

Mini Tree Skirt



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This project uses the classic quilt pattern, Grandmother's Flower Garden. It uses just one patch, a hexagon and threads you dye yourself, using Kool-Aid. It's designed to be a skirt for a tabletop tree. Colored wool can also be used.

Materials

- 18" square 13-mesh mono canvas
- 1 hank three-ply Persian wool. Cut into 1-yard lengths
 - Kool-Aid dyeing only works with animal fibers (wool and ilk)
- 2 spools Kreinik #16 (Medium) metallic 002 (gold)
- 10 packages **unsweetened** Kool-Aid
- large pot
- glass bowl
- compass
- pencil
- fabric eraser
- extra-fine permanent pen, safe for marking fabric

Dyeing the Thread

Begin by splitting a third of your white wool into skeins of 15 threads, Tie each bundle loosely in two places. This helps keep the thread together when you dye. You'll use your stove to dye. You will need a clean pot for each color; you can wash the pot after each color and reuse the pot. This prevents your colors from getting contaminated.

Everything used for this dye is food, making it an ideal project to do with children. It's best to buy inexpensive bowls, pots, and utensils that you use only for dyeing, although when using Kool-Aid you can use the items for food; this is **NOT** true for other dyes.

Soak the hanks in hot tap water with a splash of white vinegar for about 30 minute or more (they can soak up to overnight). Soak everything you will be dyeing. Before going to the next step, squeeze out the extra water and place the wool flat in a small pot.

In a separate pot for each color, put in the wool for this color in water to cover. Pour the Kool-Aid over the wool in the pot. Use a chopstick to mix the wool and Kool-Aid up. The color of the water will be close to the finished color of the yarn. To get darker colors, add more Kool-Aid. Stop mixing once all the wool is colored evenly.

Set the dye by bringing the water to a boil and simmering for 30 minutes, until the water is clear. This means the wool has fully absorbed all of the dye. Remove the wool from the water sooner to get lighter colors. If the water is still colored, you can dye more wool.

Let cool completely. Lift out the skein, rinse in cool water, and squeeze out as much water as you can Do not wring or twist. Set on a pole over a towel you don't care about to drip dry.

Marking the Canvas

Tree skirts are generally circular in shape with a hole in the middle for the tree trunk and a split on one side to help wrap around the tree. It should be big enough to cover the tree stand and be seen under the tree.

Making skirts for tabletop trees is almost an ideal Christmas project. Unlike skirts for large trees, these can be done in one piece and can be stitched relatively quickly. This skirt will go around our "toy tree," which has our mini ornaments on it.

Begin with a piece of canvas 4" wider than the finished diameter of the skirt. For mine I used an 18" piece of 13-mesh canvas. You can chose the finished size and mesh size you like. Cut the canvas into a square. Tape the edges and mark the top.

Now find the center of the canvas. I usually do this by folding along each diagonal. The center is where the two lines cross. You may want to mark this point with a permanent marker.

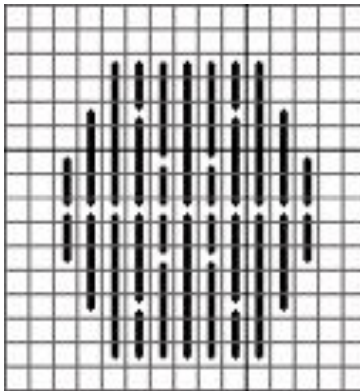
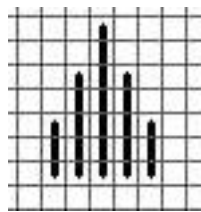
For the next step, you will need a compass that will expand to the diameter of the finished skirt. Using the compass, draw a circle using a pencil. Now go over this circle in permanent marker and use a fabric eraser to erase all pencil marks.

Draw a second circle, using the same center, about 3 or 4 inches in diameter. This will be left unstitched for the trunk of the tree. Mark this in permanent marker as well and erase the pencil marks using the fabric eraser.

