap paper. Experiment with composition—do you want to showcase a single natural element or create a grouping? Where would you like to locate the focal point? I plan this all out before I move to the final drawing.



**3** **Draw your design to the desired scale.** Once I have settled on the concept and layout of my design, I draw it in the correct size for the hoop I plan to use. I use a pencil to trace the hoop and draw the pattern within that boundary to keep everything to scale. (I do all of this in pencil in case I need to make any corrections.) Once the sketch is done, I scan it, open the

image in Adobe Illustrator (you can use this or a similar program) and trace my lines, adjusting the line weight to create a bold outline. When I am done, I am left with a crisp image I can print and easily trace. Because I save my images as vector files, I can easily size them up and down if I want to create the patterns in different sizes.

**4 keep detailed notes as you stitch.** When you go to stitch your pattern for the first time, keep detailed notes as you work. Record your hoop size, the floss colors you select for each design element, and the stitches you use. It is much easier to track all of this as you work instead of going back to figure it out at the end. Once you get in the zone, you may not remember exactly how many strands of floss you used or the exact shade number—keeping notes as you work will save you time later.

**Tip:** If you aren't planning to share or resize your pattern, you can skip scanning and editing it. Simply go over your pencil lines with a black marker to make them darker and erase the pencil markings. Keep this copy safe and you can always go back with tracing paper and make future copies if needed.

## TIPS TO GUARANTEE SUCCESS

**Practice on Scrap Fabric.** If you aren't feeling super confident when you go to stitch your first pattern, grab a spare hoop and some scrap fabric and test out different techniques first. This is a great way to experiment with different fabric textures and colors to determine what works best for you. If there is a stitch you just haven't nailed yet, you can always practice on scrap fabric on a separate hoop—removing the pressure

to get it right on the first try and knowing you can take up as much space as you need with repetitions will help you learn.

**Don't Be Discouraged by Mistakes.** In general, I love how forgiving embroidery can be—it is hard to make a mistake you can't fix! You can always cut out an area you don't like and start again. I have even accidentally cut through the fabric I was working on and still managed to create one of my favorite pieces.

**Start Small.** My first embroidery designs were extremely simple (but still difficult for me early on). I didn't even know any stitch names yet, so I kept my drawings very basic, opting for easy leaf shapes. Once I felt more comfortable and had spent significant time learning about embroidery techniques, I increased the level of difficulty with each project. My designs became more ambitious each time and with every pattern I learned more about my approach.

**Keep Your Work.** Even if you aren't completely happy with your first stitched patterns, hold on to your work. It will help you analyze what worked and what didn't so you can improve your approach with future patterns. Plus, once your collection of pieces stacks up, it will be so satisfying to see how far you have come! I created a gallery wall with my earlier projects in the first apartment I shared with my husband.

# Stitch Guide



This book focuses mainly on my favorite embroidery technique—thread painting! The great news about thread painting is that you mainly need to master the creative use of one stitch—the long and short stitch—to blend colors. This stitch guide includes step-by-step instructions and photos to help you learn everything you need to know to stitch the projects in this book and create your own thread-painted pieces. In addition to thread-painting techniques, I have also included a few of my favorite stitches for adding details to nature-focused embroidery pieces.

## Thread Painting

As the name suggests, thread painting is an approach to embroidery that mimics traditional painting. It uses the long and short stitch to blend different floss colors to create beautiful shading. It sounds quite simple, and it is very intuitive, but it does take practice to master the technique.

To set yourself up for success, carefully choose your floss colors, always thinking about the shades you will need when working from dark to light. If I am working on a flower, for example, I couldn't choose only one pink for the petals—I would need at least three different shades to create the most realistic bloom possible. I plan colors for every shape in a piece.

The long and short stitch can be explained as using long and short stitches to fill in a shape. I think of each stitch as a brush stroke and stitch the different shades into each other to blend the colors from dark to light, building shadows and highlights. Vary the length of your stitches to add even more of an organic feel. You have creative control over stitch length and placement.

The following step-by-step illustrates generally how I blend colors (using a small leaf as an example):



**1** Begin with your darkest floss color. Fill in the bottom of the shape with the long and short stitch.



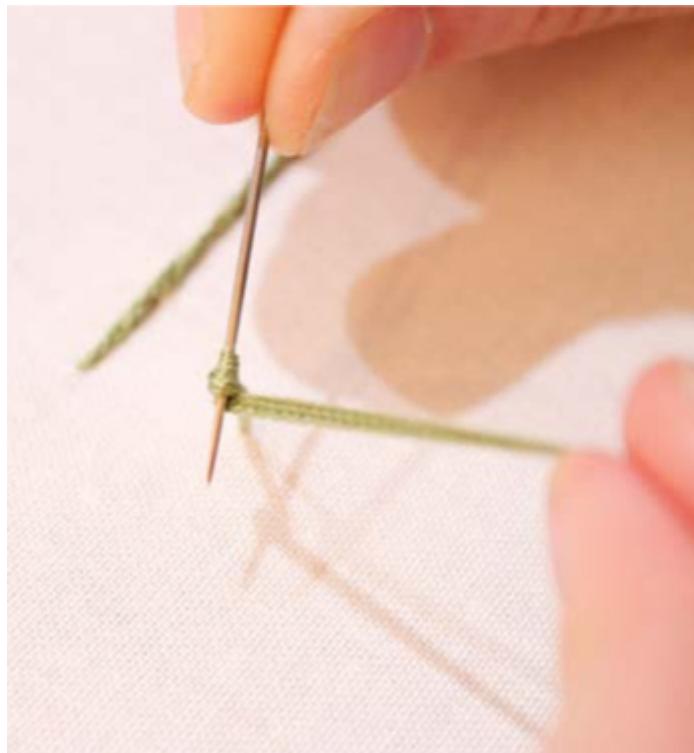
**2** Use the long and short stitch to fill in the middle of the shape with a lighter floss color.



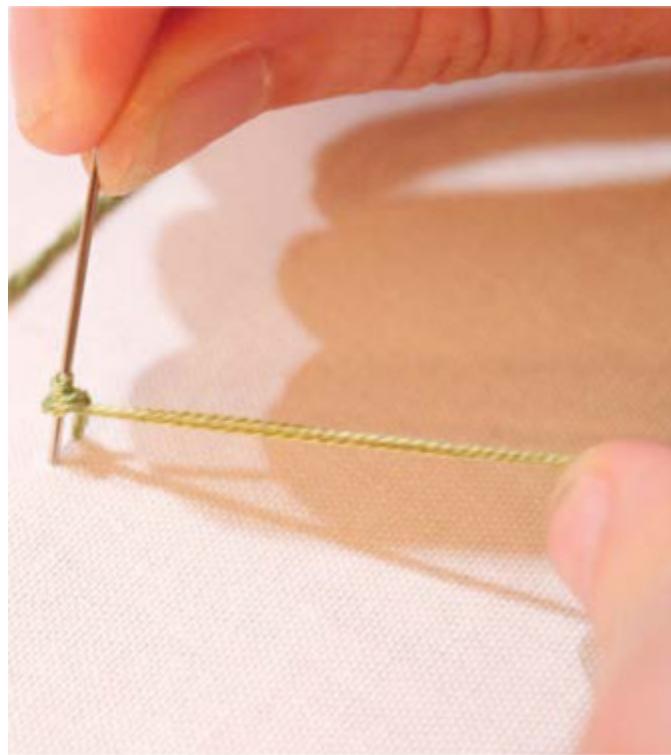
**3** Use long and short stitch to fill in the top of the shape with the lightest floss color.

# French Knots

French knots can be tricky to learn at first, but once you get the hang of it, this stitch has so many uses. This stitch is created by wrapping your needle with floss and then pulling it back through the fabric, leaving a ball-like knot on the surface.



- 1 Pull your needle through the surface of the fabric. Decide how many times to wrap your needle based on how big you want the knot to be. (In this example, I used all six strands and wrapped my needle three times.)



**2** Insert your needle into the fabric, using your nondominant hand to keep the wrapped thread pulled taut against the needle.



**3** Start to pull the needle through to the back, using your thumb to gently hold down the thread loop as the thread passes through.



**4** Start to pull the needle through to the back, using your thumb to gently hold down the thread loop as the thread passes through.

# Backstitch

The backstitch is a simple stitch that is great for outlining shapes and adding linework details to your pieces. The process of working backward prevents the stitches from coming undone.



- 1 Bring your needle through your fabric from the back of your hoop and then insert the needle back into the fabric at your desired stitch length.



**2** Bring your needle back through your fabric from the back of your hoop a stitch length away from the end of the first stitch.



Insert your needle into the fabric right at the end of the first stitch and pull through.

3



Repeat along the length of your line. That's it! The backstitch is quite easy to master, just be sure to keep your stitches even.

**4**

# Split Stitch

The split stitch is similar to the backstitch, but instead of placing your needle through the end of your last stitch, you insert it into the stitch to split the thread. I like it because it ends up looking very similar to tiny chain stitches and creates an interesting texture. It is my favorite stitch for making lines and flower stems.



- 1 Bring your needle through your fabric from the back of your hoop and insert the needle back into the fabric at your desired stitch length. Then bring your needle back through your fabric from the back of your hoop about half a stitch length away from the end of the first stitch.



**2** Insert your needle in the middle of the first stitch, splitting the strands of thread.



**3** Pull through and repeat along your line.

# Straight Stitch

Straight stitches are very easy—you just make little straight lines at your desired length with each stitch. The long and short stitch used for thread painting is just a grouping of alternating lengths of straight stitches. I often use this stitch to add details to the centers of flowers.



**1** Bring your needle through your fabric from the back of your hoop and insert the needle back into the fabric at your desired stitch length. Pull through to the back so your floss is flush with the surface of your fabric.



**2** Bring your needle through your fabric from the back of your hoop and insert the needle back into the fabric at your desired stitch length. Pull through to the back so your floss is flush with the surface of your fabric.

## PROJECTS



### Feather Pendant



I found this beautiful brown feather while on a nature walk with my husband (we love going for walks together to take a break and clear out the cobwebs). Time spent outside always helps me find inspiration and feathers are one of my favorite things to embroider.

Because the oval hoop pendant is so tiny, I use a larger hoop to make working on the piece easier, then I cut away the excess fabric when I'm finished stitching. This is a small project you can easily complete in a day!

#### Embroidery Floss\*

Use a single strand of the following colors:



\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Light Brown Linen
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 3" (7.6cm) Working Hoop
- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (4.4 x 1.9cm) Decorative Pendant Hoop
- Glue, for finishing (I used hot glue)
- Template (see page 94)



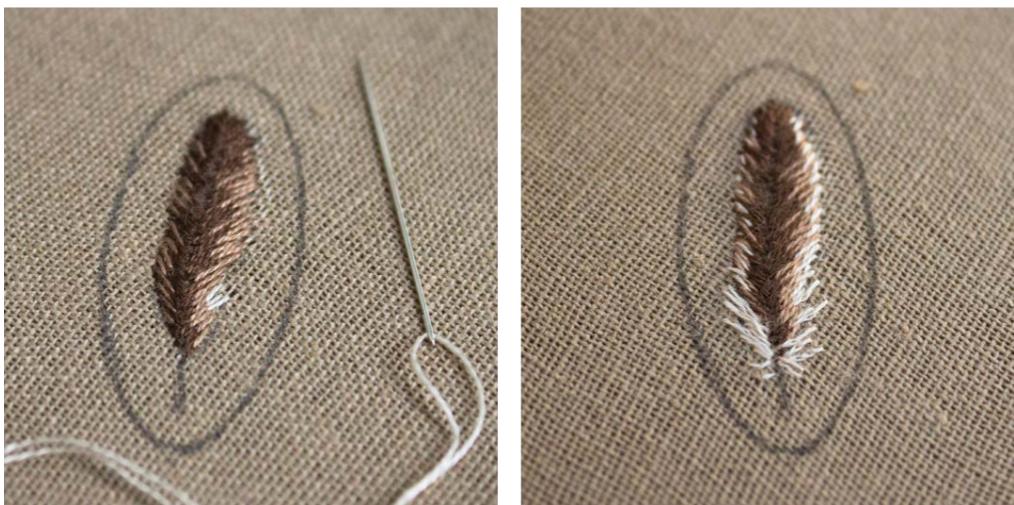
Template (included for copying on page 94).



**The texture of feathers perfectly suits embroidery. Use single strands of each color to precisely capture this feather's delicate details.**



**1** Place your fabric in the working hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to trace the smaller backing oval of the decorative pendant hoop onto the fabric. Draw or trace the feather design inside this boundary. Mirror diagonal long and short stitches in shade #3781 along the center vein of the feather. Leave space along the right edge for blending in the lighter shades.



**2** Blend in diagonal long and short stitches of shade #840 on either side of this darker center. Then add diagonal long and short stitches in shade #3033 along the outer edges. Look at the reference often to get the placement of these stitches just right. It is an organic process that you can adjust as you work.



**3** Add the vein down the center of the feather. Use shade #310 for the top third of the feather and then blend shade in #3033 until you reach the bottom. Thicken the line with a split stitch to get a smooth ridge.



**4** Once you are happy with your feather, remove it from the working hoop and trim the excess fabric.



**5** Frame the piece in the small pendant hoop and use hot glue to secure the fabric to the smaller wooden oval. Glue the second larger oval to the back to neatly finish the pendant. Hang it on a chain or cord and show it off!



