

fall apples

sewing tutorial



Apples are everywhere I look. They are hanging from my tree begging to be picked, overflowing from baskets at the farmers market, and scattered across lawns after a windstorm. The deer in my town do not go hungry this time of year. I love this season of apple pies and apple sauce and apple cider. Make a handful of felt apples as a fall decoration or a sweet gift for your favorite teacher.

MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- sharp scissors
- apple colored wool felt (I used shades of red and green)
- leaf colored felt (I used shades of green and rust)
- stem colored felt (I used shades of brown)
- cotton embroidery floss in the same color as the apple felt and the stem felt
- straight pin
- sewing needle
- about 20 grams of stuffing (I used recycled poly fiberfill)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Refer to 'Notes and Stitches' on page 3.
2. Print templates on page 2 and cut out the paper pieces. You can play with the size by reducing or enlarging the templates when you print them. Gather your materials and tools. **(photo a)**
3. Pin the templates to your felt and cut out the apple, stem, and leaf pieces. **(photo b)**
4. Roll the stem piece tightly and secure with a pin. Start with a 24" length of 2 ply embroidery floss that is the same color as your stem. (Note: This is a longer thread than I generally like to sew with, but because I am using quite a bit of the thread for wrapping I find that this longer length works well. There should be enough thread to attach both the stem and the leaf). Begin with the thread knotted at one end and pull it through the center of the rolled stem. When you have pulled the thread out the other side, tightly wrap your way down the stem and secure the wrap with a stitch at the base. Keep the pin in place until you knot your thread at the end of the stem. Do not cut your thread. **(photo c)**
5. With the sharp point of scissors, poke a small hole in the center of the apple piece. **(photo d)** Be sure to make the hole small and gently stretch it to accommodate the stem. Leading with your needle, and pull the stem 1/4" in to the hole. Don't tug the stem through by pulling hard on your thread as it might break the thread. You may need to stick your scissor tip back into the hole to stretch it if your stem won't fit.
6. Make about five stitches through the apple piece and the stem to hold the stem in place. **(photo e)** Try to make the stitches invisible by keeping them close to the edge of the stem hole.
7. Once you have securely attached the stem piece, pull your thread through so it is on the outside of the apple and close to the stem. Stitch the center vein of the leaf with the running stitch from base to tip. **(photo f)** Once you reach the tip, fill in the gaps with another running stitch to create a line. **(photo g)** Be mindful not to pierce the thread in your stitching as you will be tugging on the thread to give your leaf some dimension and create a curl. When you reach the end of the leaf near the stem, pull the thread gently until you get the desired amount of curl to your leaf **(photo h)** (if it does not easily pull then you may have pierced your thread). Pull your needle back into the stem and tie a knot at the base on the inside of the apple.



8. With 2-ply embroidery floss that is the same color as your apple, begin stitching your apple together. Starting at the top of the apple, blanket stitch two sides from top to base (**photo i**), then work up the second side. (**photo j**) The thread will travel on the inside of your apple to the last open side. Blanket stitch the last sides (**photo k**), leaving a 1.5" gap so you can stuff your apple.



