

bumble bee sewing tutorial

with kata golda handmade



MATERIALS:

Be creative here! Don't have the felt I am recommending? Try cutting up that old sweater that you accidentally felted in the dryer. Out of embroidery floss? Use regular thread. No stuffing? Try cotton balls or shredded felt scraps. You can also reach out to me to purchase a kit for this project or buy craft supplies from many sellers on Etsy.

- wool felt [yellow, black & white]
- cotton embroidery floss [black & yellow]
- sharp scissors
- sewing needle, straight pin
- glue stick
- stuffing
- dried beans (optional)

NOTES:

- Basic stitches are described on page 3.
- Embroidery floss (thread) is 6-ply and the plies are easily separated. Most patterns use 1-3 plies. Long strands can get easily tangled; cutting them to 18" helps prevent this. It helps to separate the pieces from the center of the strand (instead of at the end) and pull apart very gently.
- If your thread becomes too short while you are sewing, attach a new piece of thread to the end with a knot. Tie it as close to the felt as possible and try to hide the knot.
- Keep stitches even and hide knots.
- Felt is very flexible to work with; it can be pulled and stretched as needed, and because it doesn't fray you can trim as you work.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Print the template on page 4 and cut out the pieces. If you wish to make a bee family, print one template at 100%, one at 75% and one at 50%. Place the pieces on the felt and cut out the felt shapes with fabric scissors. (a)
2. Lay out the two body side pieces, flipping one over so that they are mirror images of each other. Place a small amount of glue on the back of each eye and stick one on each body side piece. Center each eye near the rounded side of the teardrop shape. (b)
3. Separate 2 plies of embroidery floss from the 6-ply strand. Using 2-ply black thread, whip stitch each eye to the side body and secure with a knot on the back side.
4. Fold one antenna piece in half lengthwise. With black, 2-ply thread (knotted at the end), blanket-stitch the edges together. Pull stitches tight so that the antennae curl and secure with a knot. Repeat with second antenna piece. (c)
5. In the middle of the center body piece, "draw" a smile using a double running stitch with 2-ply black thread. Knot the loose threads on the wrong side of the felt. (d)



INSTRUCTIONS, cont.:

6. Line one pointy end of the center body piece to the pointy end of one of the side body pieces. The facial features should be facing out (knotted side facing in) and the smile should be facing up (unless, of course, you prefer a frown). Hold the center body piece to the perimeter of the entire side body piece so you can visualize which direction you will be stitching - you will stitch up the bee's "back" (not towards it's "belly").
7. With 2-ply yellow thread knotted at the end, start at the pointy end with your knot facing in and begin to blanket stitch the center body piece to the side body piece up the "back" of the bee. After you have stitched about $\frac{3}{4}$ ", insert the wings underneath the center body piece, making sure the tips point back towards the tail, and that the wing piece is centered beneath the centerpiece. Pin wings in place. (e)
8. Continue the blanket-stitch to secure the wings to the body, taking care to capture all 3 layers of felt in each stitch.
9. When you reach the eye, directly in front of the wing, insert the squared edge of an antenna between the center body piece and the side body piece (you can see placement in photo f). Continue the blanket-stitch, being sure to capture all 4 layers of felt when stitching the antenna. Stitch to the end of the first center body piece and secure with a knot.
10. With the second side body piece, repeat steps 6-9 (then remove pin), but when you reach the bee's belly, pause and leave just enough of a gap in the seam to allow room to add stuffing. Don't cut your thread yet; just tuck it and the needle aside for step 12.
11. Fill the bee with stuffing so that the stitches are taut and the seams do not gap. (To help your bee sit upright you may want to add a bit of weighted material, such as dry beans, to the belly area). (f)
12. To close the gap, pick up from where you left off in step 10 and continue the blanket stitch to the end of the tail and secure with a knot. To hide your knot, pull the needle through the stuffing. Trim the strand as close to the felt as you can, it will sink into the stuffing and disappear.
13. To finish your bee, add the stripes by dabbing a little glue on the back of each. Then, wrap both stripes under the wings and around the belly. The stripes may be long and need to be trimmed. Using 2-ply black thread knotted at the end, attach the stripes with a running stitch down the center of each stripe and secure with a knot and hide your knot like you did in the previous step. (g)
14. Enjoy your new bee! If you want to make a mobile, make a few more in different sizes and hang from an embroidery ring or from a stick.



ABOUT KATA GOLDA:

Alison Kaplan is the creative force behind Kata Golda, a craft studio in the mossy seaside town of Port Townsend, WA. Kata Golda is a flourishing business that explores crafts such as needlework, letterpress printing, bookbinding, block printing, hand-thrown pottery, hand-dyed textiles, and jewelry making. Alison finds inspiration in the woods, farmlands, and beaches of her Pacific Northwest wonderland. See her work at www.katagolda.com.

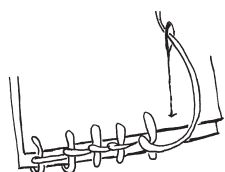




KATA GOLDA'S GUIDE TO BASIC STITCHES:

BLANKET STITCH

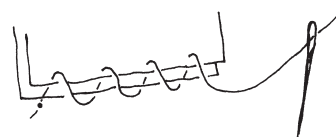
Note: these instructions are much easier to follow with your actual needle and thread in hand. The stitch is simple, the instructions sound complicated.



- Thread your needle and tie a knot at the tail.
- Starting between the sandwiched pieces, poke the needle through your top layer of felt about 1/8" from the edge. The knot will be between the two layers of felt where it will not be seen.
- Bring the thread around the edge of the two stacked pieces of the felt and poke it through the same spot as the first stitch.
- Pull your needle through the stitch you just made at the top edge. This anchors your thread but is not a true stitch.
- Start a new stitch through the back side, 1/8" from your first stitch, and 1/8" in from the edge of the felt. Before you pull the stitch all the way, catch the loop through the top with your needle and pull tight. The thread should create a straight line that lies along the edges of your two pieces of felt.
- Continue your evenly spaced stitching (1/8" over, 1/8" in), pulling each stitch through from the back side and catching the loop as you go.
- To finish, connect your last stitch to your first stitch by sliding your needle underneath your first stitch and knotting it at the back. Push your needle between the layers and out through the front about 1 inch from the edge. The thread will be pulled inside, hiding the knot from view. Then cut off the excess thread very close to the top layer of the felt.

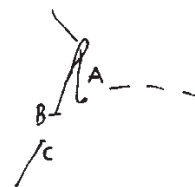
WHIP STITCH:

- Thread your needle and tie a knot at the tail.
- Starting at the back side, poke your needle up through the single layer of felt, just above the piece you are attaching.
- Come down directly below your first stitch, straight through both layers of felt.
- Continue your next stitch up through the single back layer, and then straight down through both layers again with evenly spaced stitches.
- Make sure you are not pulling the stitches so tight that you cause the felt to bunch.
- When you finish your row of stitches, secure with a knot on the back side.



RUNNING STITCH:

- Start with the threaded needle on the back side of your felt and bring it up through the felt (A) and back down into the front side (B).
- Pull it the whole way through, then bring the threaded needle back up through the felt from the back side (C).
- Try to keep the size of the stitches and the space between them consistent.



DOUBLE RUNNING STITCH:

- Start with a running stitch. When you reach the end, reverse your direction and fill in the space between the stitches with another running stitch so you have a solid line.

TEMPLATES:

NOTE: The size of this template is for the largest bee. If you would like to make a bee family, print a second template at 75% for a medium bee and 50% for a baby bee.