# Forget-Me- Not Pendant

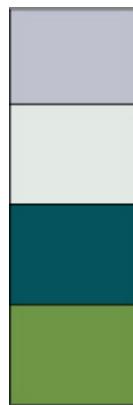


This project is a beautiful piece of wearable art featuring a tiny forget-me-not flower. You can work on it over a single evening as a treat for yourself or as a gift for someone special—they are sure to remember you every time they wear this intricate piece!

My inspiration image features a few small purple buds, so I decided to incorporate that deeper color in my finished piece. It's important to take your inspiration and make it your own—you'll capture a bit more realism and create more multifaceted pieces.

## **Embroidery Floss\***

Use a single strand of the following colors:



DMC #809

DMC #3761

DMC #3808

DMC #3347



DMC #28

DMC #167

DMC #3820

DMC BLANC

\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Pink Linen
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 3" (7.6cm) Working Hoop
- 1" (2.5cm) Decorative Pendant Hoop
- Glue, for finishing (I used strong wood glue)
- Template (see page 94)



Template (included for copying on page 94).



**Use a single strand of each floss color to create this charming flower.**

**Note:** This pattern can be sized down to fit your hoop of choice and then printed and traced. After designing this project, I traced by eye onto my fabric.



**1** Place your fabric in the working hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to trace the backing circle of the decorative pendant hoop onto the fabric. Draw or trace the forget-me-not design inside this boundary.



**2** Stitch long and short stitches at the base of the petals in shade #809, focusing on the center of the flower. Vary the length of your stitches to leave space, thinking about how you will add the other floss colors.



**3** Use the long and short stitch to blend in shade #3761. Work out toward the tips of the petals, making sure to create a neat edge around each shape.



**4** Add a few small straight stitches in shade #3808 along the inner edges of the petals to add more depth and definition. You don't want to overpower the shading; you just want to add extra realistic details.



**5** Use a few straight stitches in shade #3347 to add tiny leaves to the bottom of the flower. I only added leaves around a couple of the buds to maintain an organic look.



**6** Use a few small satin stitches in shade #28 to add buds between the petals. Use a satin stitch to add a small circle in shade #167 in the center of the flower, leaving some space between this center and the petals. Use very small, vertical satin stitches in shade #3820 to fill in the space around the inner circle.



**7** Add a few small straight stitches in shade BLANC radiating out from the center of the flower. Make sure you don't cover too much of the areas you shaded with your thread painting.



**8** Once you are happy with your flower, remove it from the working hoop and trim the excess fabric. Glue the fabric carefully to the circle backing of the pendant hoop.



**9** Frame the piece in the small pendant hoop and use glue to secure the backing circle to the back to neatly finish the pendant. Hang it on a chain or cord and it's ready to wear!



# White Feather Oval Hoop

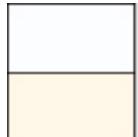


Walking back to my car one afternoon I noticed a beautiful white feather on the sidewalk. It was so crisp and bright—I knew it would make a lovely embroidery project. This piece uses a single strand of embroidery floss to mimic the delicate, natural details of the feather.

Split stitches will help you quickly fill in the thicker left side of the feather. Since the right side is narrower, you can mirror the angle of the split stitches with satin stitches while still maintaining proper stitch tension.

## **Embroidery Floss\***

Use a single strand of the following colors:



DMC BLANC

DMC ECRU

\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

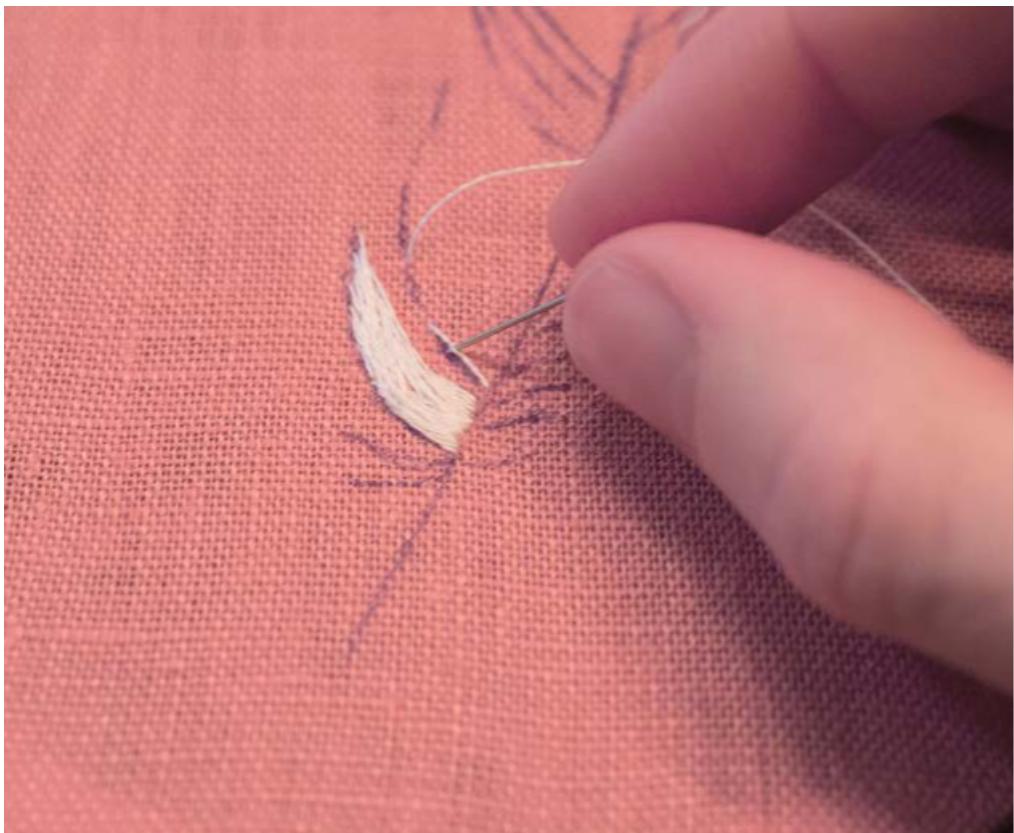
- Pink Linen
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 6" x 7 1/2" (15.2 x 19.1cm) Oval Hoop
- Template (see page 95)



Template (included for copying on page 95).



You only need two colors to create this gorgeous embroidered feather—it looks just like it drifted out of the sky to land on the fabric!



**1** Place your fabric in the oval hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the feather design in the center. Starting from the bottom left, use shade BLANC to fill in the feather shape with split stitches. Work up toward the tip of the feather, maintaining a consistent upward angle



**2** Near the top of the feather, begin using diagonal satin stitches to fill in the right side of the feather. Add the delicate wisps at the base of the feather.



**3** Use a split stitch in shade ECRU to add the vein of the feather down the center. Where the line needs to be thicker (at the base), make several split stitches beside each other to achieve the correct width.



**Thread painting, split stitch, and backstitch techniques can be combined to fill in a feather's delicate details.**



# Red Rose

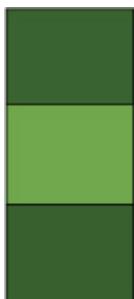


A memory of a beautiful summer night inspired this piece. My husband, son, and I ended a busy week by visiting our favorite pizza place for a picnic. While we were waiting for our meal to be prepared, I walked with my son near the flower beds outside. It had very recently rained and there were large, glistening raindrops all over the roses planted by the parking lot. I snapped a photo and still think often about the simple joy of that moment.

You'll notice I took my inspiration photo and made a few adjustments to create a more pleasing piece. I turned the flower straight on, chose to show a single bloom and small bud, added French knot details, and simplified the leaves to place the focus more fully on the deep red blossom. I also used more strands of floss to create a punchier piece. If you want something a bit more delicate, use fewer strands and build up your rose more slowly.

## **Embroidery Floss\***

Use six strands of the following colors:

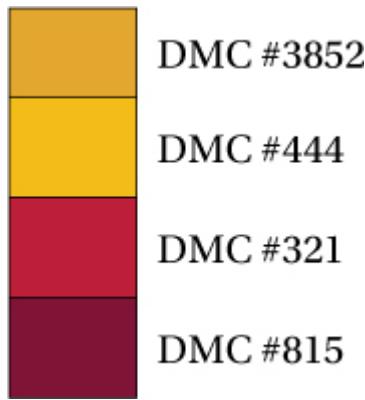


DMC #904

DMC #989

DMC #580

Use three strands of the following colors:



\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- White Linen
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle

- 6" x 7 1/2" (15.2 x 19.1cm) Oval Hoop
- Template (see page 96)



Template (included for copying on page 96).



The intense reds and two-tone leaves of this project always make me feel happy. With just a few stitches you can capture that feeling for yourself!



**1** Place your fabric in the oval hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the rose design in the center. Stitch the large central stem with shade #904, using a horizontal satin stitch to create a smooth effect.



**2** Use shade #904 to fill in the outside (lower) half of each leaf with upward-angled satin stitches. Then use shade #989 to fill in the inside (upper) half of each leaf with satin stitches, mirroring the angle of the darker stitches.



**3** Add the individual leaf stems using thin lines of split stitches in shade #580.



Add straight stitches to the center of the flower in shade #3852 radiating out from the middle. Then add a few straight stitches in shade #444. At the end of a few of the longest stitches, add French knots in shade #444, wrapping your needle 2–3 times before inserting it back into the fabric.

**Note:** Putting the dark green on the bottom of the leaf and the light green on top conveys the feeling of natural light highlighting certain parts of the leaf. Mirroring your stitches also gives the leaves a realistic feel—each stitch mimics the texture of a leaf's veins.



**5** Use a satin stitch in shade #321 to fill in the innermost petals.



6 Use a long and short stitch in shade #815 to add shading to the petals. **Note:** I completely filled two of the outer petals with satin stitch—they were too small for thread painting, and the heavier shading added more dimension.



**7** Use a long and short stitch to blend shade #321 and fill in the rest of the petals.



**8** Use the long and short stitch to add the flower bud, starting at the base with shade #815, then blending to the top with shade #321.



# Mushroom Collar

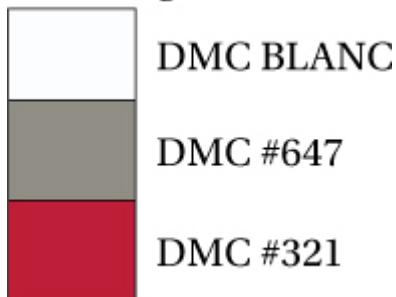


One of my favorite ways to use embroidery is to upcycle clothing from my closet or the thrift store. I can create items that are completely one-of-a-kind simply by adding my own embroidery design—and now you can too! This is a fun project you can easily complete while watching a movie on a Saturday night. Grab an old shirt from your closet and cozy up with this quick pattern!

These tiny fungi are based on *Russula* mushrooms I found on one of my mushroom hunting adventures. I am always attracted to mushrooms that remind me of classic fairytale toadstools. I took the inspiration and rolled with it—adding simple gill details and refining the shape to fit the collar (and my fairy-tale ideal).

## Embroidery Floss\*

Use two strands of the following colors:



Use one strand of the following color:



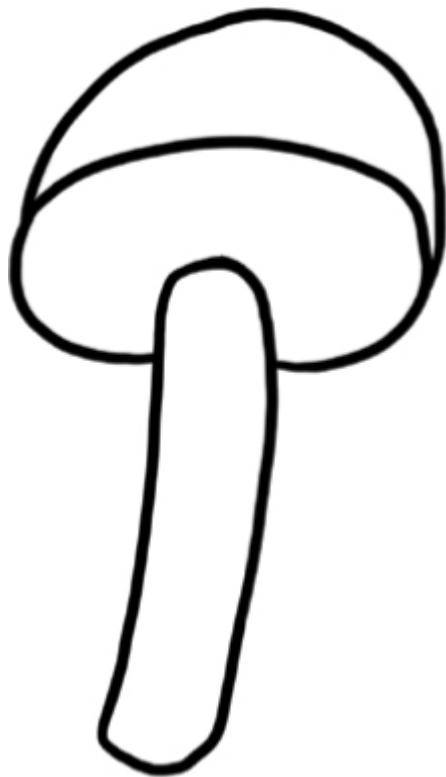
\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Collared Cotton Shirt
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 3" (7.6cm) Working Hoop
- Template (see page 94)



Template (included for copying on page 94).



**Embroidery is the perfect art for upcycling  
thrifted clothing or personalizing your favorite  
wearables!**



**1** Place the shirt collar in the working hoop so that it is held taut. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the mushroom design on the collar tip.



**2** Use shade BLANC to horizontally satin stitch the mushroom stem. This will create a crisp shape with an even surface.



**3** Next, add the gills (my favorite part). Use a long and short stitch to fill in the base of the gill area with shade #647.



**4** Fill in the rest of the gill area by blending in shade BLANC with long and short stitches.



**5** Add gill lines using shade #3031 to make straight or split stitches.



**6** Fill in the top of the mushroom using a satin stitch in shade #321. Repeat steps 1–6 on the other collar tip, if desired, or stop if you're happy with a single, small accent!



# Chickadee Portrait

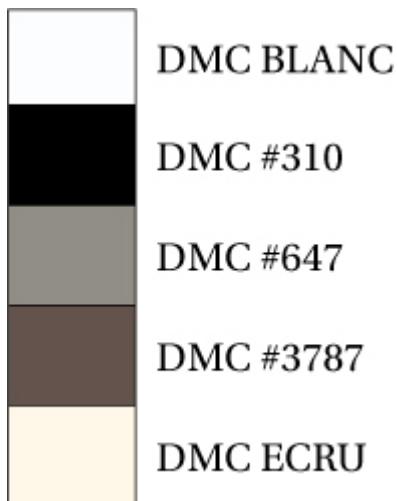


Birds are my favorite animals and I love taking my camera out on birding adventures to see what I can capture. I have to be slow, quiet, and patient, so it is truly a meditative process that forces me to focus on the moment and take in my surroundings. I have gotten to know several different types of birds and one that always delights me is the chickadee—certainly not the rarest of birds, but always a joy.