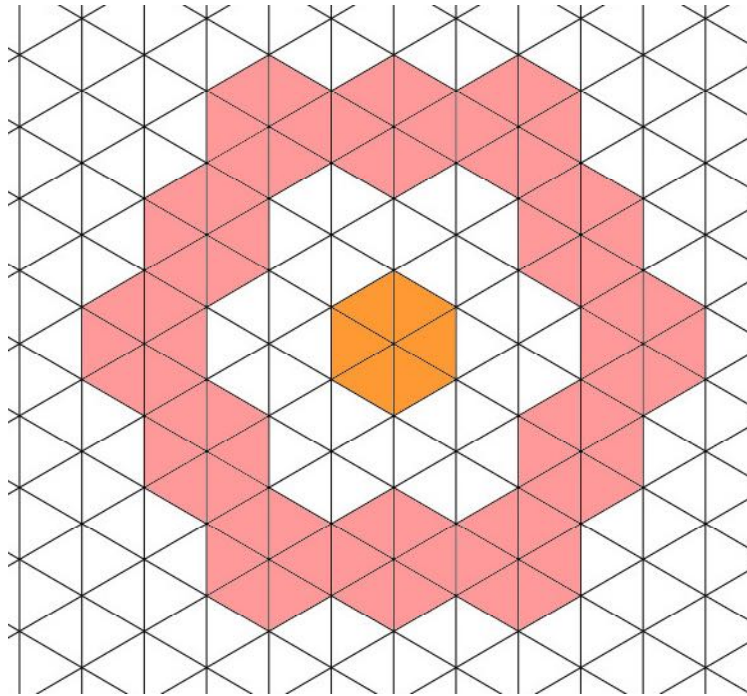
Next, mark the slit. Draw two straight lines from the inside edge of the skirt to the outside edge about 1 inch apart (at the outside. This leaves a margin for finishing the skirt.

Stitching the Design

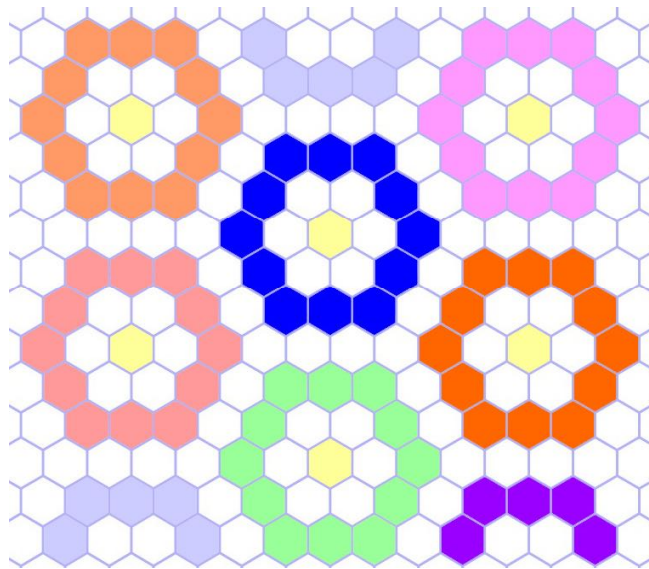
The skirt is stitched entirely in Trianglepoint, with triangles made up of five straight stitches, below right. Six of these are grouped together to make a hexagon, below left. Depending on your stitching tension, this may need one or two strands of wool. Take your darkest color and make a hexagon in the unstitched margins with one strand and one with two strands. Pick the coverage you like best.



The flowers are made of these hexagons. The center hexagon is made using pale orange thread. This center is surrounded by six white hexagons. Around this is another circle of a dozen hexagons, completing the flower, below. Each flower should be stitched in a different color. A complete map of a single flower is on the next page.



The diagram above is on a different kind of graph paper, isometric paper. One triangle on the paper is equal to one complete Triangelpoint stitch. The chart below is a hexagonal graph. In it one hexagon is equal to a stitched hexagon (six triangles sharing a common center.). Graph papers like these make it easy to show how these shapes fit together.



The diagram above shows a section of the skirt, showing how the individual flowers meet. Continue making complete and partial flowers until the skirt is stitched.

Each hex is outlined using the gold metallic thread. One Straight Stitch is made for each side of the hexagon.

Finishing the Skirt

Zigzag stitch around the entire perimeter of the skirt just outside the needlepoint to stabilize the stitching. Cut the needlework out, leaving a 1/2 inch seam allowance. Cut along the center line between the two edges of the skirt (the straight edges not the curves).

Essentially a tree skirt is made like an unstuffed pillow. It really needs some kind of piping or edging to make it look its best. If you are using a piping that has a seam allowance, pin the seam allowances together along all the edges of the skirt. Hide the joint between the two ends either at a corner or along one of the straight sides. Sew this down, just at the edge of the stitching. If you are using twisted cord or another trim without a seam allowance, you will need to sew it on, by hand, after the skirt is turned and before the opening is stitched up.

Now you are ready to sew on the backing. Place the needlework and the backing, right sides together, and pin all along every edge. Sew around the entire skirt, leaving almost all of one straight edge open. Sew around the corners of this edge, but leave 4-6 inches open. Clip the seam allowances to help make the curves lie flat. Using your fingers press the open needlepoint canvas towards the stitched canvas, this will help it lie flat.

Turn the skirt right side out. You should have the piping, if you used it, show up between the backing and the needlepoint. Using your fingers, or a pressing cloth and iron, smooth down the edges all around. Pin the opening you left shut and blind stitch it closed.

When you put your skirt around the bottom of the tree, put the open edges towards the back and overlap them for a smooth look.