



Flower Block-of-the-Month

Joining Blocks



In this tutorial, you'll learn how to join your blocks, quilt-as-you-go style, and then join the rows together, to make the large medallion shown above.

You will need:

- *Thirteen flower blocks*
- *Eight border triangles*
- *Four corner triangles*

1. Trim all pieces.

In the individual instructions for the flower blocks each month, you were instructed to trim the blocks 1" away from the satin stitched edging on all sides. You may have used a 5," 6," 7," or 8" block size, but all sizes will be trimmed 1" away. If you have not done so, do it now. Embroidery can make fabric shrink more in one direction than another, so it is recommended to first draw a line 1" away from the satin stitching on all sides, then measure to make sure your blocks are squares. If they are not, redraw the line to the larger dimension and then cut. For example, our blocks measured 8-3/4" x 8-11/16;" we cut them to 8-3/4" x 8-3/4."

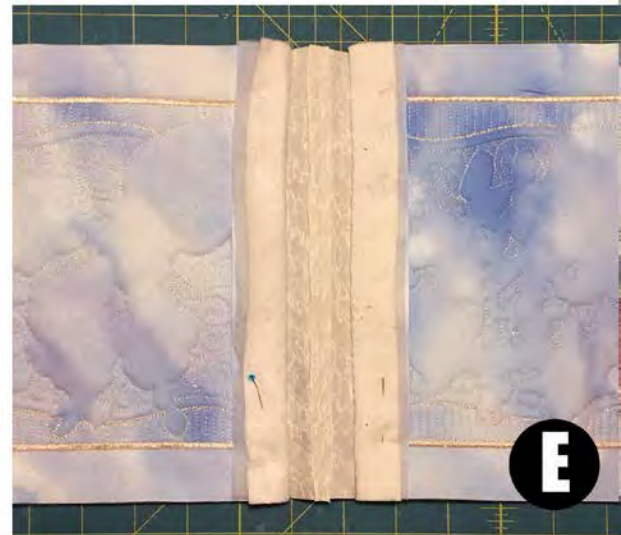
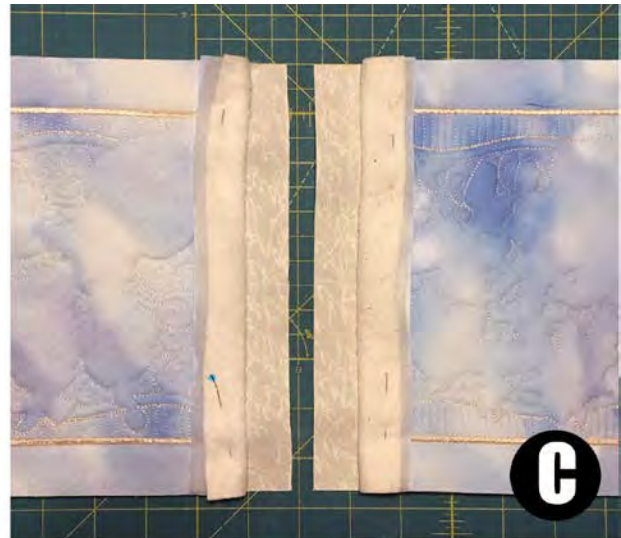
The triangles will also be cut 1" away from the embroidery on all sides as shown in Photo A. There is no need to worry about shrinkage with them—just make sure that the top corner is 90 degrees.

The blocks are set on point, so we'll be stitching them together in diagonal rows. You may start anywhere, but work towards having the rows assembled as shown to the right. For this tutorial, we are going to join the daffodils to the columbine.



2. Join the front of your blocks.

Heavily starch the sides that you will be joining before beginning. Lay your blocks together as shown in Photo B, with the sides together as you will attach them. Flip them both over to the back. Peel back both the batting and backing fabric and pin both out of the way, leaving only the front fabric exposed. (Photo C.) Now put the blocks right sides together, and carefully match the edges and pin them about 1" apart. (Photo D.) Then sew the two edges together, using 1/4" seam. Backstitch at the beginning and ending of the seam, so that when you join the rows together, you won't have seams coming apart. Unpin and open up your work; press the seam open. (Photo E.)