I used single strands of each color to create the airier, fluffier texture of the chickadee. It takes longer to fill in the colored sections with a single strand, but this is what creates the greater depth typical of needle-painted images.

## Embroidery Floss\*

Use a single strand of the following colors:



\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Gray Linen
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 3" (7.6cm) Circle Hoop
- Template (see page 95)



Template (included for copying on page 95).



**Chickadees are often the boldest and friendliest of birds and they are certainly one of the cutest! Enjoy thread painting this soft, subtle portrait of a beloved backyard visitor.**

**Tip:** I like using one strand at a time for bird and feather projects because it helps create that delicate texture.



- 1 Place your fabric in the hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the chickadee design in the center. Use the long and short stitch in shade BLANC to fill in the cheek.



- 2 Use the long and short stitch in shade #310 to fill in the black area under the beak.



**3** Use a satin stitch in shade #310 to fill in the center of the eye. To help the eye stand out, outline it with shade #647 using a split stitch or backstitch.



**4** Fill in the black area on the top of the head with long and short stitches in shade #310.



**5** Use vertical satin stitches in shade #310 to fill in the bottom of the beak. Use vertical satin stitches in shade #3787 to fill in the top of the beak.



**6** Use long and short stitches in shade #3787 to add a feathery layer to the neck below the white section.



**7** Use long and short stitches to blend in shade #647 and fill the rest of the neck area.



**8** Scatter straight stitches in shade ECRU on top of the white cheek area to add depth. Be sure to follow the direction of the stitches you've already made. Blend stitches in shade #3787 into the outer edge of the white cheek to mimic the shading of a bird's feathers. Add a few small straight stitches in the same color to add highlights to the top of the head and below the beak.



**9** Add split stitches in shade #647 to highlight the top of the beak.



**10** Add a few more small stitches in shade BLANC around the black areas to blend and add realistic detail. Once you are happy with the result, your project is complete.



# Bumblebee Beret

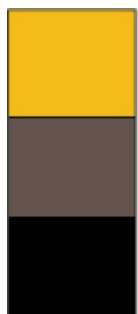


Here is a whimsical, wearable piece that is both beautiful and detailed without being too time-consuming. I love that it looks like a little bee has landed on the beret! I spend a lot of time outside, so I often run into bees working their magic.

Use a single strand of floss to build the fluffy texture of the body, add delicate legs, and create the intricate wings and thin antennae. This brilliant bee looks quite true on the black wool beret, but it would look equally at home embroidered on other items, like floral scarves or the pocket of your favorite pair of jeans.

## **Embroidery Floss\***

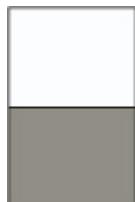
Use one strand of the following colors:



DMC #444

DMC #3787

DMC #310



DMC BLANC

DMC #647

\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Black Wool Beret
- White Gel Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 3" (7.6cm) Working Hoop
- Template (see page 94)



Template (included for copying on page 94).



**Adding the bee's body and legs first allows you to layer the fine white tracery over them,**

creating the illusion of translucent wings.



- 1 Place your beret in the working hoop. Use a white gel pen to draw the bee design on the beret.



**2** Organically place small straight stitches in shade #444 to mimic the fluffy texture of a bee's torso, leaving an area in the center of the middle segment empty. Use shade #3787 to fill in that spot and add dimension. Then use a satin stitch in shade #3787 to add the bee's head.



**3** Fill in the rest of the body using the long and short stitch in shade #3787. Next, stitch the legs, creating segments with straight stitches. The four longer legs should have four segments each and the two shorter legs in the front should have three segments each. I used six to seven stitches to achieve a thicker base close to the bee's body, about four stitches for the middle sections, and one stitch at the very end.



**4** Use straight stitches in shade #310 to add a stripe on the bee's body.



**5** Use a split stitch to carefully outline the wings with shade BLANC. Add the veining of each segment. I improvised the veining, but feel free to draw these marks on the beret if you want to follow a guide.



**6** Add the antennae using a split stitch or backstitch in shade #647. You're done and ready to rock your new beret!

**My favorite part of this design are the wings—I love how the outline, left open in the middle, conveys the transparency of real insect wings!**



# Tiger Lily

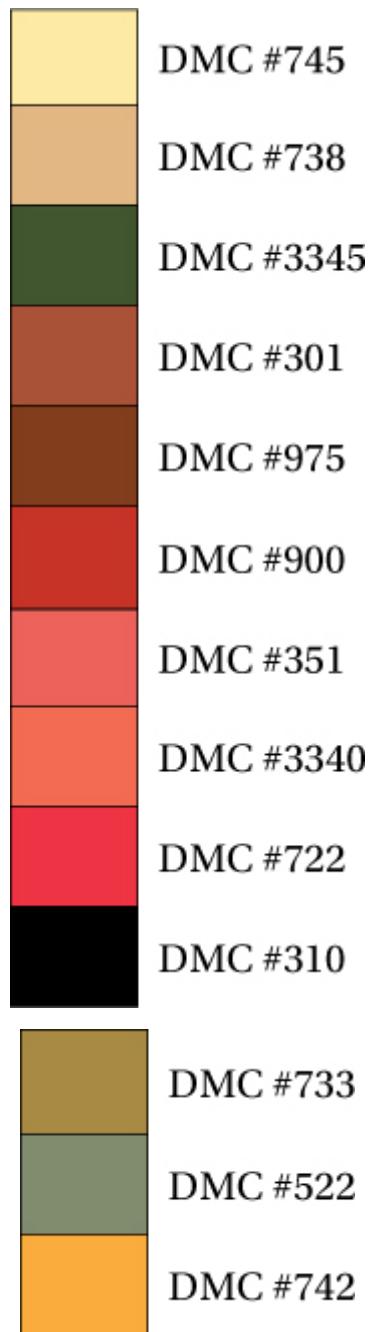


This project captures the beautiful texture and color contrast of a Tiger Lily. I am always happy when I spot this stunning orange flower in a garden bed. My reference photo was taken from slightly below the flower, so it's difficult to see here, but as they bloom, the petals curl back and expose more and more of the speckled pattern.

My favorite part of creating this piece is adding the distinctive black speckles to the layered oranges of the petals. You'll use scattered straight stitches to create an organic chaos of spots, varying the shape and size by changing how many stitches you make for each one.

## **Embroidery Floss\***

Use six strands of the following colors:



\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Light Blue Linen
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 4 ½" x 9" (11.4 x 22.9cm) Oval Hoop
- Template (see page 98)



Template (included for copying on page 98).



**This flashy design will make you feel like  
you've brought part of a gorgeous garden into  
your home.**



**1** Place your fabric in the oval hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the tiger lily design in the center. Use small, horizontal satin stitches in shade #745 to fill in three of the long central filaments.



Fill in the remaining central filaments using a horizontal satin stitch in shade #738.

2



3 Use the long and short stitch in shade #3345 to add the central base of the style.



4 Use the long and short stitch to blend shade #301 into the green base. Then add an orange tip at the end of the style (the stigma).



**5** Fill in the rest of the style with the long and short stitch, first using shade #738, then finishing with shade #745.



**6** Use short, horizontal satin stitches in shade #975 to fill in the anthers at the ends of the filaments, carefully following the outlines.



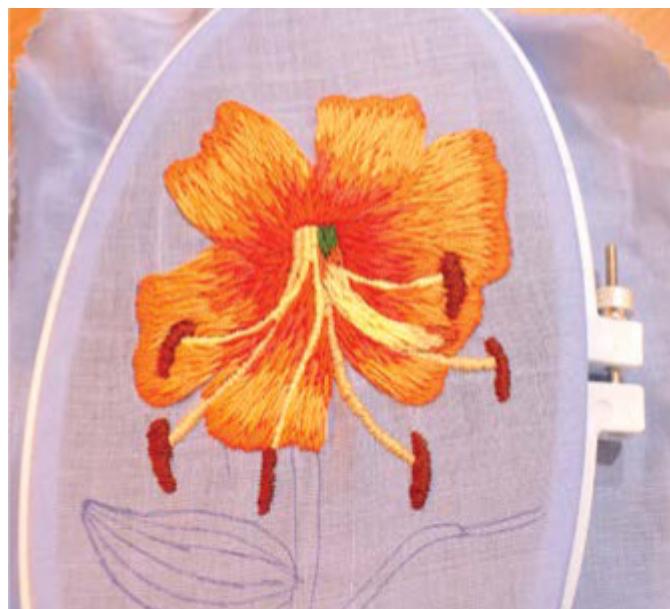
**7** Start to fill in the petals with long and short stitches in shade #900, working out from the flower's center.



**8** Use long and short stitches to blend in shade #351.  
**Note:** This is a similar orange color, but the slight difference will add dimension to the finished piece.



**9** Use long and short stitches to blend shade #344 into the center and to add color at the outer edges of each petal. Take care along each edge to closely follow the outline.



**10** Use long and short stitches to fill in the rest of the petals with shade #722.



**11** Now for my favorite part! Use scattered straight stitches in shade #310 to make the distinctive speckles on the petals. I use one to two stitches for each spot and vary the size and shape. Keep adding speckles until you are happy with the look.



**12** Use horizontal satin stitches in shade #3345 to fill in the stem, maintaining a clean line along the outer edges.



**13** Use long and short stitches in shade #3345 to fill in both ends of the leaf. Fill in the rest of the leaf with long and short stitches, first in shade #733, then in shade #522.



**14** Use a satin stitch in shade #742 to fill in the bud.



# Crocus Tote Bag

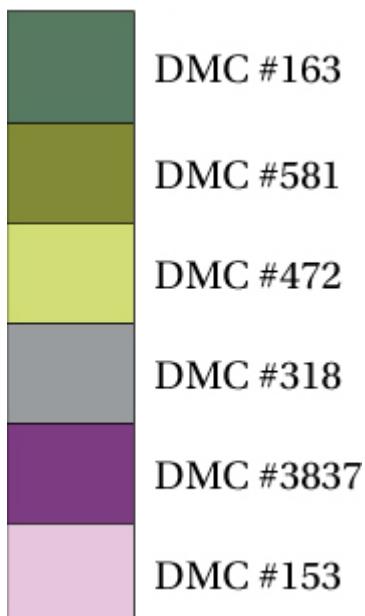


When I see crocuses start to pop up, I know that spring is on the way—my favorite time of year. It is a time of new beginnings, and my mood always lifts when the flowers start to bloom after a long winter. My inspiration was a photo of a cluster of crocuses in a flower bed, so I designed a simple small grouping of three bright purple crocuses to liven up a plain canvas tote.

Canvas works well for embroidery because it's strong and easy to work with. Embroidering on canvas will be similar to embroidering on linen, though it is usually thicker. Work slowly and don't be afraid to add depth to your piece—the sturdy canvas can handle many stitches.

## Embroidery Floss\*

Use six strands of the following colors:



\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

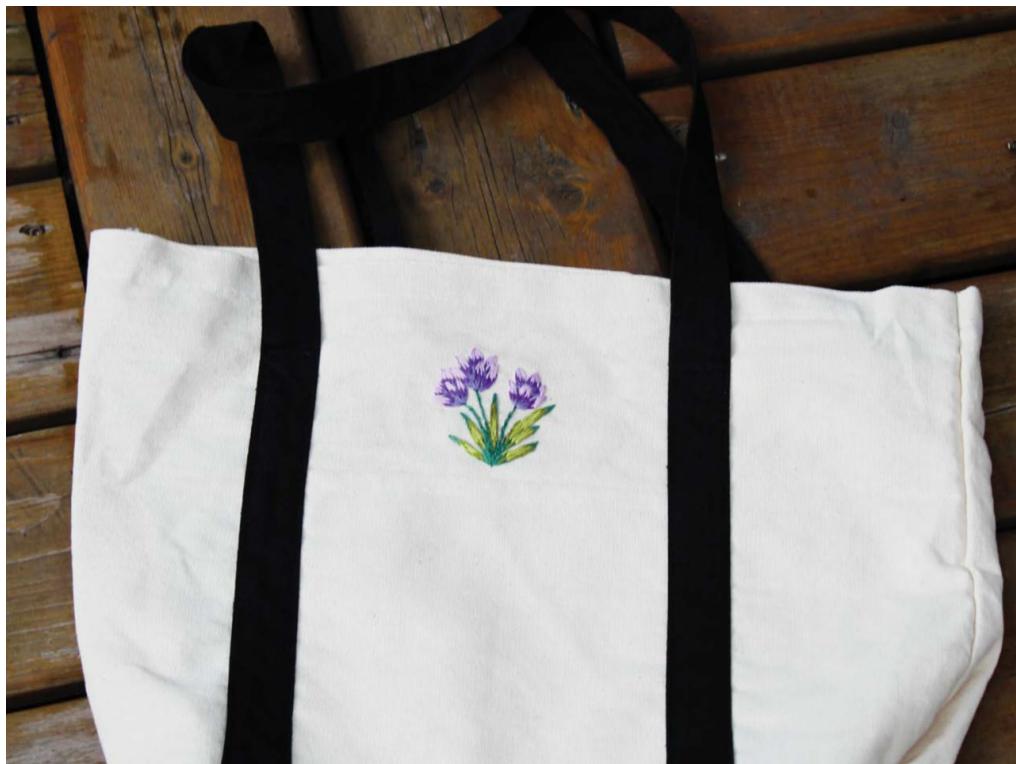
#### **TOOLS AND MATERIALS**

- Canvas Tote Bag
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 3" (7.6cm) Working Hoop

- Template (see page 95)



Template (included for copying on page 95).



