

WINTER 2021 | ISSUE NO. 3

CHURCHMOUSE YARNS & TEAS

FRESH START

A SLOW AND STEADY BEGINNING



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The snowy scenes in this issue were photographed in the Cascade Mountains, just a couple of hours east of Bainbridge Island. We're so grateful our photography team was able to travel to this beautiful location while keeping safe and healthy in their 'bubble'.

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**When things fall apart...
when we lose something
dear to us...this is the time
when the natural warmth
of tenderness, the warmth
of empathy and kindness,
are just waiting to be
uncovered...**

-PEMA CHÖDRÖN



A NOTE FROM KIT

Happy New Year, dear friends!

If, as they say, hindsight is 2020, how wise we all must be as the calendar turns over!

I, for one, have learned more in this most revelatory of years than at any other time in my adult life. I've discovered strengths and confronted weaknesses. I've had more substantive conversations, been pressed harder by friends and teachers, had more time to reflect, and had more opportunities to uncover what Pema Chödrön calls "natural warmth".

This year, we'll be looking at ways our marvelous team can put

what we've learned into purposeful practice, turning "resolutions" into "projects," "projects" into "actions," and "actions" into "results." We're determined to walk forward with renewed commitment in that characteristically "slow and steady" (some might even say glacial!) Churchmouse way.

We're looking forward to a reset. While a new year may not be a panacea (after all, many of our toughest challenges will be coming right along with us!), each new day is a chance to take a deep breath and say, "Yes, let's go on." And, "Let's have some fun!"

Warmest regards,


Kit Hutchin



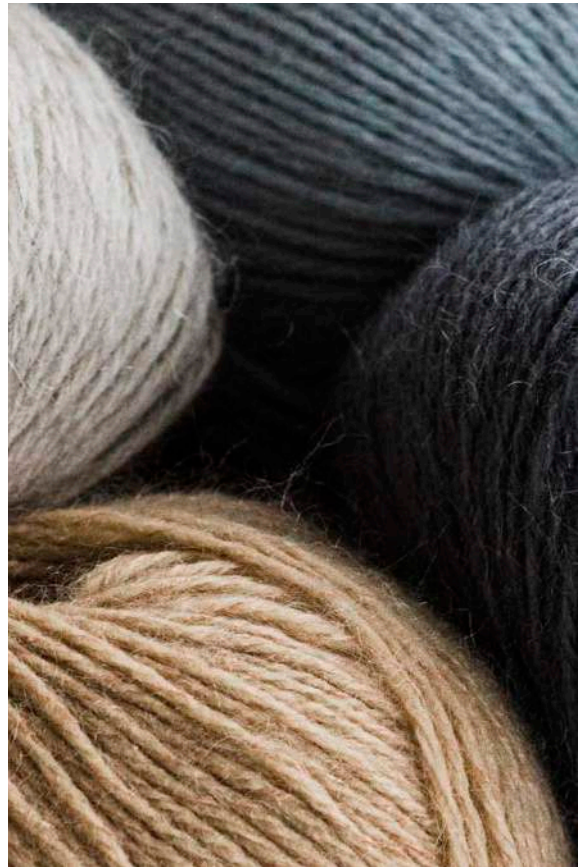
WARMTH

Unless we're building a snowman or donning a pair of skis, we tend to not spend too much time outside in the winter. After all, it's cold and (especially on our rainwashed island) damp! And yet, with a few clever layers and the natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest, we can feel quite warm.





[Crazy Big Color-Blocked Muffler](#) (free Churchmouse pattern)



With the ongoing pandemic, the safest way to meet up with friends is either through a video call or outside, at a distance and wearing a mask. Over the course of 2020, so many Mice and friends of Mice kept their spirits up with socially distant picnics, walks, and small knitting sessions in the backyard. Then, the cold weather arrived and those safe, outdoor gatherings became harder to coordinate. (It's tough to knit or

crochet with chilly fingers...)

But, as knitters and Pacific Northwest residents, we have a few handy, winter-ready tools in our arsenal! First, of course, are all the hand-knit sweaters and wraps and socks and hats in our wardrobes. Second—the woolly wools in our stash. And third, our well-honed, year-round PNW instinct to layer up.

