

TUTORIAL

Learn Whitework with Colour Embroidery

Basket Of Flowers



TRISH BURR EMBROIDERY

Introduction

Traditionally whitework is done with white thread on a white ground fabric but I have added touches of colour to enrich the design and named it “ Shades Of Whitework ” so as to distinguish it from pure whitework embroidery. This design uses silk threads which contrast beautifully with the matt cotton threads.

This design is suitable for beginners and will help you to master the basics of this fresh take on a timeless and elegant style of traditional embroidery. Try out the practice stitches first and then start stitching - YOU CAN DO IT!

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

Fabric

To capture the refined, delicate appearance of whitework embroidery I believe we should use only the best quality fabrics and threads. Traditionally it was worked on either cambric linen or batiste, with a very tight weave, which are no longer manufactured today but I have sourced the closest alternatives: a fine quality 100% linen fabric. Alternatively you could use a good quality cotton lawn.

Hoop

The best type of hoop to use for surface embroidery is a Susan Bates super grip hoop. This hoop will grip your fabric and keep it absolutely taut - which is necessary to prevent puckering of your embroidery.



Magnifying Light

One of the main stitches used for whitework is satin stitch. It takes practice and a magnifying light to see where each stitch should be placed, I highly recommend you use one.



Awl

This is used to make holes in your fabric for eyeletts. I recommend a tapered awl such as this from Clover.



Needles

The ideal needle is a No 10 sharps because it has a short shaft and round eye for threading floche and broder.



Scissors

You will need a very sharp pair of embroidery scissors.



Threads

Floche, cotton a broder and DMC stranded cotton are the main threads used for whitework. They are well suited to this style of embroidery, lovely to use, have a soft sheen and are great for padding areas under satin stitch. At Present they are not always easy to obtain in needlework stores but you can find them for sale in my Etsy store.

DMC stranded cotton can be used as a substitute for floche or broder see Use Of Threads on next page.



USE OF THREADS

Here is a list of which stitches to use for each thread type. Always use one strand unless otherwise indicated. Remove one strand of thread from the skein and cut.

Floche

Running/double running stitch

Padding

Satin stitch

Split/whipped split stitch

Overcast stitch

Dot stitch.

French knots

NB: wherever possible use floche for padding as it provides the best foundation for satin stitch.

Silk

Satin stitch

Split stitch

French knots

DMC Stranded

Running/double running stitch (2 strands)

Padding (2 strands)

Split/whipped split (1 strand)

Eyelets (1 strand)

Dot stitch (2 strands)

French knots (1 strand 2 twists)

Satin (1 strand).

Long & short (1 strand)

Transferring The Outline Onto The Fabric

If you have not bought this pattern as a kit and need to transfer the design outline onto the fabric it is best to use a blue crayon rather than a pencil as the pencil is inclined to rub off and make your thread grubby.

Preparation

1. Iron the fabric you have received in your kit to remove wrinkles, you can steam spray/wash if necessary, as the pre-printed outline is commercially screen printed and will not wash out.
2. Pull a thread on two sides at right angles to the fabric to make sure it is on the straight grain. Overcast the edges of the fabric to prevent fraying. If you don't have a sewing machine you can use masking tape or fray stop liquid.
3. Bind your inner hoop with strips of white/off white scrap fabric or bias binding.
4. Cut a second piece of scrap fabric in white/pastel shade and cut a small hole in the centre. Place your embroidery fabric over the inner hoop (lip facing up) and the scrap fabric on top of this. Make sure your design is centred in the hoop.

Place the top ring over, and mount both pieces in the hoop. Adjust the fabric till it is drum tight and tighten the screw. Cut a large hole out of the top fabric so that the design is exposed as shown (right page). Pull the fabric on all sides till it is drum tight in the hoop - adjust every now and then as you are stitching.

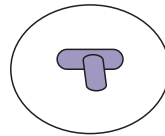
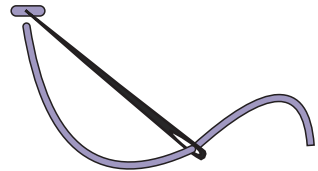
5. Keep your fabric & hoop inside a pillowcase or similar when not working to keep it clean.
Begin stitching.



Starting & Ending Off

To start off make a tiny stitch inside the shape (or on the line if you are stitching a line) near the edge, leave a small tail at the back. Make a second stitch at right angles to this and back into the centre of the first stitch. Give it a tug it should feel secure. Snip off the tail with scissors.