This is a fun, quick project you'll be able to take with you on the go when it's done!



**1** Place your fabric in the working hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the crocus design on the tote bag. Use split stitches in shade #163 to add three stems.



**2** Make long and short stitches in the same shade at the bases and tips of the leaves.



**3** Use long and short stitches to first blend in shade #581, then to finish filling in the middle of each leaf with shade #472.



**4** Use the long and short stitch to add shade #318 at the base of each petal.



**5** Add the darker shade, #3837, to the middles of the petals with long and short stitches.



**6** Finish filling in the petals by adding long-and-short-stitched highlights in shade #153. Once the petals are done, you are ready to rock this fresh tote bag!

**Tip:** Usually I begin my stitching with the darkest shade, then move through the middle shade to finish with the lightest shade, but to mimic the texture and patterning on a crocus's petals, I stitched them in a different way. I started with the medium shade, then added the darkest shade, and added the lightest at the tips of the petals. I love the result and it suits this particular bloom.



# Wild Strawberry Hat

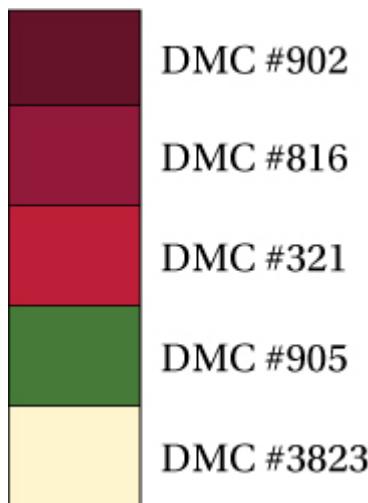


On a summer's walk, it is always so delightful to catch a glimpse of a bright red wild strawberry. This project can easily be completed in an afternoon, so you can quickly enjoy wearing this perfect warm-weather accessory! You only need a few floss colors to create this bright and cheerful piece.

I used six strands of each of the main colors to quickly fill in the strawberry and create a three-dimensional effect. If you want to create a more detailed strawberry, use fewer strands of each color to build subtle shading.

## **Embroidery Floss\***

Use six strands of the following colors:



Use three strands of the following color:



DMC #472

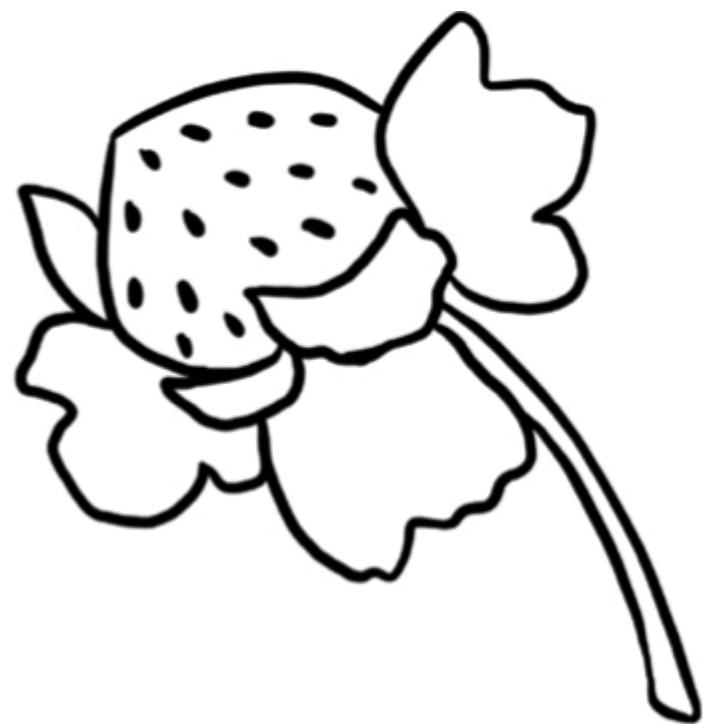
\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

### **TOOLS AND MATERIALS**

- White Cotton-Blend Baseball Hat
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 3" (7.6cm) Working Hoop
- Template (see page 94)



Template (included for copying on page 94).



**This brilliant strawberry design is perfect for livening up a plain white hat, but you can easily add it to a tote bag or small purse, or even make it into a summery statement necklace.**



**1** Place your hat in the working hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the strawberry design on the hat. Use a satin stitch to add shade #902 to the base of the berry.



**2** Blend shade #816 into the darker red base with a satin stitch.



**3** Add shade #321 to the tip of the berry with a satin stitch.



**4** Use a satin stitch in shade #905 to fill in each leaf. They should look thick and smooth and should pop off the surface of the hat.



**5** Use the same shade and a horizontal satin stitch to fill in the stem. These will be very small stitches, but the final result will create a texture that is consistent with the leaves.



**6** Add three straight stitches in shade #472 to each of the three large leaves. Then scatter small straight stitches in shade #3823 on the berry to add the seeds. Make sure to add them organically so your piece looks as balanced and realistic as possible. You're done and ready to wear this hat for some fun in the sun!



# Monarch Butterfly Bandana



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Monarch butterflies have been a fascination of mine since I was very young, and they have appeared in my art for years. This creates a fun wearable piece when stitched on a bright yellow bandana, but you could easily transform it into a beautiful, framed wall hanging, as well.

Be certain to use a cotton bandana. Synthetic bandanas are often thinner, more fragile, and difficult to work with. This is especially important when you're stitching a dense, detail-rich piece like this butterfly.

## **Embroidery Floss\***

Use six strands of the following colors:



\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



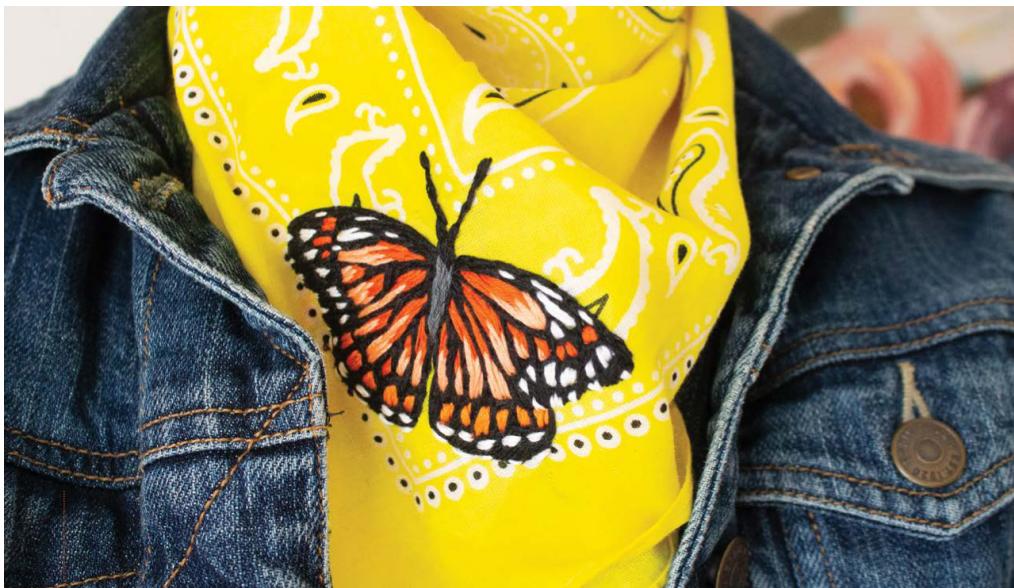
Inspiration—for reference

#### **TOOLS AND MATERIALS**

- Yellow Cotton Bandana
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 3" (7.6cm) Working Hoop
- Template (see page 96)



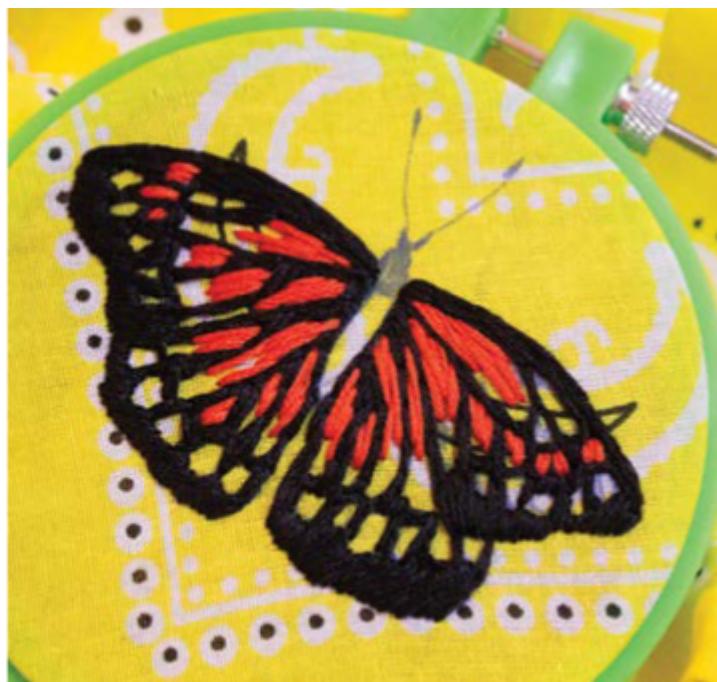
Template (included for copying on page 96).



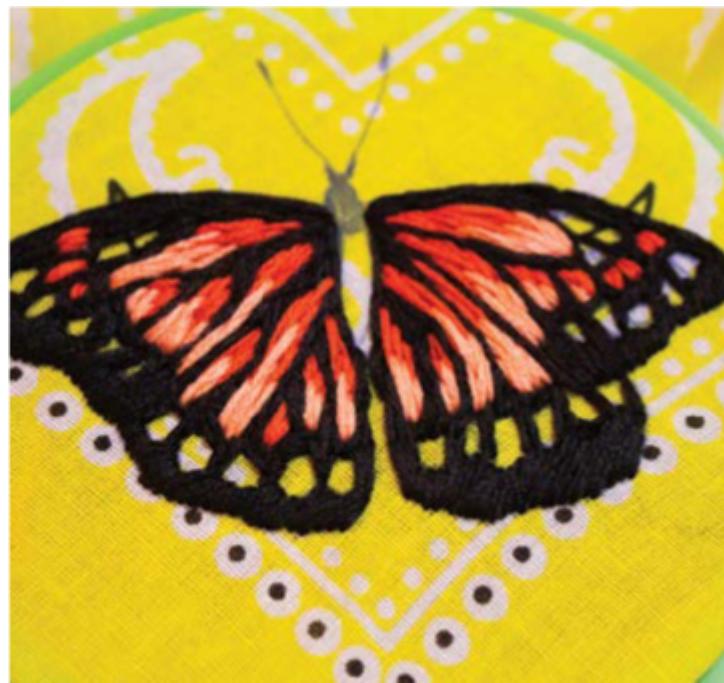
I love how wearing this stitched bandana makes it look like the butterfly is gently fluttering along with me wherever I go.



**1** Place your bandana in the working hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the monarch butterfly design on the bandana. Stitch all of the black areas of the wings using long and short stitches in shade #310.



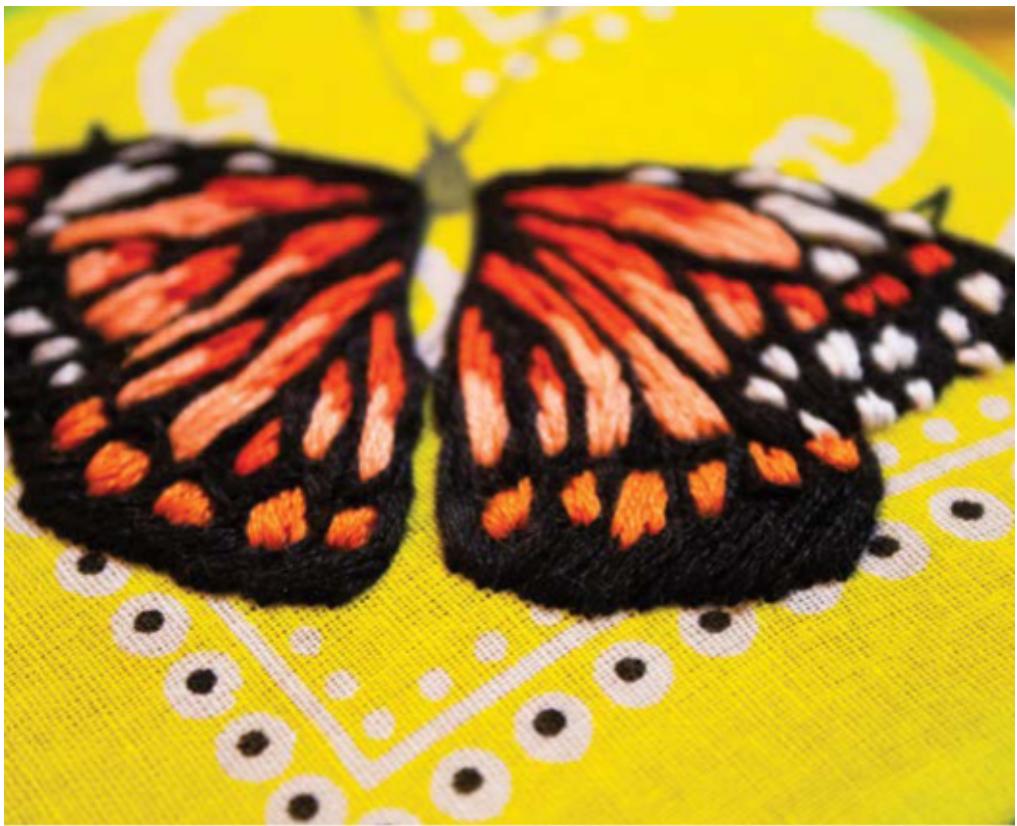
**2** Use the long and short stitch to add shade #900 to the areas closest to the butterfly's body. Add a few detail spots of this shade with satin stitch as shown close to the outer edges of the forewings.