We depend on homey projects, smart layering pieces, and yarns that naturally insulate. For picnics and knitting meet-ups where we might be sitting still for a spell, wool sweaters and big wraps, fingerless gloves and warm socks are all necessities. We've also filled a hot water bottle (tucked, of course, in a hand-knit cozy) and held it in our laps for a long-lasting heat source.

On winter walks and other active endeavors, we usually tote along a few extra accessories—mittens to go over fingerless gloves, a long muffler to double up around the neck, another hat just in case. With all our woolens protecting us from the elements, we can step outside and safely enjoy each other's company throughout the winter.




[Earflap Hat](#), [Reversible Knitting Mitts](#) (both free Churchmouse patterns);
Churchmouse Classics [‘Better-Than-Basic Pullover.’](#)



Churchmouse Classics [‘Thinking Cap.’](#)



A blurred background image showing a snowflake resting on a green leaf. The snowflake is white and has a complex, multi-pointed structure. The leaf is green and has a prominent vein. The background is out of focus, showing other parts of the leaf and the snowflake.

**To appreciate
the beauty of
a snowflake,
it is necessary
to stand out in
the cold.**

- ANONYMOUS



Churchmouse Classics [‘Shoulder Cozy’](#); [Reversible Knitting Mitts](#)

And then, after a few hours spent playing in the snow (or, more likely here on Bainbridge Island, splashing through rain puddles) and catching up with friends at a distance, we head home and put on the kettle. Really, is there any better feeling than melting away the cold with a steamy cup of tea or cocoa?



Churchmouse At Home [‘Hot Water Bottle Cozy.’](#)
(free Churchmouse pattern)

A NOTE ON INSULATION

The human inventions that keep us warm—like a down coat or polar fleece—all mimic the natural methods of insulation found among our favorite animal friends! Many wool-producing animals—sheep, goats, alpacas, yaks—have a double coat. The outer coat is made up of long, coarse, water-resistant hairs, protecting the animal from the elements. The soft, short hairs of the fine inner coat trap heat beneath the outer coat, keeping the animal warm—from snowy mountain pastures to damp and drizzly islands!

Yarns that use these natural fibers take on many of their insulating characteristics—woolen-spun yarns like Brooklyn Tweed *Shelter* (below) in particular! In a woolen-spun strand, the fibers are spread out evenly and scattered in many directions (i.e. not lying smoothing in one direction, all together). As a result, they're light and full of air (like that poofy down coat), fluffy and maybe a little hairy. Woolen-spun yarns also tend to make use of fiber from both the coarse outer coat and the soft inner coat. This creates a wonderfully insulating yarn with a visible texture and a more 'home-spun appearance.' ✨



Brooklyn Tweed [Shelter](#).





HUES & VALUES

At Churchmouse, our color palettes all seem to be built on a foundation of classic black, snowy and creamy whites, and soft grey. Timeless and trend transcending, these muted tones are always in style—and help to bring seasonal accent colors to life! Just think of how lichen glows against rain-streaked stone, or the wonderful contrast of red berries on bare branches.

We usually knit our wardrobe staples in black, white, grey, and other neutrals. When we want to add a bit more color, we have a few options at our needle tips—blending colors together, using them side-by-side in stripes or blocks, and playing with stranded colorwork motifs.



Baggu [Duck Bag](#).



Churchmouse Classics [‘Better-Than-Basic Pullover.’](#)



Brooklyn Tweed [Shelter](#); Churchmouse Classics ['Better-Than-Basic Pullover.'](#)