To end off run the stitches under the previous stitches on the back of the work, about 3 times till secure. Snip off with scissors.

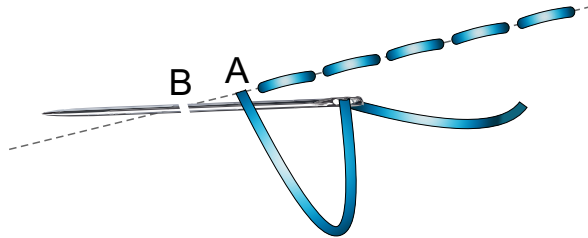


enlarged detail of securing stitch

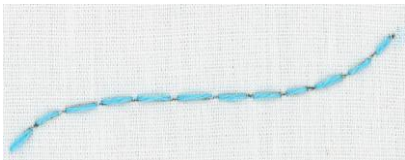
Outline Stitches

Running stitch

This is used for outlining shapes, and as padding for shapes and lines. It is like tacking stitch except you take very little of the fabric between stitches (about 2 threads) so that all the stitching is on the front and very little on the back. Bring the thread up at A and down at B. Continue working like this to the end of the line.



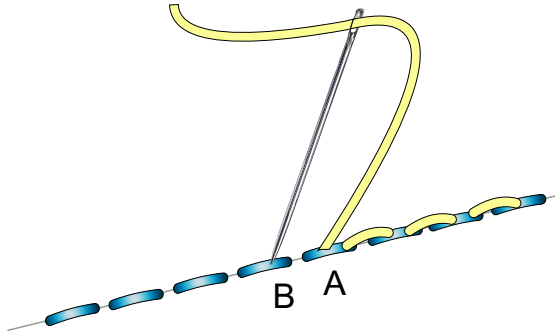
Running Stitch Looks Like This



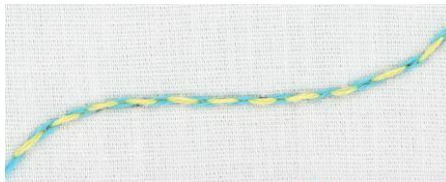
French Double Running stitch

This provides a solid outline, similar to split stitch for outlining shapes and padding lines. It is running stitch with a second line of running stitch worked on top of this. (shown in contrasting colour for clarity).

The second line of stitches is worked between the previous stitches as shown. Work a line of running stitch. Bring the thread up in the centre of the first stitch (A) and down into the centre of the second stitch (B). Continue working like this till complete.



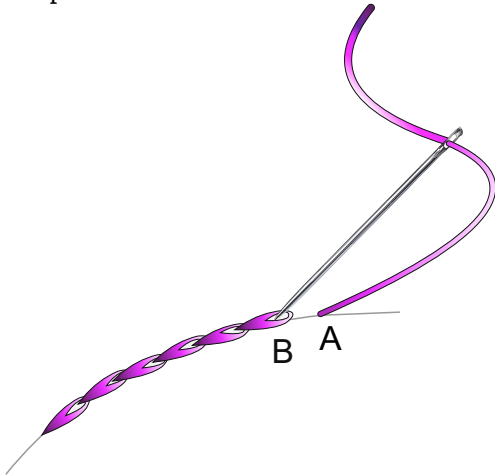
Double Running Stitch Looks Like This



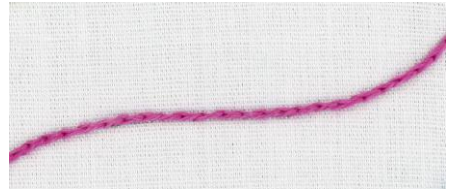
Split stitch

This provides a firm outline for shapes or for filling motifs. It is like backstitch except you bring the needle and thread back, about two thirds into the previous stitch.

Bring the thread up at A and down back into the previous stitch at B. Continue working like this till complete.