**3** Use the long and short stitch to fill in the rest of these central orange spaces with shade #3341.



**4** Use a satin stitch to fill in the remaining blank spots of the forewings with shade BLANC.



**5** Use a satin stitch to fill in the remaining blank spots of the hindwings with shade #721.



Use two to three straight stitches to add two rows of white dots on top of the thick black bands along the bottom of the hindwings. The wings are complete!

6



**7** Use long and short stitches in shade #413 to fill in the butterfly's body up to the base of the head. Try to create a slightly hairy effect to mimic the natural texture of a butterfly's body.



**8** Use long and short stitches in shade #310 to fill in the butterfly's head. Use the same shade to create two straight lines of split stitches for the antennae and make a few satin stitches to create the thicker parts at the tips of the antennae.

**Tip:** You normally use long and short stitches if you'll be blending colors but using long and short stitches for these black areas will help you navigate around tight areas and create a smooth surface. Stitching the black first also makes it a lot easier to see the small orange and white shapes you'll complete in the following steps.



# Daffodil

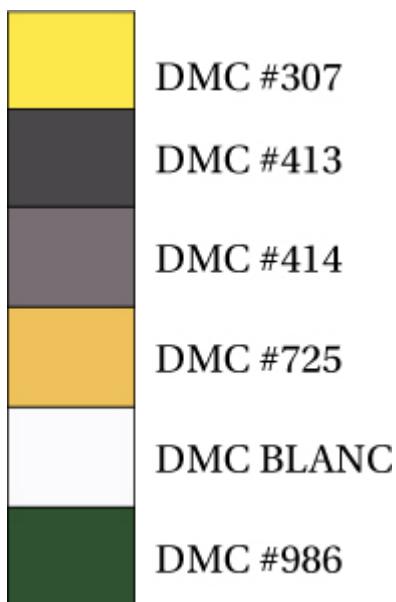


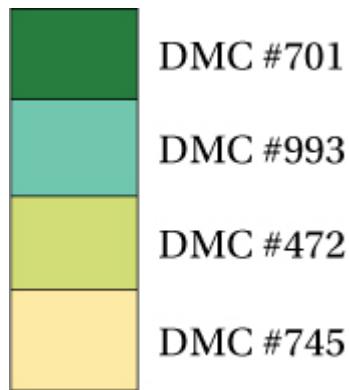
Daffodils hold a special place in my heart because they are my son's birth flower. They are bright and cheerful just like his personality! I also love them because they are another vivid sign of spring to lift the winter blues. I snapped the inspiration photo while playing with my son in the park on a warm spring day.

I chose a dark olive-green linen for the background to contrast with the bright whites, yellows, and greens of the flower—the right background choice will really make your colors pop.

## Embroidery Floss\*

Use six strands of the following colors:





\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Dark Olive-Green Linen
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle

- 6" (15.2cm) Circular Hoop
- Template (see page 99)

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Template (included for copying on page 99).



**This daffodil is bright white on the outer petals and sunny yellow on the inner trumpet. The gray shading on these petals creates depth and a sense of volume.**



**1** Place your fabric in the hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the daffodil design in the center. Use a few straight stitches in shade #307 to add the style, stigma, and anthers to the center of the flower.



**2** Add shading to the small, curved area around the center of the flower using satin stitches in shade #413.



**3** Use long and short stitches in shade #414 to add shadows to the center of the flower and around the bases of each of the outer petals.



**4** Blend shade #725 into the center of the flower using the long and short stitch.



**5** Blend shade #307 into the other yellow shade in the center of the flower using the long and short stitch to add more intensity to these inner yellow petals. Also add some of this shade to the center of the background flower.



**6** Add highlights around the outer edges of these yellow petals with long and short stitches in shade BLANC.



**7** Continue using long and short stitches to blend shade BLANC into the gray bases of the outer petals. Work outward to the tips, filling each petal and maintaining clean lines all the way around.



**8** Use long and short stitches in shade #986 to add shadows to the leaves and stem as shown.



**9** Blend shade #701 into the first green with long and short stitches to build dimension.



**10** Use long and short stitches to blend in shade #993 and add the highlights.



**11** Finish thread painting the leaves and stem with shade #472.



**12** Backstitch around the central petals in shade #745 to define this section and make the inner portion of the flower stand out.

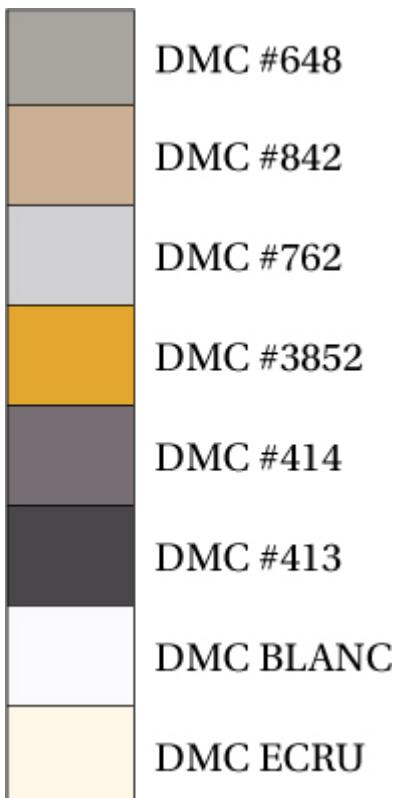


Ghost flowers are one of my all-time favorite plants. There is something incredibly enchanting about their iridescent white stems and petals and I love seeing them growing from mossy patches on the forest floor—it always feels a rare, magical experience.

This piece works really well on dark linen, which contrasts with the flowers and helps set the scene of a shadowy environment. Ghost flowers thrive in this darkness, and against it they can look almost like they're glowing.

### **Embroidery Floss\***

Use six strands of the following colors:



\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

**TOOLS AND MATERIALS**

- Black Linen
- White Gel Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 6" (15.2cm) Circular Hoop
- Template (see page 99)



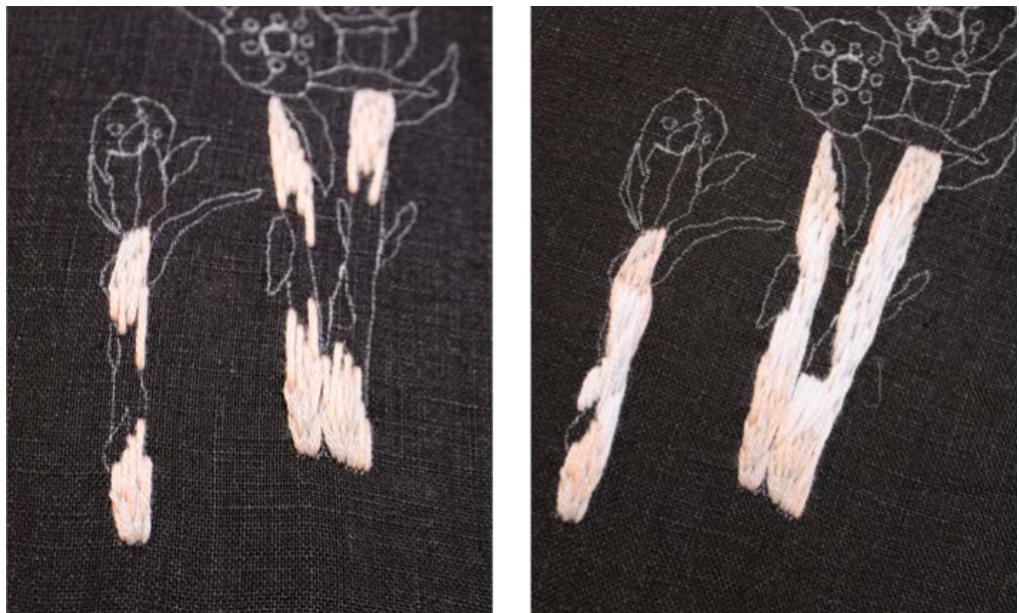
Template (included for copying on page 99).



**With careful placement of a few subtle gray threads, you'll create a really unique work of art based on a true wonder of nature!**



- 1 Place your fabric in the hoop. Use a white gel pen to draw the ghost flower design in the middle. Use long and short stitches in shade #648 to begin thread painting the tops and bottoms of the stems.



**2** Blend shade #842 into the first color with long and short stitches, then finish filling in the middles of the stems with shade #762.



**3** Add French knots in shade #3852 around the centers of the two open flowers and inside the petals of the front flower. I wrapped the needle twice each time.



**4** Use a satin stitch in shade #762 to add small leaves along the stem and to fill in the centers of the two open flowers. For the flower centers, come up from the center of the circle each time and stitch to the outward edge to give it more of a realistic texture.



**5** Use the long and short stitch to add shade #414 to the petals and upper leaves.



Add the deeper shadows to the petals and upper leaves with long and short stitches in shade #413.

6



**7** Add highlights to the petals and upper leaves with long and short stitches in shade BLANC.



**8** Finish filling in the petals and upper leaves with long and short stitches in shade ECRU. Once this blending is complete, the piece is done!



# Pansy



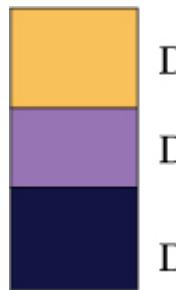
Pansies come in so many bright and beautiful color combinations. This piece includes the soft purple hues of my reference photo, but you can easily swap them out with other palettes! I love pansies in gardens or potted arrangements—we always had them in our garden growing up and when my mother-in-law told me they remind her of budgie faces, they became even more special to me (the first pet I had with my husband was a budgie).

You'll use long and short stitches to maintain your stitch tension as you fill in the separate flower petals and the yellow center. The highlights and smaller details along the outer and inner edges of the petals are made with short straight stitches.

## Embroidery Floss\*

Use six strands of the following colors:

	DMC #3756
	DMC #3747
	DMC #157
	DMC BLANC
	DMC #742



DMC #725

DMC #155

DMC #823

\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



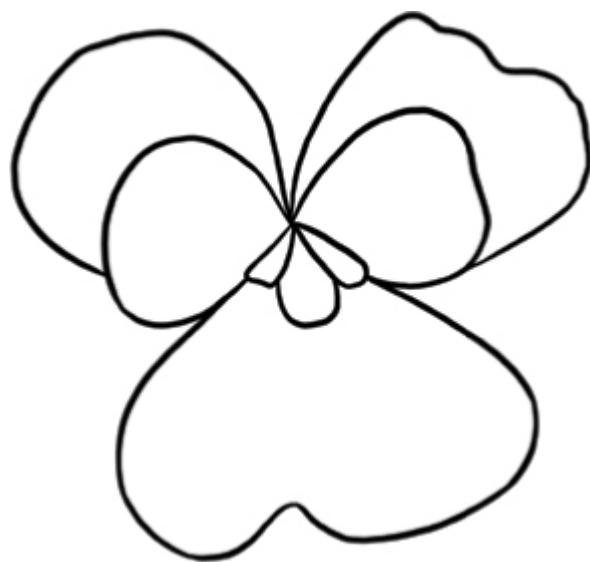
Inspiration—for reference

### TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- White Linen
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle

- 3" (7.6cm) Circular Hoop
- Template (see page 100)

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Template (included for copying on page 100).



**The dark veins are straight stitches of various lengths that radiate out from the center—adding the finishing touch to this stunning realistic flower.**



**1** Place your fabric in the hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the pansy design in the center. Use long and short stitches in shade #3756 to fill the large lower petals.



**2** Use long and short stitches in shade #3747 to fill in the two smaller upper petals.



**3** Use long and short stitches in shade #157 to fill the larger upper petals.



**4** Use small satin stitches in shade BLANC to fill the tiny ovals in the center of the pansy.



Fill in the yellow center with long and short stitches, first adding shade #742 at the top, and then blending in shade #725.

**5**



Add highlights to both sets of upper petals by adding straight stitches to the lower halves in shade #3756.

6



**7** Sprinkle a few straight stitches in shade #155 along the bottom edges of the lower petals.



**8** Use straight stitches in shade #823 to add dark veins to the petals radiating out from the center of the flower.



# Bright Tulip

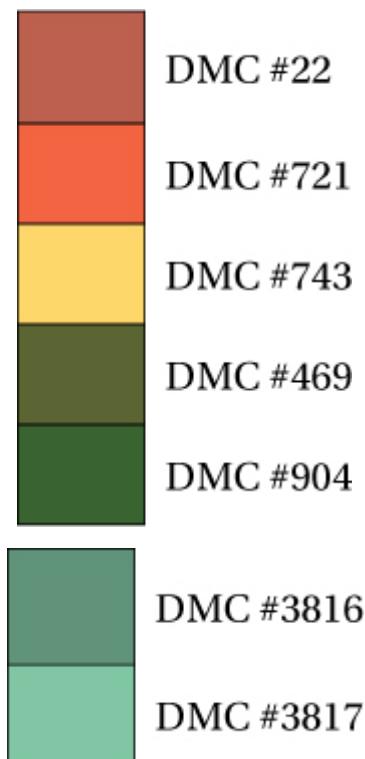


Brightly colored tulips are another beautiful first sign of spring and this project is sure to remind you of that fresh, revitalizing feeling. I snapped a picture of this beautiful grouping of tulips in an urban garden bed and loved the mix of oranges, reds, and yellows on the petals.