3. Baste the batting pieces together.

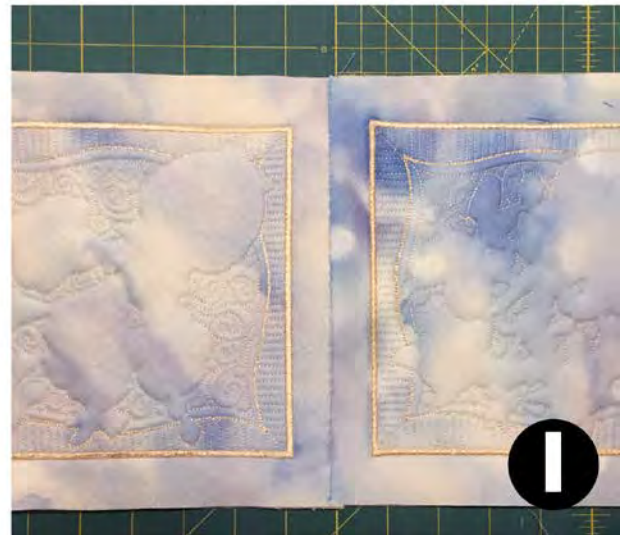
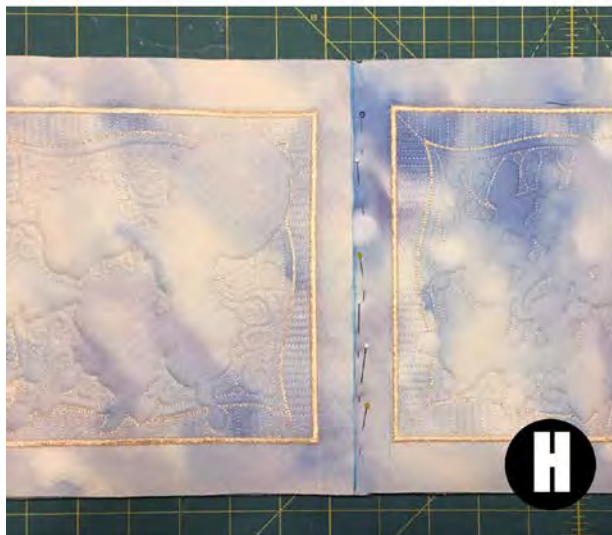
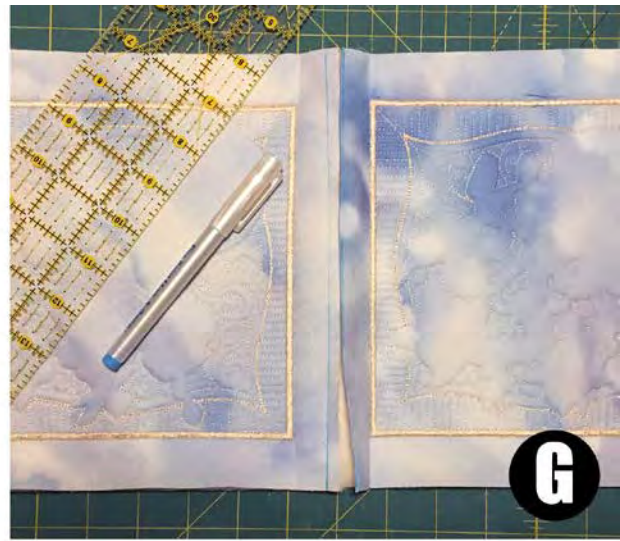
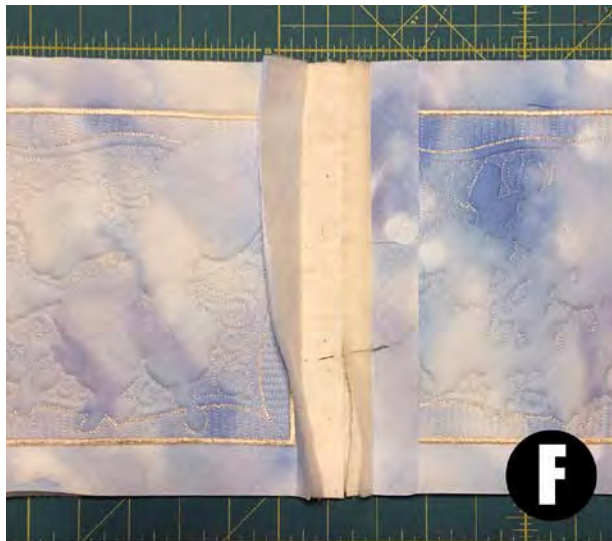
Gently replace the batting as shown in Photo F; the pieces will slightly overlap. Trim off 3/8" batting from one side to reduce some of the overlap. Do not trim off too much—keep a tiny bit of overlap. With white thread and a long running stitch, quickly stitch them together by hand to insure they will sit flat inside. (Photo F.)