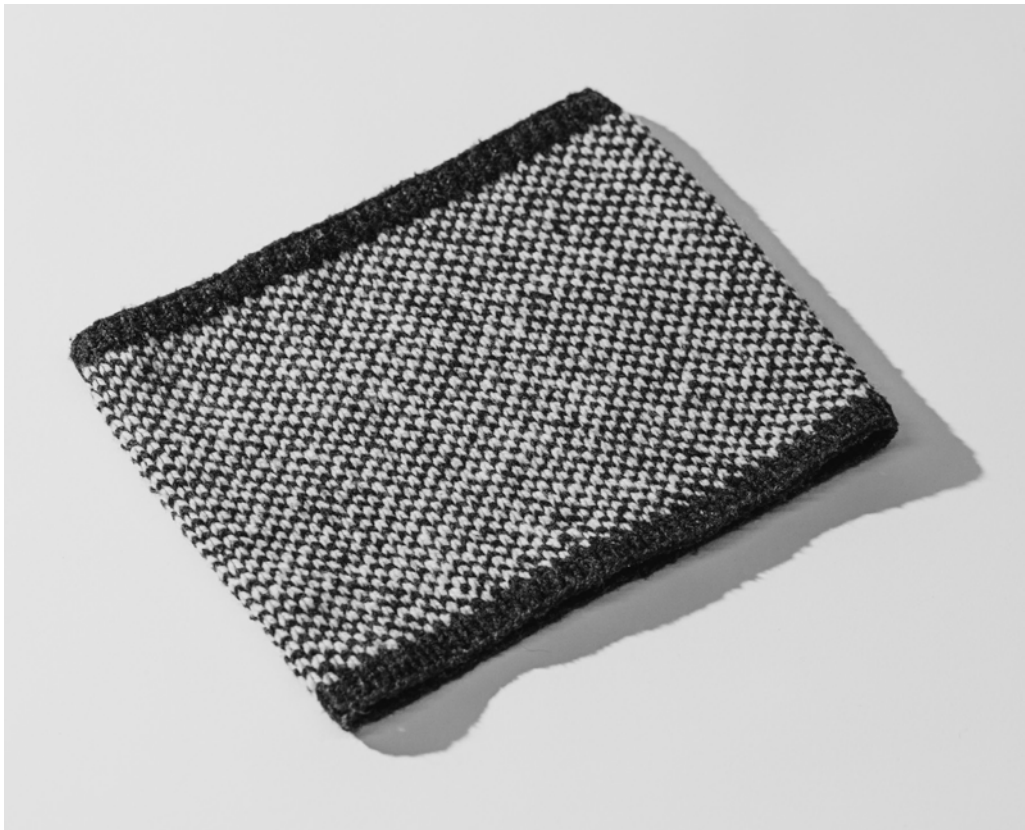


MARLING

Marling yarn colors together is a lot like blending paints. You can create a different color by combining two (or three or four...) strands of yarn! While tonal colors add depth to your fabric, blending contrasting colors can deliver a more tweedy look. It's fun to mix colors together that might not seem to 'go'—try it and see what happens! Disparate colors can naturally meld into something new. To get an idea of how marled colors will look, take your two or more strands and twist them together.

STRANDING

With stranded colorwork, you can play with colors side-by-side. Tonal colors make for subtle shifts, while crossing the color wheel creates striking contrasts. The Churchmouse design team has a few tricks for finding dynamic striping sequences and compelling color combos. To get a sense of proportion, use colored pencils and graph paper, flood cells in a spreadsheet, or wind yarn strands around paint sticks or cards.



[Simple Colorwork Cowl](#) (free Churchmouse pattern).



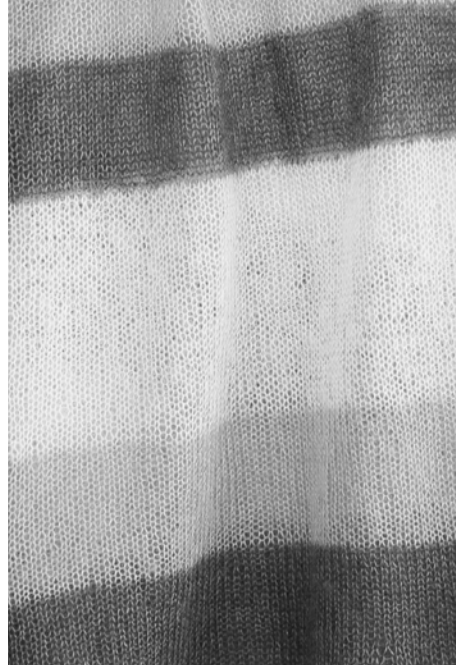
[Simple Colorwork Cowl](#) (free Churchmouse pattern).