I focused this piece on a single tulip and was heavily inspired by the more yellow-tinted petals, but you can create a more detailed piece by drawing a tight composition with multiple blooms and stitching each with different blends of the red, orange, and yellow threads.

## Embroidery Floss\*

Use six strands of the following colors:



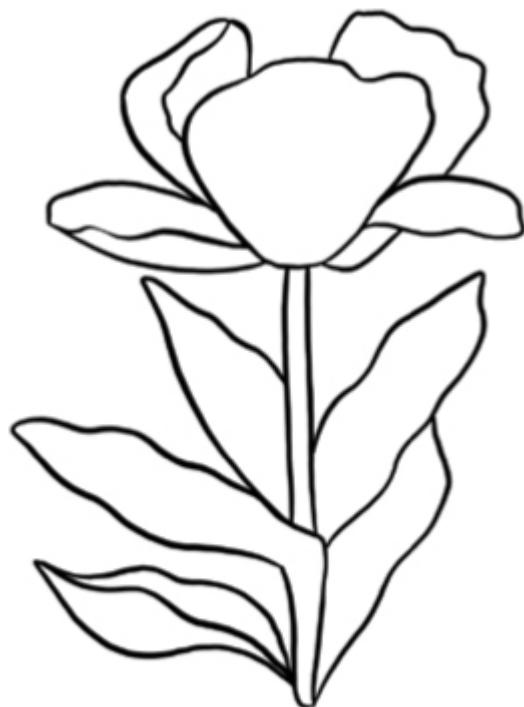
\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- White Linen
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 5" (12.7cm) Circular Hoop
- Template (see page 97)



Template (included for copying on page 97).



**Using horizontal satin stitches in a single color to fill in the stem helps to add a calming balance to this energetic piece.**



**1** Place your fabric in the hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the tulip design in the center. Use straight stitches in shade #22 to mimic the way the orange flecks appear on the petals. Use the reference photo as a guide.



**2** Use long and short stitches to blend in shade #721.



Use long and short stitches to fill in the rest of the flower petals with shade #743.

3



**4** Use horizontal satin stitches to fill the stem with shade #469.



Use long and short stitches in shade #904 to fill in the bases of the leaves and any places you'd like to add dimension and shadow. Use the reference photo as **5** a guide.



**6** Blend in shade #3816 using long and short stitches. Finish the piece by filling in the rest of the leaves with long and short stitch highlights in shade #3817.

**Note:** The thread painting process is a little different for this piece due to the pattern of the tulip —rather than creating large areas of shading, you're trying to convey the speckling on the tulip's petals.



# Cardinal

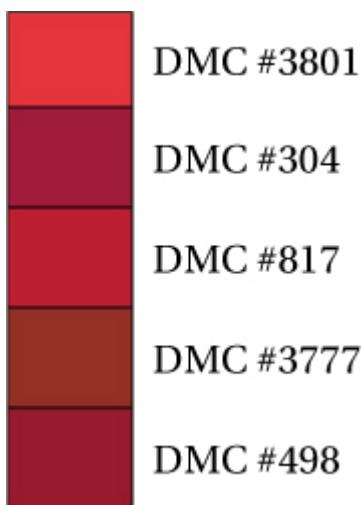


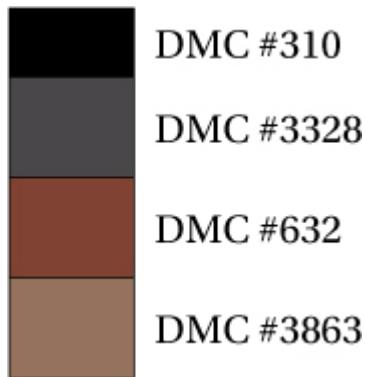
Last winter, I really started to get into bird photography. My family surprised me with an excellent lens for birding and I started going on frequent adventures to see what local birds I could find. One of the first pictures I was proud of was this shot of a bright red cardinal. The colors are so eye-catching and beautiful, I knew I had to try to capture the feathery textures and shading in an embroidered piece.

This piece is larger in scale than the Chickadee Portrait on page 42, so I used six strands of each color rather than a single strand. This quickly fills out the space and creates a fluffy, textured blend of colors. To create a piece with finer, airier stitches, use fewer strands of each color and build up each layer of color with more stitches.

## **Embroidery Floss\***

Use six strands of the following colors:





\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

### **TOOLS AND MATERIALS**

- White Linen
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 6" (15.2cm) Circular Hoop
- Template (see page 100)



Template (included for copying on page 100).



**I separated the eye from the black feathers surrounding the beak so it would be clearly defined—it adds a lot of personality!**



- 1 Place your fabric in the hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the cardinal design on the fabric. Use long and short stitches in shade #3801 to create a feathered texture around the cardinal's beak and eyes.



**2** Use long and short stitches to blend in shade #304. Also use this color to begin thread painting the outer edges of the wing.



Use long and short stitches to blend in shade #817.

**3** Examine the reference photo closely to decide where to add the shades and how to build the feathery texture.



**4** Use long and short stitches to blend in shade #3777. Add some stitches in this shade to the end of the cardinal's tail.



Use long and short stitches to fill in any remaining space **5** on the cardinal with shade #498. Use straight stitches in shade #310 to add accents on the wing, tail, and beak. Use long and short stitches in this shade to fill in the area around the beak. Use a few short satin stitches to create the eye.



**6** Use short, vertical satin stitches in shade #3328 on either side of the black beak line to fill in the beak. Complete your cardinal by split stitching the feet with this same shade.



**7** Use long and short stitches to add shade #632 along the bottom edges of the branch.



Finish your piece by using long and short stitches to fill in the rest of the branch with shade #3863. This will be the highlight along the top of the branch.

8



# Blossoms and Branches

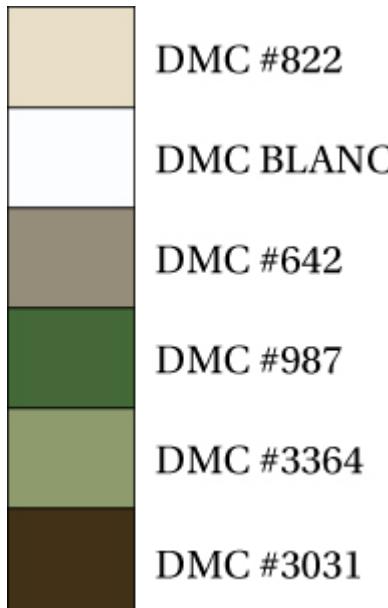


My absolute favorite sign of spring is blossoms suddenly appearing on bare branches. We get long, snowy winters where I live, and I am always eager for this magical moment. I captured this blossoming branch on a spring walk when it was finally getting warm enough to spend more time outside.

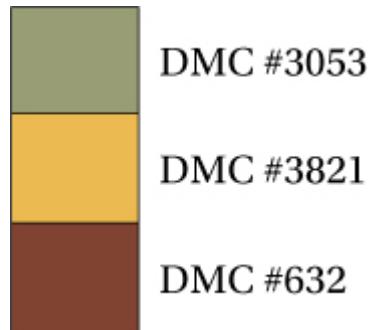
I placed these beautiful white blossoms against white fabric. The thread-painted texture makes them pop off of the cotton despite the similar colors. Keeping everything (including the backing fabric) within a more neutral color range creates a subtle, graceful effect.

## Embroidery Floss\*

Use six strands of the following colors:



Use two strands of the following colors:



\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

#### **TOOLS AND MATERIALS**

- White Linen
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 7" (17.8cm) Circular Hoop
- Template (see page 101)



Template (included for copying on page 101).



**This project reminds me of the flowering trees in my childhood garden—brilliant heralds of spring's fresh start.**



**1** Place your fabric in the hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the design on the fabric. Begin at the base of each petal, using long and short stitches to add shade #822.



**2** Use long and short stitches to blend shade BLANC into the petals, working neatly from the darker center to the edge of each petal.



**3** Use straight stitches in shade #642 to carefully add shadows to the petals where needed. Use the reference photo as your guide.



**4** Add long straight stitches radiating out from each of the flower centers. Add a few in shade #3053 and a few in shade #3821. At the end of each line, add one or two tiny straight stitches in shade #632.



**5** Use long and short stitches to add shade #987 to the base of each leaf, then blend in shade #3364.



**6** Use long and short stitches to add shade #3031 to the left edges of the branches. Then blend in shade #642 to add the highlight and complete your piece.



# Fall Leaf

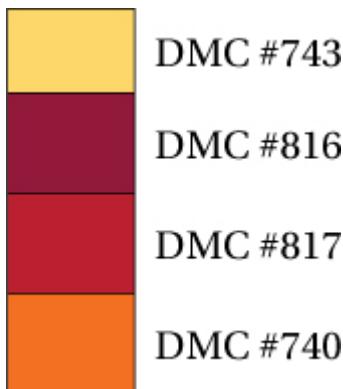


The warm colors of fall are always something to look forward to! This small but beautiful project was inspired by a fallen maple leaf I found tucked between some rocks. You can also use the same design in different thread colors to capture the different seasons of the year.

The line work of the veining is created with split stitches in brilliant yellow, creating smaller sections you can easily fill in with fiery speckled and blended bits of red and orange. The whole piece is very soothing to stitch.

## **Embroidery Floss\***

Use six strands of the following colors:



\*Also see the Thread Color Conversion Chart on page 102



Inspiration—for reference

#### **TOOLS AND MATERIALS**

- White Linen
- Heat-Erasable Fabric Pen
- Embroidery Needle
- 4" (10.2cm) Circular Hoop
- Template (see page 97)



Template (included for copying on page 97).



I chose a few of the strongest colors in my inspiration image to create a piece that is a true celebration of fall.



**1** Place your fabric in the hoop. Use a heat-erasable fabric pen to draw or trace the design on the fabric. Use split stitches in shade #743 to create the veins.



**2** Use long and short stitches to add shade #816. Use the reference image as a guide for color placement.



**3** Blend in shade #817, leaving space for the highlight color. I filled much of the leaf with this color, focusing on the central line of the veining and radiating outward.



**4** Fill the remaining spaces with shade #740, stitching out to the edges of the leaf. These pops of bright orange really bring the leaf to life. Use a split stitch in shade #817 to add the stem. You're done!



**This project is broken into smaller, more approachable parts by adding the split-stitch leaf veins first.**



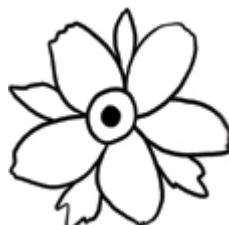
# Templates



These templates are all included true to size. Copy them at 100% to exactly replicate the project as shown in the book or enlarge or reduce the designs as desired to suit your vision.