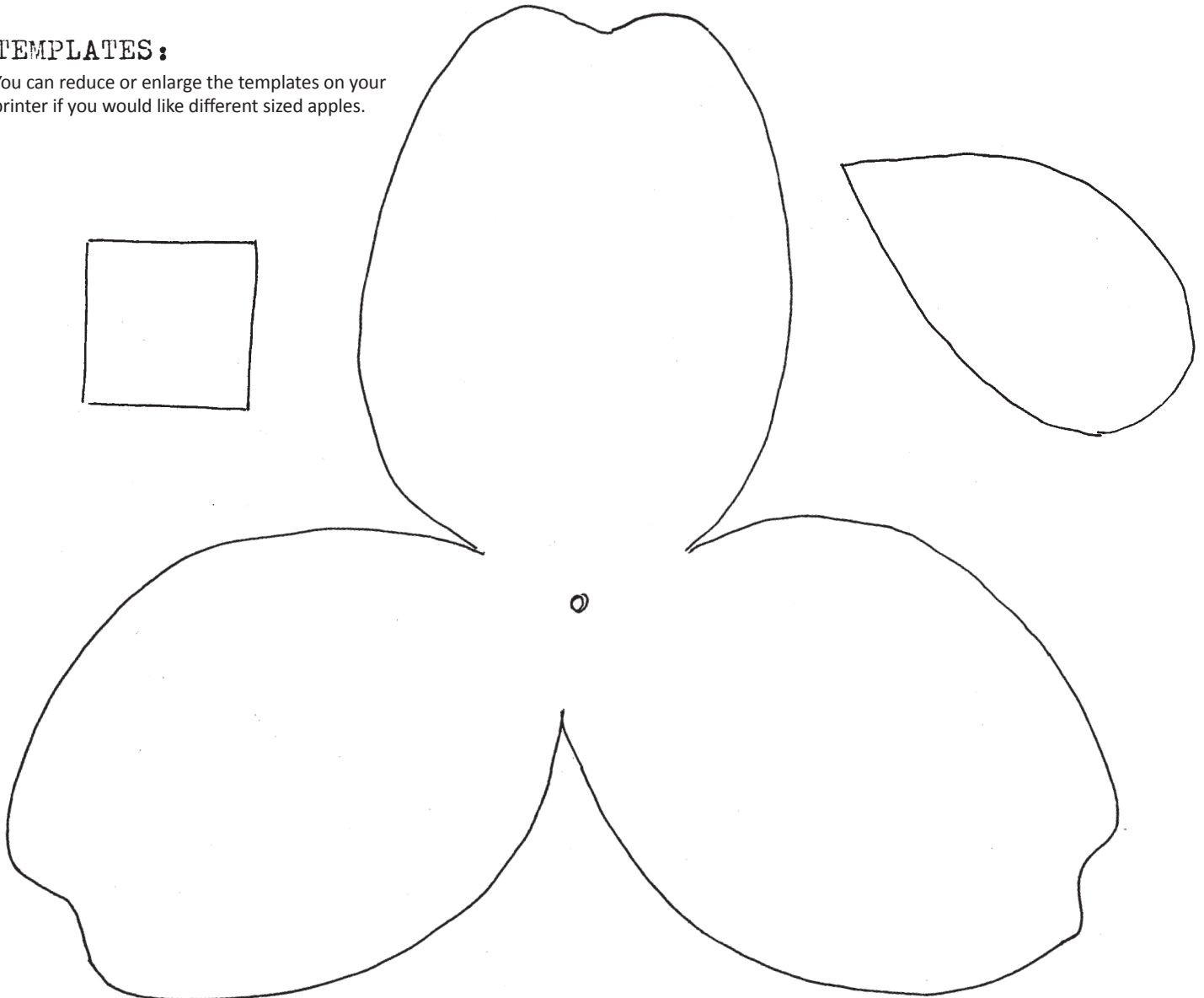
9. Using small bits of stuffing at a time, generously stuff your apple. You want it to be plump and firm. Continue with the blanket stitch to close the gap (**photo l**) and secure with a knot. To hide your knot, pull the needle through stuffing and out the other side. Trim the thread as close to the felt as you can, it will sink between the stuffing and disappear. (**photo m**)



10. You may want to smooch, push and pull to get the apple to be the right shape and play with your leaf a bit to get it just right. (**photo n**)

TEMPLATES :

You can reduce or enlarge the templates on your printer if you would like different sized apples.



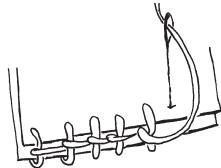
NOTES :

- Embroidery floss has 6 plies (threads) and the plies are easily separated. Most embroidery patterns use 1 to 3 plies. Long strands can get easily tangled, cutting them to 18-inch strands helps prevent this. It also helps to very gently separate the pieces from the center of the strand instead of starting at one end.
- If your thread becomes too short while you are sewing, attach a new piece of thread to the end with a knot. Tie it close to the felt and 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 if your pieces are not lining up.

STITCHES USED IN THIS PROJECT:

BLANKET STITCH

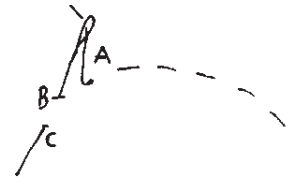
Note: these instructions are much easier to follow with your actual needle and thread in hand. The stitch is simple; the instructions sound complicated.



- 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.
- TO CONNECT TWO PIECES ALONG THE OUTER EDGES: 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 CONNECT TWO LAYERS ALONG A SINGLE EDGE: push your needle from the top down through both layers. Dip through the back side making a small stitch and bring your needle up through the single layer, just outside where your first stitch went in. 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 edge of your top piece 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.

RUNNING & DOUBLE 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.
- A double running stitch is used to make a solid line.
- 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.



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.