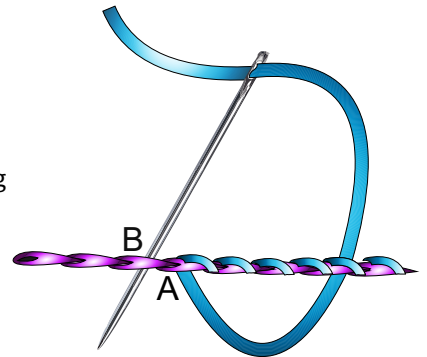


Split Stitch Looks Like This



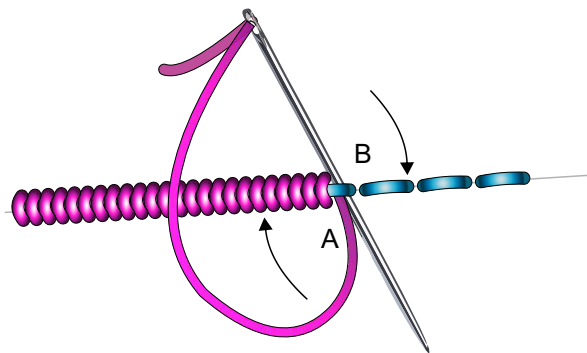
Whipped split stitch

This is a quick way of working a solid raised line for outlining shapes or filling raised stems. Work a line of split stitch. Bring the needle up near the beginning of the first stitch, pass the needle under each stitch. This can also be used in the same manner for running stitch. (whipping shown in contrasting colour for clarity).

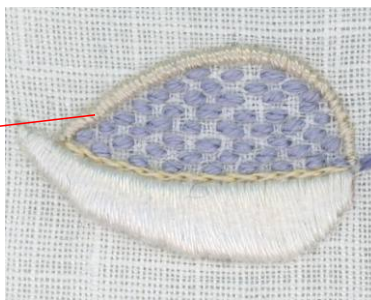


Overcast stitch

This is a very solid, raised outline for shapes and lines. It is normally worked over a single line of double running stitch but can be worked over two adjacent lines to achieve a thicker line. Work a line of double running stitch. Bring the thread up at A and down at B - work small satin stitches over the line till complete. The stitches should be very close together.



Overcast Stitch Looks Like This



FILLING STITCHES

Padding

Padding is used to raise the area under satin stitch - it is worth doing as it creates a 3 dimensional effect which produces more of a sheen as the light reflects off the shape. It also forms a better surface for the satin stitch. You can use one strand of floche/ broder or two strands DMC cotton for padding. The padding stitches should always be worked at right angles to the stitching - generally along the length of the shape , then the satin stitch will be worked across the width.

Running stitch

Fill the shape with adjacent rows of running stitches as shown. If it is a very small shape you can work long straight stitches - ensure that the running/straight stitches fit the shape exactly right up to the outline.



1. Outline the shape with running/double running



2. Fill the shape with running stitches (shows front)

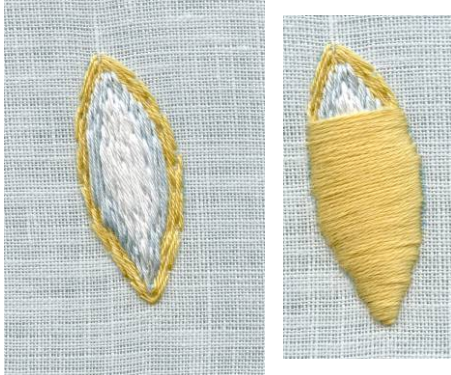


3. Showing back of padding



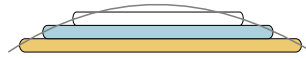
4. Satin stitches worked at right angles to padding

Padding



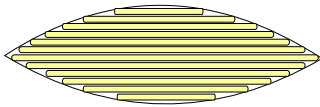
5. Two extra layers of padding added on top of the first. Each one slightly inside the previous layer to create a dome.

To begin with use one layer of padding, once you have gained some experience with satin stitch you can add additional layers for a more raised effect.

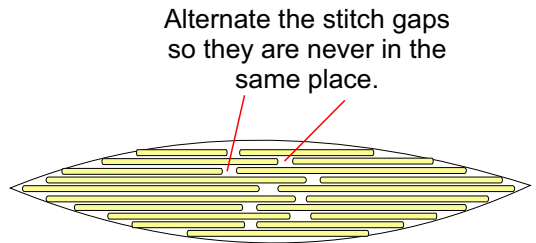


side view dome

Padding Examples



small shape - long straight stitches



Alternate the stitch gaps so they are never in the same place.

Larger shape - long running stitches.

