



Spring Favorites Collection





Happy spring everyone!

We've rounded up some of our favorite festive crafts just for you. Get ready to spruce up your spring and indulge in creativity with this detailed collection of seasonal crafting secrets. From DIY Easter Garlands and adorable bunny quilt blocks to sweet Mother's Day cards and gardening galore, you're guaranteed to spring out an unforgettable season full of sweet treats and playful projects.

Embrace longer days of sunshine
and jump right in!





Rainbow Mug Rug Tutorial



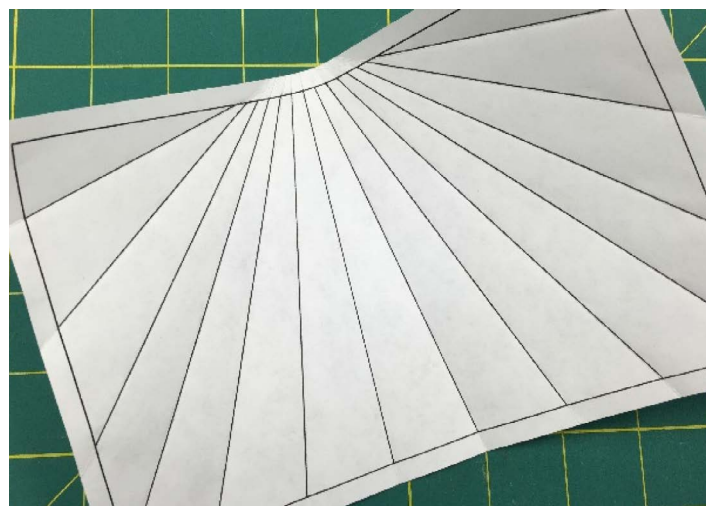
By Diane Knott

Make your morning cup of coffee way more colorful with a rainbow ray mug rug. This project is pure fun – and a great introduction to the sew-and-flip technique on a paper foundation.

Level: Easy

You will need the following:

- PDF Template
- 15 fabric strips (2" x 6"-8")
- Rotary cutter
- Ruler
- Scissors
- Batting (6" x 10")
- Backing fabric (6" x 10")
- 30" of binding
- Thread
- Iron
- Cutting mat



1. Prep the Pattern

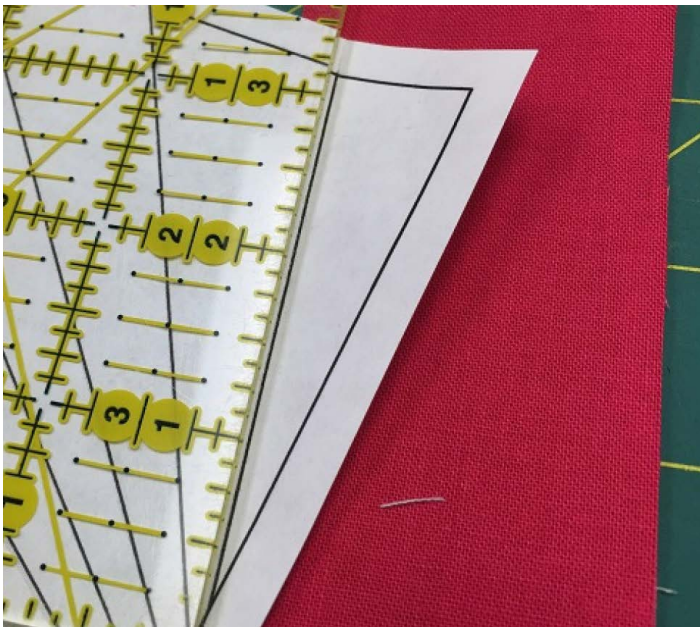
If you don't have paper designed for paper piecing, print the pattern on lightweight (20 lb) copy paper.

Using a ruler and rotary cutter, trim the paper $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from the outside line. Fold the pattern on each of the lines – this will score the paper so it's easier to work with.



2. Cut Your Fabric

Cut all 15 strips so they're 2" wide. Cut the strips on the corners 8" long; the rest can be cut to 6". If needed, place the strips on top of your pattern to double check their length.