SWATCHING

All of these fun methods—from twirling yarn strands together to using graph paper—are also great for sketching out stripe and color-block ideas! But the most effective method of all, of course, is to knit a swatch. It's really the best way to see what you're getting into! And once you're

done, be sure to hold onto your swatches—even if, in the end, you decide to go with a different colorway. They'll remind you of the color combinations you've tried and liked—or disliked—when you're ready to start your next colorful project. ✨



From top, left to right: Churchmouse Classics [Vintage Crocheted Scarf](#);
Churchmouse Classics [Pretty Perfect Square](#);
Brooklyn Tweed [Shelter](#); Churchmouse Classics [Basic Sock](#)

SWEETNESS & LIGHT

We like to take every chance to knit thoughtful gifts for our friends and families. And Valentine's Day is a perfect opportunity! A light, whimsical little holiday, we celebrate it with friendship in mind just as much as (or more than) romance.

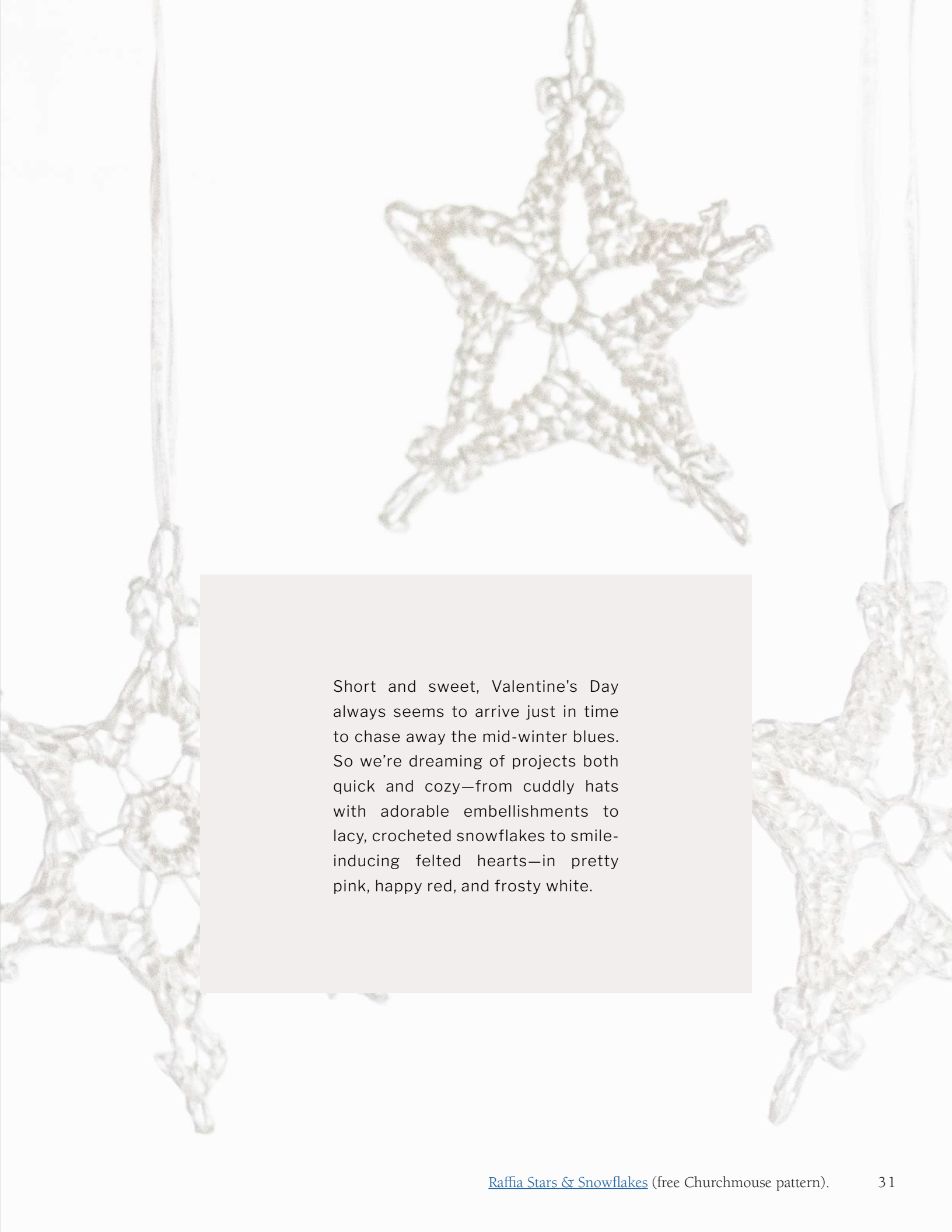
Valentine's Day is the perfect excuse (not that we need much of one) to send out care packages filled with encouraging notes, delicious chocolate confections, and hugs and kisses in handmade form. Just thinking about it, we have the warm and fuzzies!