**Feather Pendant Page 22**



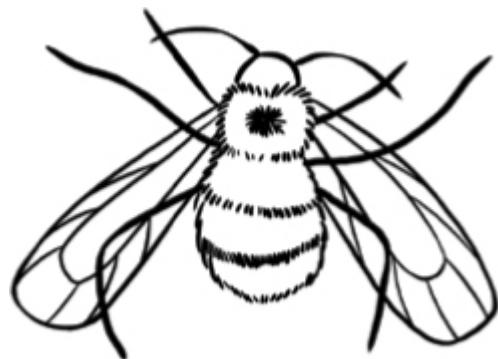
**Forget-Me-Not Pendant Page 26**



**Mushroom Collar Page 38**



**Wild Strawberry Hat Page 58**



**Bumblebee Beret Page 46**



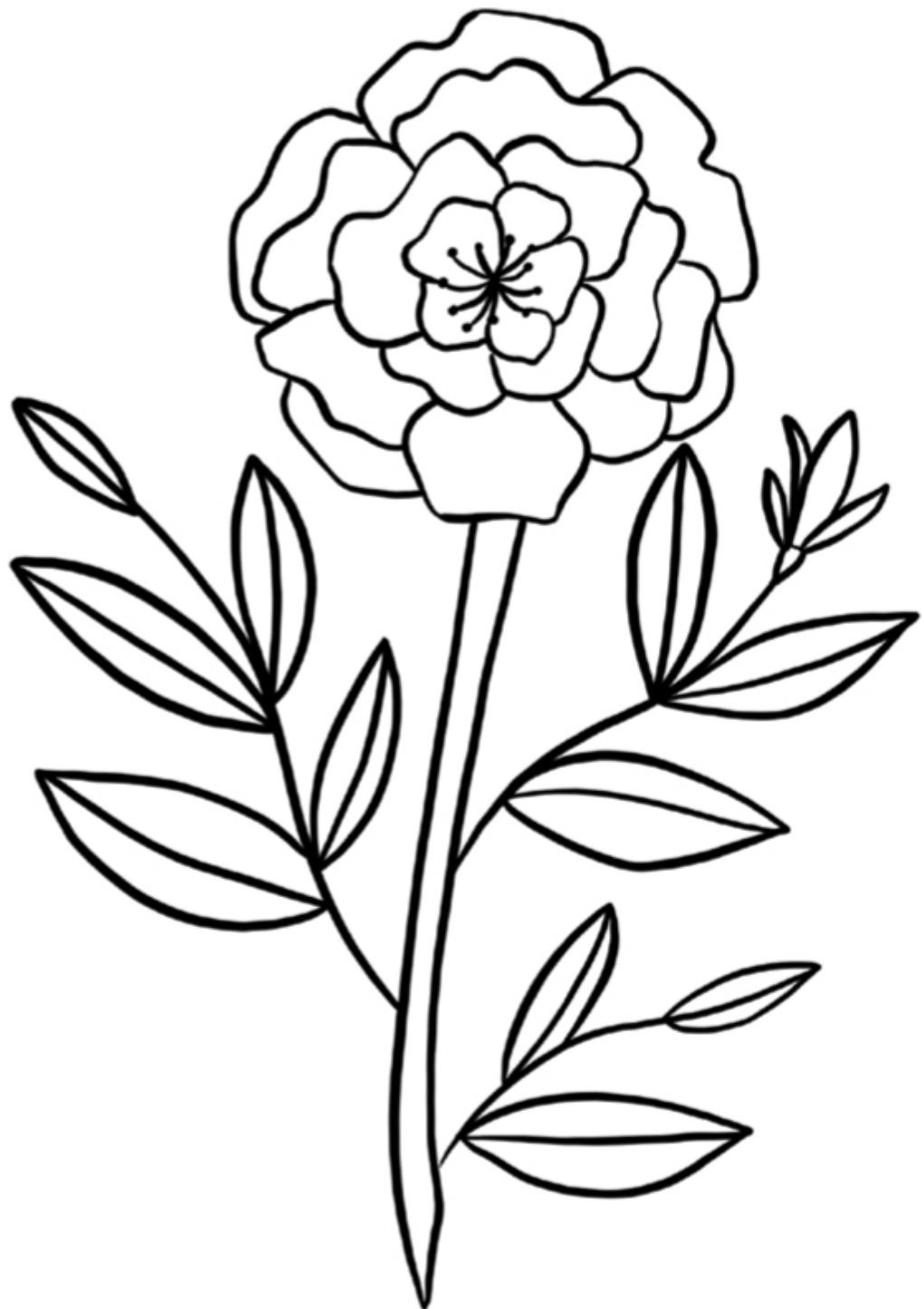
**Crocus Tote Bag Page 54**



**Chickadee Portrait Page 42**



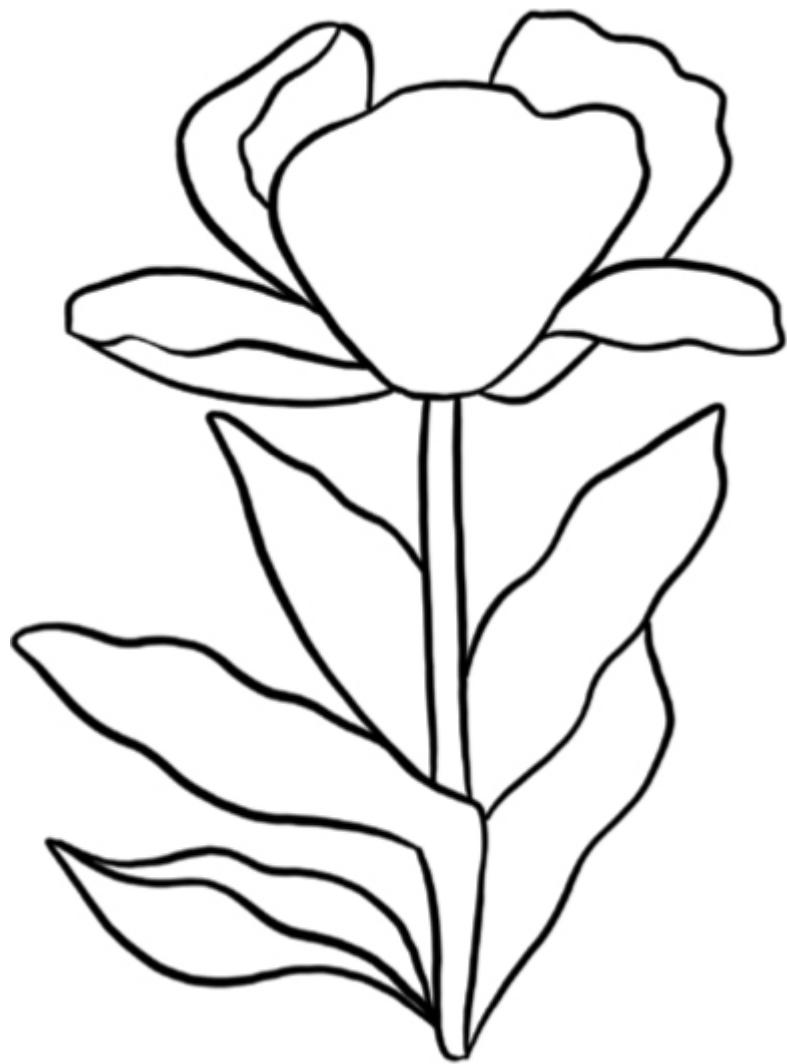
**White Feather Oval Hoop Page 30**



**Red Rose Page 34**



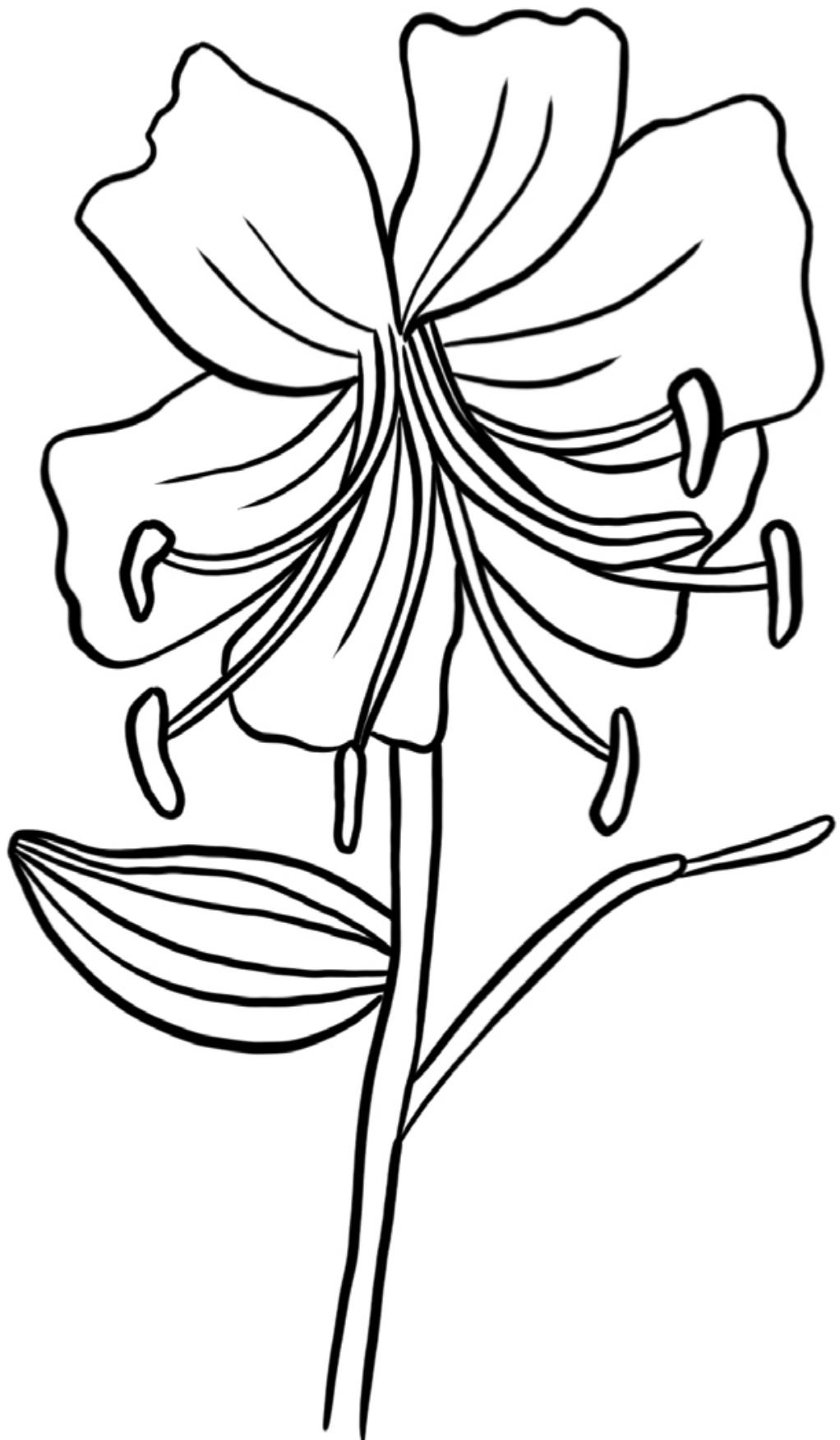
**Monarch Butterfly Bandana Page 62**



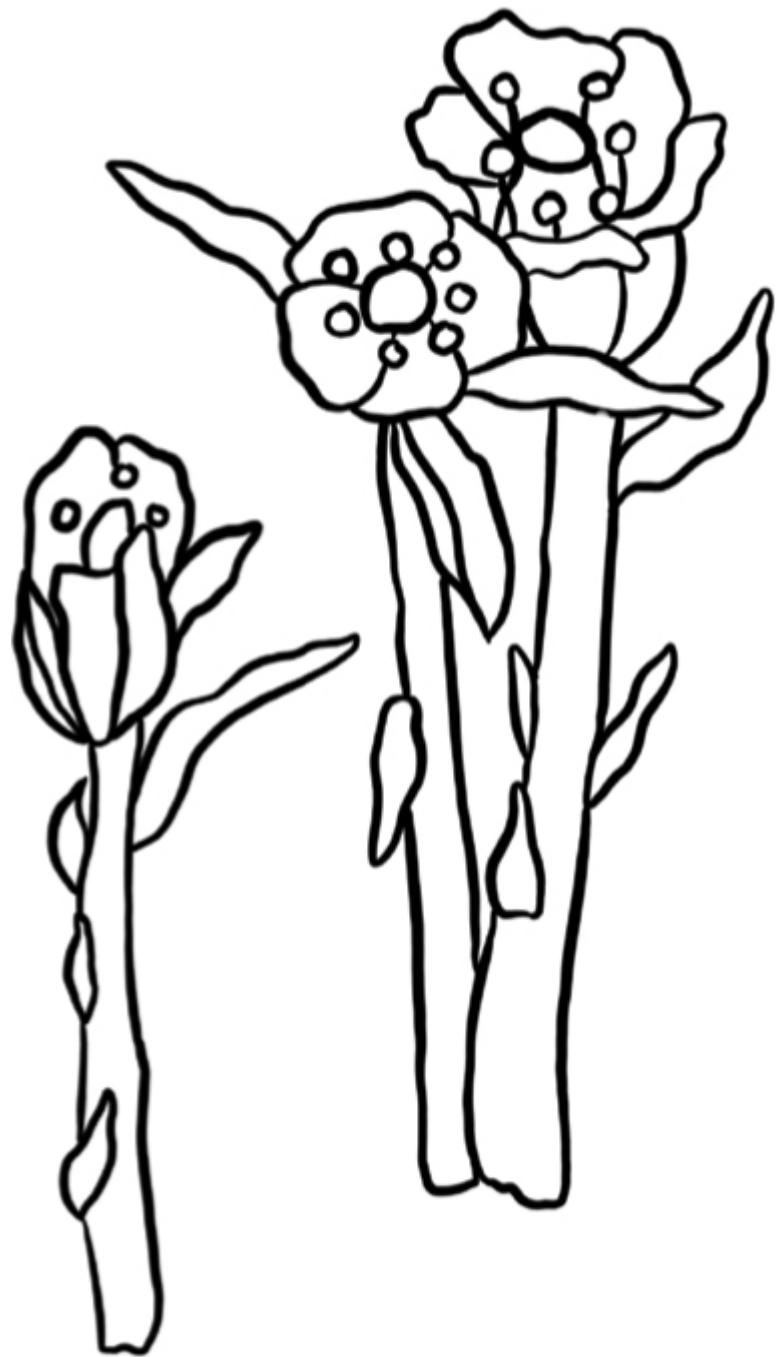
**Bright Tulip Page 78**



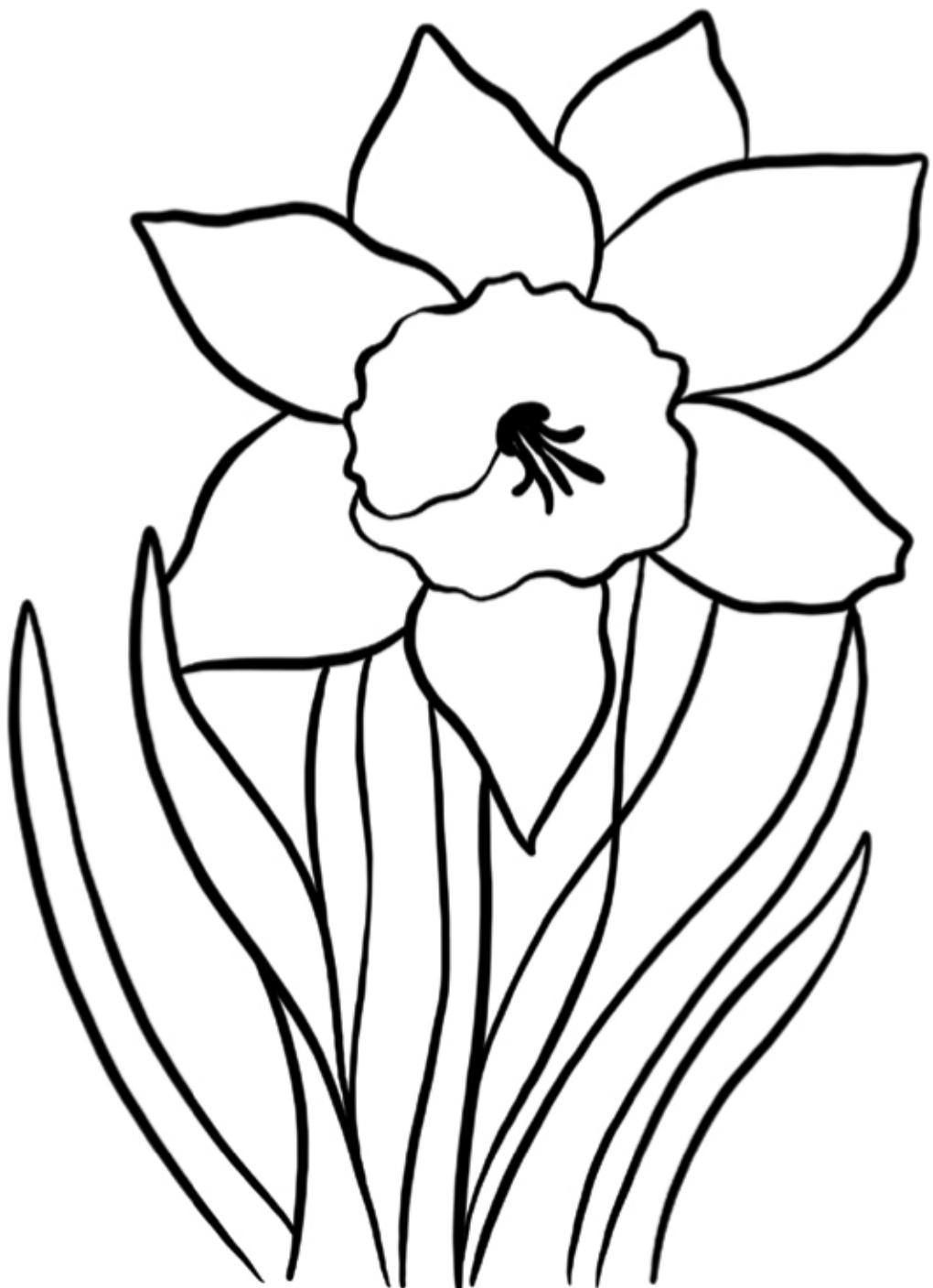
**Fall Leaf Page 90**



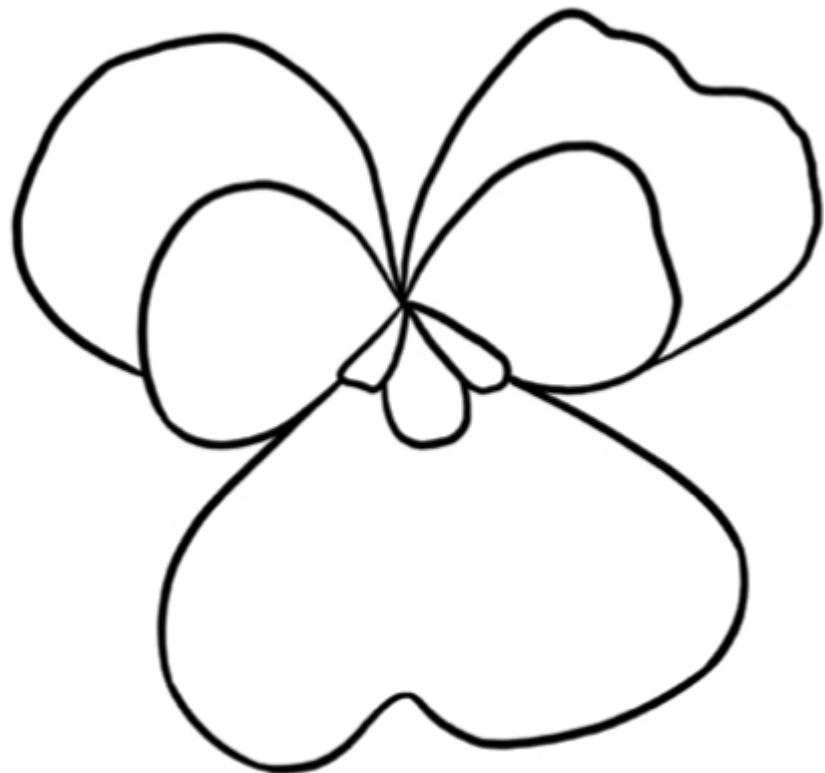
**Tiger Lily Page 50**



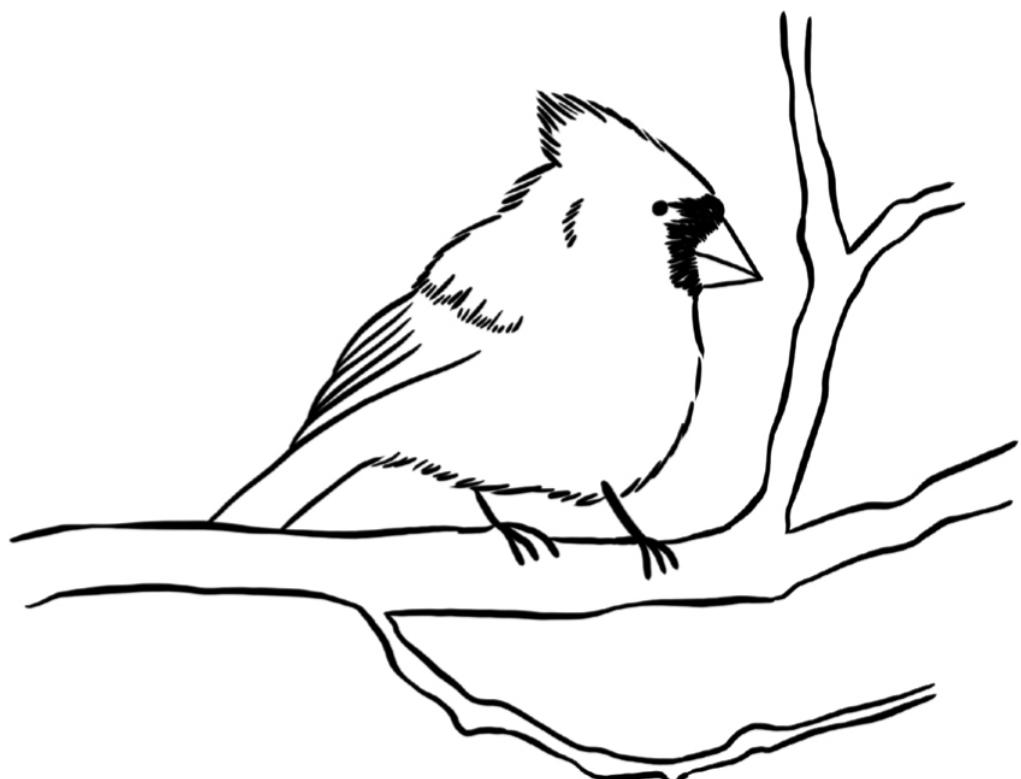
**Ghost Flower Page 70**



**Daffodil Page 66**



**Pansy Page 74**



**Cardinal Page 82**



**Blossoms and Branches Page 86**

# Thread Color Conversion Chart

Color representations are approximate.

DMC	ANCHOR	COLOR NAME	DMC	ANCHOR	COLOR NAME
BLANC	2	White	815	22/43/44	Medium Garnet
ECRU	387	Ecru	816	20/1005	Garnet
22	NA	Alizarian	817	13	Very Dark Coral Red
28	NA	Medium Light Eggplant	822	390	Light Beige Gray
153	95/103	Lilac	823	127/152	Dark Navy Blue
155	1030	Medium Dark Blue Violet	840	1084	Medium Beige Brown
157	120	Very Light Cornflower Blue	842	376/388/1080	Very Light Beige Brown
163	877	Green	900	333	Dark Burnt Orange
167	898	Very Dark Yellow Beige	902	22/72/897	Very Dark Garnet
301	1049	Medium Mahogany	904	258	Very Dark Parrot Green
304	1006	Medium Red	905	257	Dark Parrot Green
307	289	Lemon	975	355/371	Dark Golden Brown
310	403	Black	986	246	Very Dark Forest Green
318	399	Light Steel Gray	987	244/245	Dark Forest Green
321	19/47	Red	989	241/242	Forest Green
351	10	Coral	993	185	Very Light Aquamarine
413	236	Dark Pewter Gray	3031	905	Very Dark Mocha Brown
414	235	Dark Steel Gray	3033	391	Very Light Mocha Brown
444	290	Dark Lemon	3053	261	Green Gray
469	267	Avocado Green	3328	1024	Dark Salmon
472	253/254	Ultra Light Avocado Green	3340	329	Medium Apricot
498	799	Dark Red	3341	328	Apricot
522	860	Fern Green	3345	268	Dark Hunter Green
580	281/517	Dark Moss Green	3347	266	Medium Yellow Green
581	280/281	Moss Green	3364	260	Pine Green
632	936	Ultra Very Dark Desert Sand	3747	120	Very Light Blue Violet
642	392	Dark Beige Gray	3756	1037	Ultra Very Light Baby Blue
647	1040	Medium Beaver Gray	3761	928	Light Sky Blue
648	900	Light Beaver Gray	3777	1015	Very Dark Terra Cotta
701	227	Light Green	3781	904/1050	Dark Mocha Brown
721	324/925	Medium Orange Spice	3787	273	Dark Brown Gray
722	323	Light Orange Spice	3801	1098	Very Dark Melon
725	305	Medium Light Topaz	3808	675/1068	Ultra Very Dark Turquoise
733	280	Medium Olive Green	3816	876	Celadon Green
738	361/366/367/942	Very Light Tan	3817	875	Light Celadon Green
740	316	Tangerine	3820	306	Dark Straw
742	303	Light Tangerine	3821	305	Straw
743	301/302	Medium Yellow	3823	386	Ultra Pale Yellow
745	300	Light Pale Yellow	3837	100/112	Ultra Dark Lavender
762	234	Very Light Pearl Gray	3852	306	Very Dark Straw
809	121/130	Delft Blue	3863	379/677	Medium Mocha Beige