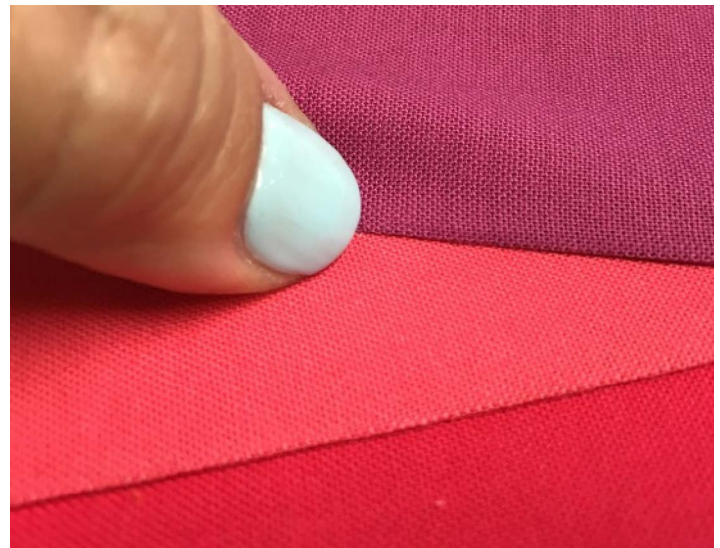


3. Sew the First Two Strips

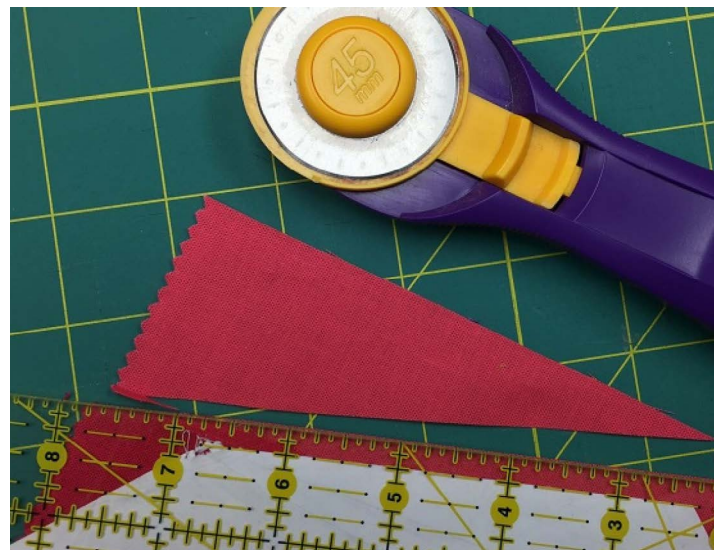
Begin on one side and place the first two strips together, right sides facing, with the first strip touching the paper (as shown above). Using a ruler, lay the strips so they overlap the first sewing line by $\frac{1}{4}$ " to create a seam allowance.

Set your stitch length to 1.8 - 2.0 for shorter stitches: this makes it easier to remove the paper at the end. Sew across the first line in the paper..

Pro Tip: Don't stop sewing when you get to the end of your line, or it will be more difficult to remove your paper. Stitch from edge to edge, allowing the stitching to run off the paper and fabric.



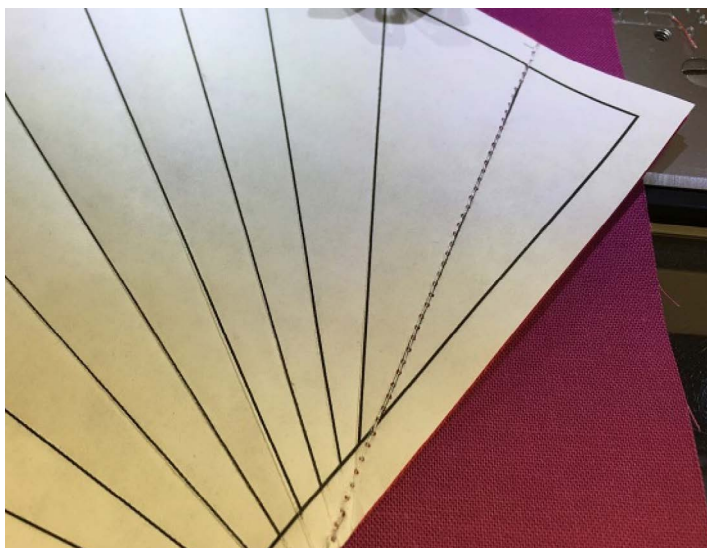
Press the seam open with your fingers. Take care to completely open the seam and make sure the fabrics are lying flat and smooth.



4. Trim

Fold the paper on the next sewing line and trim away the excess fabric, leaving a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.