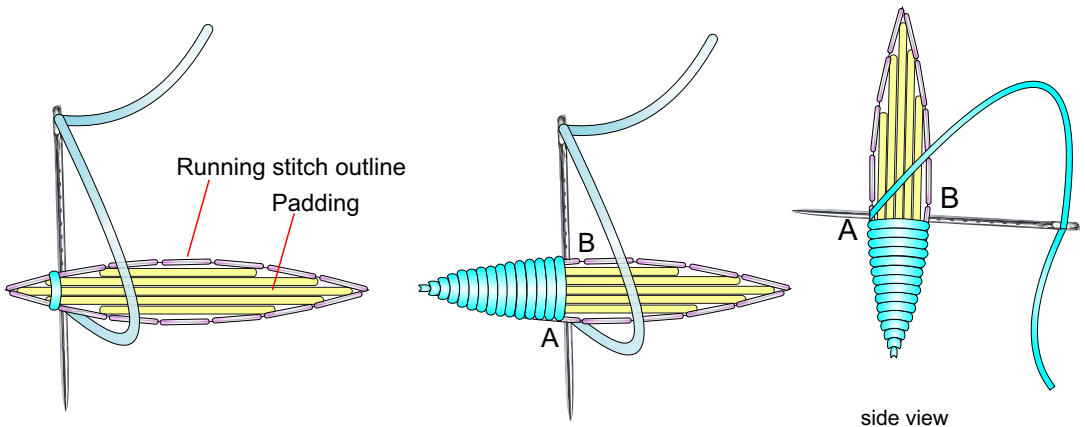
Satin Stitch

Satin stitch or Plumetis as it is named in French Embroidery is used to fill a shape with smooth straight stitches that are worked side by side. The stitches are worked at right angles to the padding stitches underneath and also to the shape.

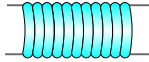
The diagrams below shows the process of working satin stitch. (outline, padding and satin stitch showed in different colours for clarity.)

METHOD

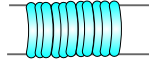
1. Always outline the shape with running/double running stitches unless the shape is very small, this will give a nice crisp edge.
2. Start slightly away from the edge of the shape as shown and place a directional stitch. (you can go back and add the stitches on the left of this afterwards). This helps to establish the direction of your stitches. Come up at A and down at B. Continue filling in the shape with adjacent satin stitches.



3. The stitches should be very close together but not on top of each other. If your work does not look smooth it is because the threads do not lie flat because they are scrunched up together too tight/too loose with gaps in between. It helps to work under a magnifying light so that you can see where to place each stitch.



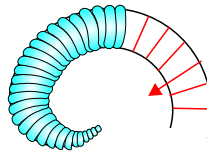
Stitches side by side correct



Stitches crowded or overlapping incorrect

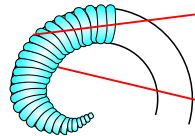
4. Always work in the same direction, and don't change direction in the middle of your stitching. I like to work from left to right.

5. The stitches should be worked at right angles to the padding stitches underneath.



right angle to the shape

6. If working a curve you can come down on the outside of the curve as it gives a neater edge. The stitches on a curve should be more crowded on the inside and slightly fanned out on the outside - keep your stitches at right angles at all times.



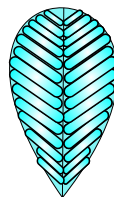
Stitches fanned out on outside of curve

Stitches close together on inside of curve

7. Your stitches must hug the padding and outline - keep a firm tension and bring the needle up against the outline and push down against the outline on the other side.

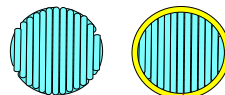
SATIN STITCH AT AN ANGLE

Satin stitch can also be worked at an angle to direct the stitches as appropriate to the shape.



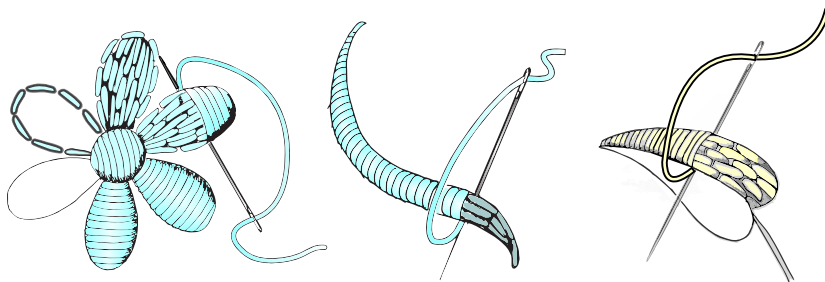
SATIN STITCH OUTLINES

I like to add a fine split stitch outline to satin stitch shapes as it hides wobbly edges - especially when working satin stitch dots you get a nice round circle shape.