4. Join the backing fabric.

If you haven't done so, starch each remaining loose edge of the backing fabric heavily. We starched ours like cardboard; doing so makes the hand work that much easier to do without wiggly edges. Now draw a water soluble blue line on the 1/4" seam line on each edge of the backing fabric. (Photo G.) This line needs to be very accurate for best results. On one side, finger press the seam allowance back, ironing it if needed--- ours was so stiff we didn't have to. A good tip is to cut a piece of file folder or template plastic, and turn the edge back against it to get a very straight fold.

Lay the pressed side down over the other side and pin them together so both blue lines meet exactly. (Photo H.) If you slip the pointy end of the pin down into the batting, you won't get pricked as you go along. By hand, slipstitch or ladder stitch the seam together.

Many don't enjoy handwork, but this type of sewing is not hard to do if you follow some basic tips. Work in daylight. Use a thread that matches your fabric as closely as possible. Use a very high quality, sharp needle, such as Bohin, in a very short size for control. Take tiny 1/8" inch stitches, catching the very edge of the fold and stitch right along the blue line on the bottom. Tighten up your pins as you go along if the blue lines start to separate. Don't forget that this is the BACK of the piece and will not be seen frequently. When finished, your back will look as in Photo I.



4. Repeat!

There are seventeen more joins to put the rows together. Stay encouraged and slowly work away at it, maybe one each day—as with most things, it will get easier as you go along. Maybe your hand sewing skills will become so fantastic, that one of those hand applique Baltimore album quilts will be your next project!

When you add triangle pieces, align them so that the satin stitched borders line up and the triangles hang off the end as shown in Photo J. Do not cut off any triangle pieces until you have completed all the rows—then you will more easily see which ones get trimmed and which don't.

5. Join the rows

Once your rows are ready, the process of joining them is the same as that for joining the blocks—you will just have a much longer seam. Try to align the block seams on the front as you would for any patchwork project. Trim off the excess triangle pieces as needed.



6. Finishing

Once you reach this point, congratulations are certainly in order! Your “Beaucoup de Bouquets” quilt is now an heirloom that will be treasured for years to come. You could certainly just add binding at this point and have a gorgeous piece. Or you could add some large, floral borders, using the same technique in this tutorial of joining front fabric, adding and basting in more batting pieces in the border area, and this time, you could even machine stitch the backing fabric on. You could free motion quilt the border, or stitch straight lines, and then bind.

We are, of course, planning to continue ours as a potential show quilt, with a beautiful pinwheel pieced border overstitched with more floral embroidery designs. We'd love you to join us—but the thought, creativity, work, and time needed to finish it will be about six months.

Thank you so much for joining us on our 2017-2018 flower block adventure. You certainly deserve much praise for the effort you put in to this challenging piece of work, and we know that as you share it with friends and family, the joy and amazement in their eyes will be ample reward for every minute you spent.

XOX

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