Churchmouse At Home [‘Felted Gingerbread Ornaments,’](#) heart version.







Short and sweet, Valentine's Day always seems to arrive just in time to chase away the mid-winter blues. So we're dreaming of projects both quick and cozy—from cuddly hats with adorable embellishments to lacy, crocheted snowflakes to smile-inducing felted hearts—in pretty pink, happy red, and frosty white.



In fact, we've revisited our Churchmouse At Home 'Felted Gingerbread Ornaments' and made felted heart ornaments in red and pink and white! Decorated with cute buttons, bright ribbon, and hand-stitched motifs or messages, they'd make quite the heartfelt—see what we did there—valentine, don't you think?

A feel-good symbol all year long, we're imagining these hearts strung along a garland, dangling from a mobile, stitched on as a patch on your favorite jacket—added to your holiday *Woolly Wreath* as an adorable decoration! And slipped into a card or envelope, these handmade hearts are a wonderful way to let someone know you're thinking of them. ✨



[Super-Quick Hat](#) (free Churchmouse pattern) with [Felted Gingerbread Heart](#).



Churchmouse Classics [‘Studio Beret.’](#)





[Tea Bowl](#); Smith Teamaker [Wellness Teas](#).

SLEEPY TEAS

By John Koval

A few years ago, I was working in the shop and saw a visitor in the tea area holding a box of Smith Tea's "Meadow." When she saw me, she asked, "This has chamomile in it. Will this help me sleep?"

She looked really tired. Poor woman.

I answered, "Yes, it will. If you prepare it properly." She asked for the formula. I laid it out:

"First, put on the kettle, pick a mug and fill it with hot tap water to warm it, unwrap the tea bag, and have a seat. While the kettle heats up, turn off all blue screens and repeat to yourself this phrase:

"The day is over. What's done is done. What's not done is not done. Let it go."

"Keep thinking about that until the kettle boils. Remember, no blue screens—TV, phone, or computer.

Dump out the tap water, put in the bag, pour on the boiling water, cover the mug with a saucer or little plate, and set the timer for five minutes.

"During this time, you have another chance to get into the here and now. No need to think about anything else. You can plan for tomorrow in the morning. Your tea is steeping. Your day is done.

"When the timer dings, remove the bag, bring the cup to the table and sit up close to it. Smith's blend has a fabulous comforting aroma! Focus, as the zen masters do, on the far edge of the mug. Be in the here and now. Finish the tea. Go right to bed with a boring book."

She promised to try it.

I congratulated her, and said: "If it doesn't work the first night, it will soon enough."

SMITH WELLNESS TEA

Few people know that in the 1970's, Steve Smith supplied herbs to health food stores, starting with Oregon peppermint. From there he went into black and green teas: he started Stash Tea, sold it in 1993, then started Tazo Tea, sold it 1999, and then in 2009, created his eponymous line which we all know and love.

Ravi Kroesen, now head teamaker and master blender of Smith Tea, recently came across an old notebook of Steve's with notes on designing a series of healthy teas. Ravi showed Kim, Steve's wife and co-founder of the tea company, who shared with Ravi that a Wellness Collection was always part of their vision. It was a sign he was on the right path and Ravi, who also had a great deal of herbal experience over the years, decided to continue the effort.