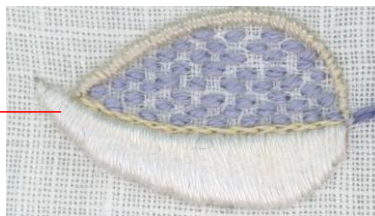


split stitch outline

Examples of satin stitch on different motifs.



Satin Stitch Looks Like This

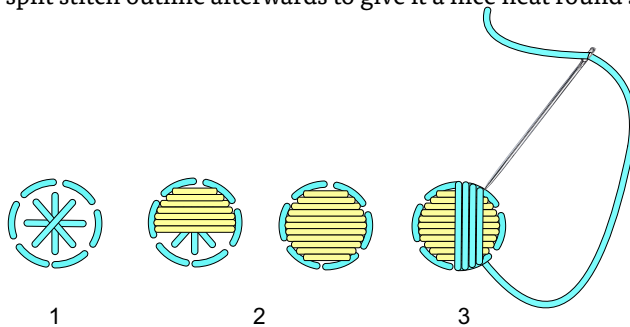


SATIN STITCH DOTS

These are used to fill dots in various shapes and sizes with raised satin stitch.

1. Outline the dot with running/double running stitches. Add a star in the centre with straight stitches as shown.
2. Fill the shape with adjacent padding stitches across the shape (inside the line) as shown.
3. Fill the shape with satin stitches at right angles to the padding as shown.

HINT - I like to add a split stitch outline afterwards to give it a nice neat round shape.



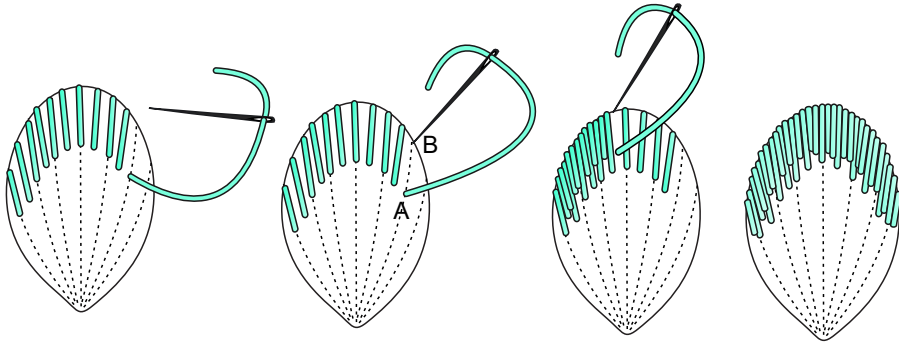
Satin stitch dots Looks Like This



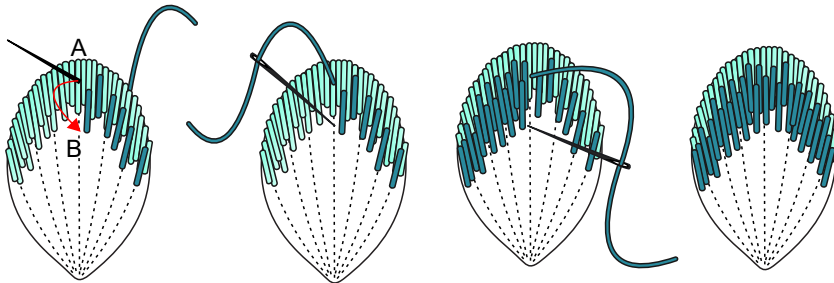
Long & short stitch.

This stitch is used as a filling stitch. It is worked in rows of colour that gently blend into each other. For more details on this stitch refer to any of my books, the DVD or the kits.

Row one: The first row should look like staggered satin stitch. Stitch random stitches across the shape and then go back and fill in the gaps. The stitches should be about 1cm in length some a bit shorter. Make sure this row is full and close together without any gaps.



Row Two: Bring the needle up through the previous row of stitches and down into the fabric. As before stitch random stitches across the row and go back and fill in the gaps. Some stitches will go right back into the previous row and some come forward to create a staggered appearance. Continue working each row/section of colour till the shape is filled.