## About the Author



Sarah Godfrey is an embroidery artist, illustrator, marketer, and designer with a passion for color, texture, and the beauty of nature. She is the owner of The Lake of Spring online shop, where she offers downloadable embroidery patterns, art prints, finished hoops, and one-of-a-kind upcycled garments. In 2020, she was selected as the Artist in Residence at the Schneider Haus National Historic Site (Kitchener, Ontario), where her solo exhibition focused on her hand embroidery, block printing, and illustration work. To see more of Sarah's art, visit her on her website ([www.TheLakeOfSpring.com](http://www.TheLakeOfSpring.com)), Etsy (thelakeofspring), or Instagram (@thelakeofspring) and pick up a copy of her first book, ***Organza Hoop Art***:

***Embroidery Techniques and Projects for Sheer Stitching.*** She lives in Ontario, Canada, with her husband and son.



To my husband, Nick, and my son, Ellis. Thank you, Nick, for always helping with step-by-step photography when needed, and thank you both for your endless love and support. You inspire me every day!

# Let Your Embroidery Bloom!



The perfect source of inspiration for new embroidery artists, *Beginner's Guide to Embroidery and Needle Painting* will show you how to capture the beauty of nature through stunning stitches! Featuring 18 nature-inspired embroidery projects—including pendant necklaces, hoops, clothes, and accessories—you'll not only learn how to make gorgeous works of realistic embroidery art, but you'll also learn how to design your very own patterns. From finding your subject and taking a photo to making it into a line-art template, thread painting, and more, this skill-building guide will take your embroidery to the next level!

## What's Inside:



- **Detailed overviews of tools, materials, and how to design your own original patterns**
- **A stitch guide featuring essential technique tutorials**
- **18 realistic embroidery projects with birds, flowers, mushrooms, and more that slowly progress in difficulty**
- **Ready-to-use pattern templates for each featured project**
- **A helpful thread color conversion chart**

Sarah Godfrey is an embroidery artist, illustrator, and designer with a passion for the beauty of nature. She is the author of *Organza Hoop Art* and the owner of The Lake of Spring online shop. To see more of Sarah's art, visit her on her website ([www.TheLakeOfSpring.com](http://www.TheLakeOfSpring.com)), on Etsy ([thelakeofspring](https://www.etsy.com/shop/thelakeofspring)), or on Instagram (@thelakeofspring).



**Sarah Godfrey's new book is filled with gorgeous nature-inspired patterns and instructions that demystify the thread-painting process.**

—Beth Stackhouse, author of *Lovely Little Embroideries*

**Both beginner and experienced embroiderers will find inspiration in the stunning botanical projects.**

—Alexandra Stratkotter, author of *The Embroidered Closet*

**Sarah's detailed guide is the perfect resource for any stitcher looking to grow their skillset and celebrate nature.**

—Olivia Skelhorne-Gross, author of *Round & Round the Garden: Nursery Rhymes and Songs*

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