So now, welcome Smith Wellness Teas. A delicious way to search for peace.

BLEND NO. 15: SOOTHE SAYER

This herbal infusion is a comforting blend of peppermint, ginger, elderberry, nutmeg, licorice, cacao, wild cherry bark, black pepper, and echinacea. With tasting notes of after-dinner mint, eucalyptus, and hot honey, [Soothe Sayer](#) is a deliciously soothing tea.

BLEND NO. 40: LULLABY

The perfect brew for a quiet evening, [Lullaby](#) is a relaxing, caffeine-free blend of floral lemongrass and lavender, golden chamomile, lemon balm, licorice root, and soothing ashwagandha. It has tasting notes of lemon curd, apple sauce, and sage.

BLEND NO. 54: GOLDEN LIGHT

The gold standard of turmeric teas, this vibrant infusion is a blend of black pepper, lemon, cardamom, and smooth sarsaparilla. With tasting notes of vanilla frosting, lemon snap, and white oak, [Golden Light](#) is an excellent way to start your day.

If you are pregnant, breast-feeding, or have health issues, please consult your doctor before consuming any herbs in quantity.

EST. 1852
SMITH
TEAMAKER



SMALL BATCHES



All you need is love. But
a little chocolate now
and then doesn't hurt.

- CHARLES M. SCHULZ

EASY BLENDER POTS DE CRÈME

This simple recipe is a scrumptious little treat, whether you serve it with pure chocolatey goodness or give it a delectable twist! It's a cinch to add a personal flourish. Perhaps a touch of cinnamon in the chocolate, with a cinnamon heart candy perched atop the whipped cream? Or add a dash of your favorite liqueur with a garnish to match!

Makes 2-4 servings: two if it's 'the main event,' four if it's 'just a little something' after a rich meal. It's an easy recipe to double. Keeps 3-4 days, covered with plastic wrap and refrigerated—a nice thing to keep on hand!

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup *Chocolat Vitale* drinking chocolate mix or your favorite chocolate chips (save a few pinches for garnish)

1 egg, at room temperature

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup half & half cream (or whole milk for a lighter version)

Lightly sweetened whipped cream for garnish, optional

In the blender jar, whiz chocolate and egg 'til just blended. Heat cream to boiling (the hot cream melts the chocolate and cooks the egg). With blender running, pour hot cream slowly (a funnel will help) into chocolate mixture through center of lid, whizzing until well blended.

Pour neatly into serving dishes, glasses, or cups, dividing evenly into desired number of servings. Refrigerate 'til set (at least 2 hours).

To serve, whip cream to soft peaks, adding a teaspoon of sugar if desired. Top pots de crème with a dollop of whipped cream and sprinkle with a dusting of *Chocolat Vitale*. That's it. Seriously.





SITE SPECIFICS

Our marvelous team works every day to make the churchmouseyarns.com experience as smooth and helpful as possible. To that end, we'd love to introduce you to several useful features on our website (if you haven't discovered them already!).

[OUR STORY](#)

The tale of how Churchmouse came to be.

[UPDATES](#)

Up-to-date Churchmouse news, including holiday shipping estimates.

[FINDERS](#)

Use these little tools to search for just the right [yarn](#), [tea](#), or [needles](#)!

[MOUSE POINTS](#)

Our rewards program! Every purchase brings you points. Sign up. Refer a friend.

[USEFUL TECHNIQUES](#)

Tried and true techniques that you'll find in *Churchmouse Classics* patterns.

[FAQS](#)

A collection of our most frequently asked questions, sorted by category.

Don't forget to follow us on Instagram and Facebook, and join our spirited group on Ravelry. Remember, if you ever want to get in touch, please write to us at contact@churchmouseyarns.com or give us a call at 206.780.2686. We love to hear from you!

Join our mailing list (at the bottom of our webpage). You'll get our emails and the next issue of this newsletter. ✨



[Tea Bowl!](#); [Chocolat Vitale](#)