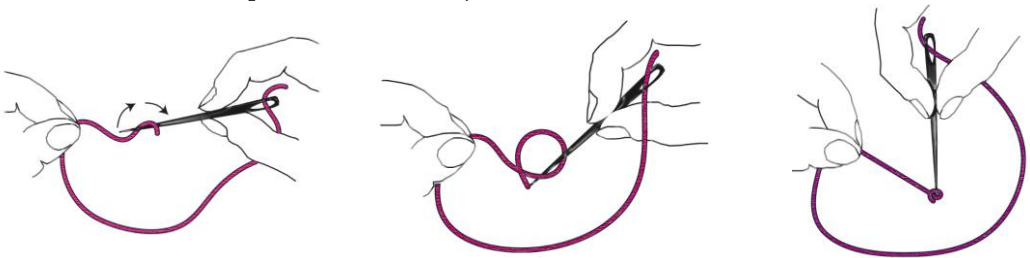
Long & Short Stitch Looks Like This



French Knots

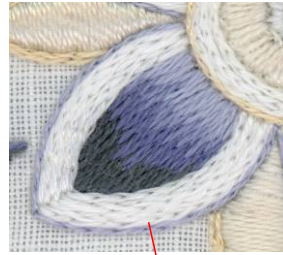
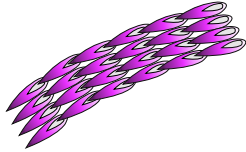
These can be used as a filling stitch to add texture .

1. Wrap the thread around the needle twice.
2. Insert the needle tip into the fabric very close but not in the same hole.
3. Insert the needle tip into the fabric very close to A but not in the same hole.



French Knots Looks Like This

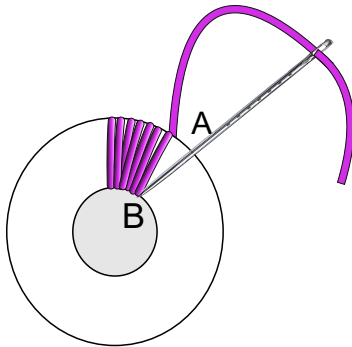
Split Stitch Filling



Split Stitch Filling Looks Like This

STRAIGHT STITCH

Used to fill areas with straight stitches - similar to satin stitch but worked alone without padding underneath. Come up at A and down at B.



Straight Stitches Looks Like This

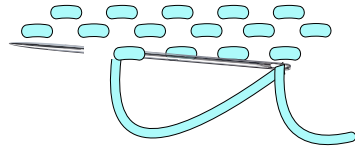
DOT STITCH

This stitch is similar to seed stitch (or Point de sable in French), it is also known as sand stitch but I like to call it dot stitch as it looks like little raised dots or pearls.

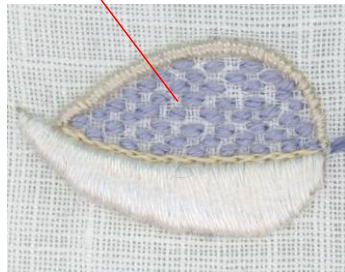
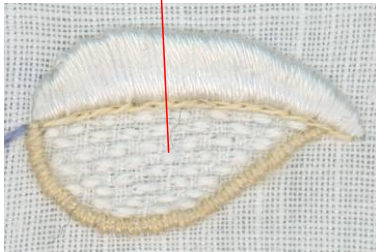
It is particularly effective when worked next to satin stitch, but can be used to fill any shape. The stitches are done in alternative rows of small double backstitch stitches with gaps in between. The stitches should look like little pearls.

I like to work them in a firm thread such as cotton a broder but can also be done using two strands DMC cotton.

1. Make a small backstitch.
2. Make a second stitch on top of this, using the same entry & exit hole.
3. Continue making double stitches in lines as shown.



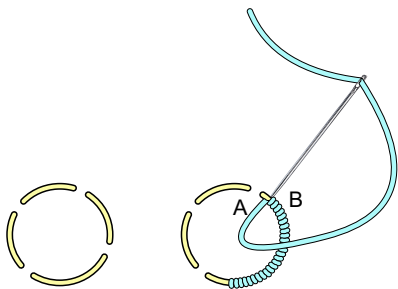
Dots Stitch Looks Like This



EYELETTTS

It is best to use one strand DMC stranded cotton for these.

1. Outline the circle/dot with running stitches. I like to use four stitches one on each side of the circle, for some reason it always works out as round in the end!
2. a) Pierce a hole with your awl in the centre. Push it down till it will go no further into the fabric so you have a nice round circle.
b) Make tiny overcast stitches from inside the hole over the outline all the way around. Come up at A inside the hole and down at B outside the outline stitch.,
c) Secure by lacing the thread through a few stitches on the back.



Eyeletts Looks Like This

Piece of surface linen fabric approx 28 x 28cm

DMC stranded cotton threads as per list

DMC Floche white

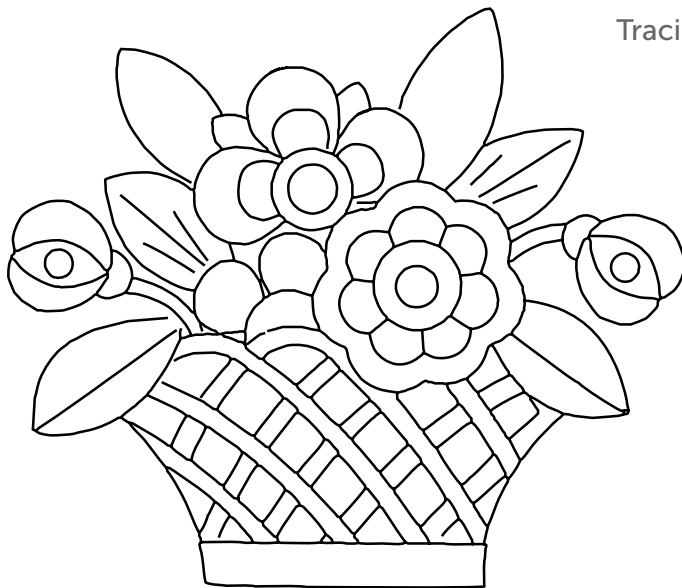
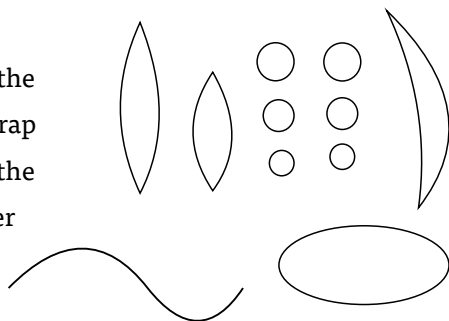
Needles size 10 sharps

Super grip hoop size 6"

List of materials required
if purchased as download

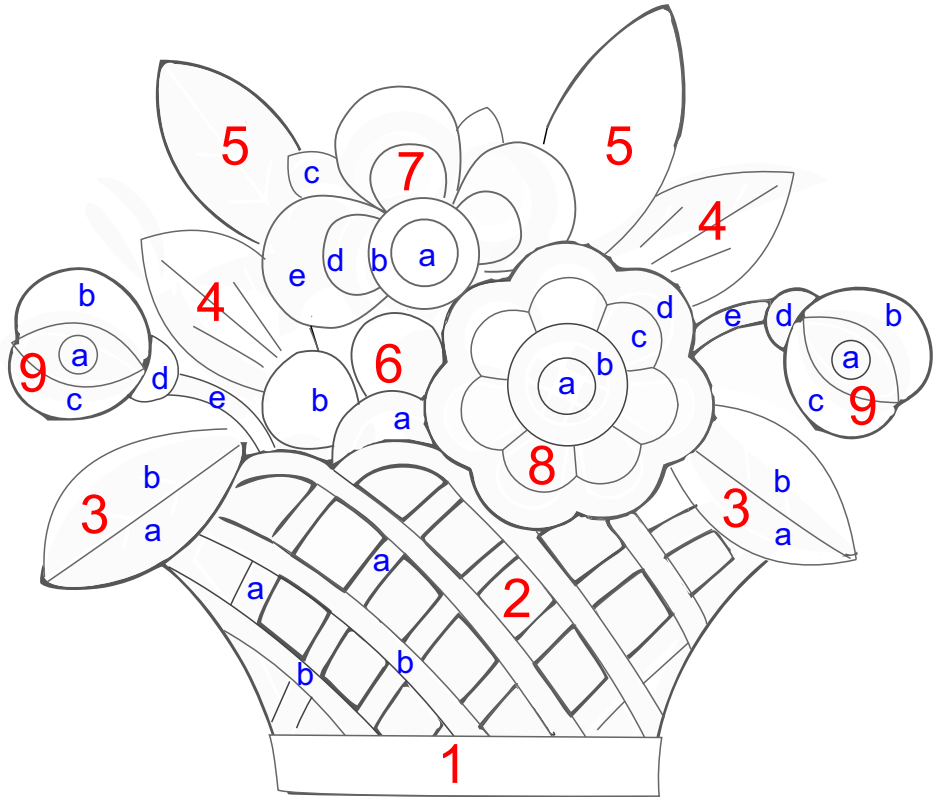
Practice.

Before you begin it is a good idea to practice some of the stitches. Trace the provided shapes onto a piece of scrap fabric - a tight weave cotton will be good and try out the various stitches. Keep this piece of fabric as a sampler of stitches for future reference.



Tracing outline actual size

Thread Diagram



Credit Source: Design outline adapted from original vintage free hand embroidery design provided by French Knots: www.french-knots.com. With thanks.

Thread List



DMC Floche blanc



DMC stranded 927



DMC stranded Ecrú



DMC stranded 926



DMC stranded 928



DMC stranded 3768

One strand used throughout

Thread Diagram

- 1) Floche blanc.
- 2) a) floche blanc. b) ecru. Outline 926 .
- 3) a) 927. b) floche blanc. Outline 926.
- 4) Floche blanc, 928, 927, 926, 3768.
- 5) Floche blanc, lines & securing stitches 927. Outline 926.
- 6) a) ecru. b) Floche blanc. Outline floche and 926.
- 7) a) floche blanc, outline 927. b) ecru, outline 926. c) 3768.
d) floche blanc, outline 928. e) floche blanc, outline blanc & 926.
- 8) a) ecru. b) ecru, outline ecru. c) floche blanc, outline 3768.
d) 928, outline floche blanc.
- 9) a) ecru. b) blanc floche. c) ecru. d) blanc floche. Outlines 927.
e) 927, 926, 3768.



Step One - Fill the base with padded satin stitch. Outline with split stitch.



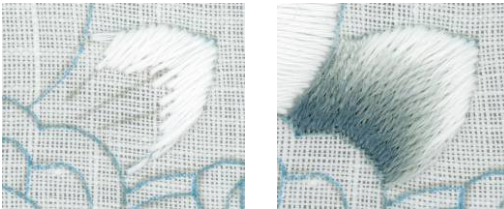
Step Two - Fill each basket strip with padded satin stitch. Outline with split stitch.



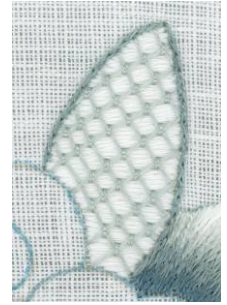




Step Three - Fill bottom half of leaf with padded satin stitch. Fill the top with dot stitch. outline with split stitch.



Step Four - Fill each leaf with long & short stitch from the top down towards base.

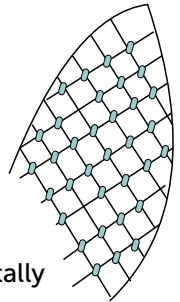


Step Five - Fill each leaf with laid stitch as per diagram (left). Outline with split stitch.

Laid stitch

a) lay a foundation of straight stitches/ satin stitch across the shape.

b) On top of this lay threads at right angles to each other horizontally and vertically.



c) Secure each cross over point with a tiny stitch.

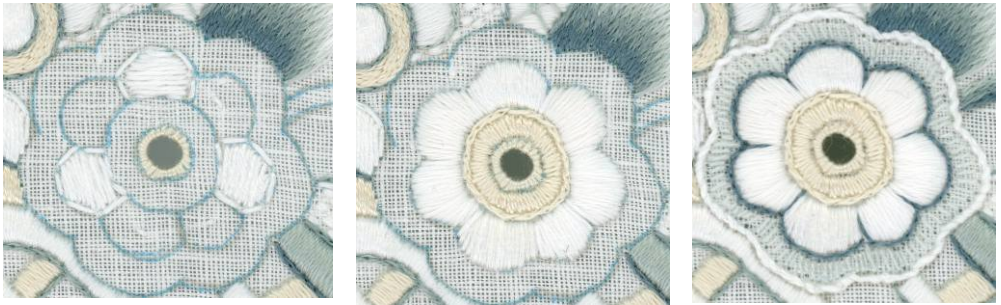


Step Six - Fill the centre with padded satin stitch. Fill the petals with straight stitches/ long satin stitches. Outline with split stitch.





Step Seven - Fill centre with a satin stitch dot. Fill around dot with rows of split stitch. Fill small back petals with straight stitches. Fill front petals with padded satin stitch. Fill outer petals with dot stitch. Outline all shapes with split stitch as shown.



Step Eight - Work an eyelet. Fill around the eyelet with straight stitches. Fill inner petals with padded satin stitch. Fill outer edge with straight stitches. Outline all shapes in split stitch or whipped split as shown.



Step Nine - Make an eyelet in centre. Fill each side and base of buds with padded satin stitch. Outline with split stitch. Fill stems with adjacent rows of split stitch.