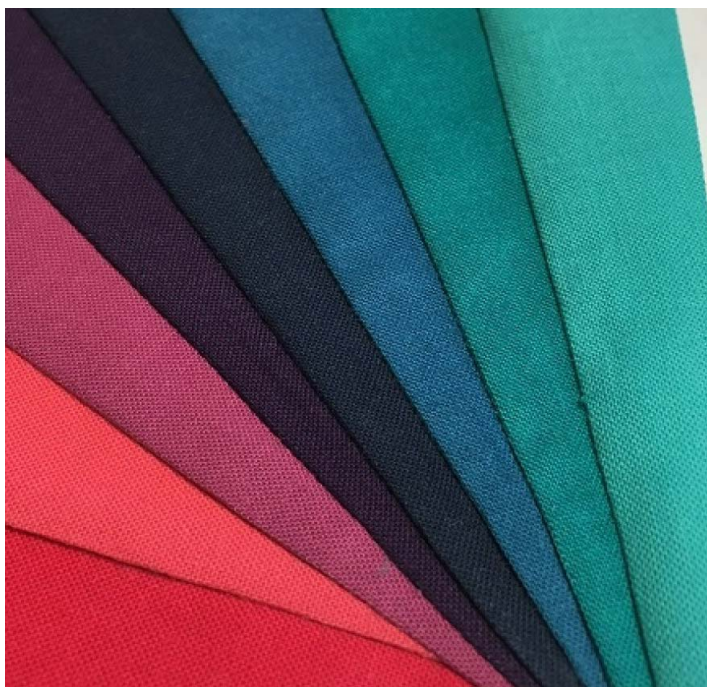
Pro Tip: If you have an Add A Quarter ruler, it'll work perfectly here.



Layer the next strip, right sides together, on the newly cut edge. Sew along the second line, finger press and trim the excess.



The seams will come together very closely on the bottom edge. To prevent extra bulk, trim the seams at an angle with scissors, leaving about 1/8" at the very edge (as shown above).



5. Repeat

Continue to sew, finger press, fold the paper and trim. Keep building your rainbow one strip at a time.

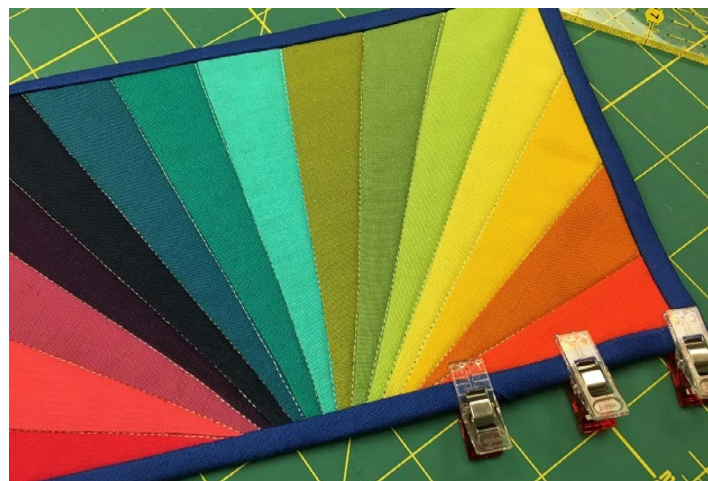


Keep working until your rainbow is completely sewn and press the top with an iron. At this point, your paper will still be attached to the back.



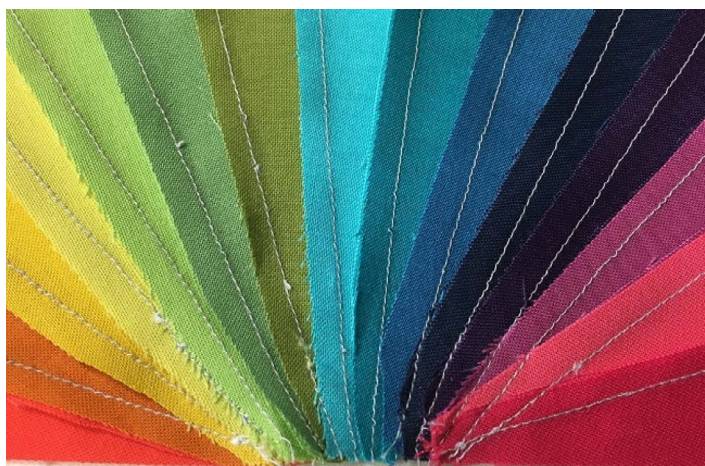
6. Remove the Paper

Gently pull your paper away while securing the end (to prevent the first few stitches from coming undone). The paper should tear away easily, thanks to the shorter stitch length.



8. Add the Binding

Add the binding as you would to any quilt and stitch it down on the back, either by hand or with your machine.



Once the paper is removed, the back of your mug rug will look like the photo above. Handle it carefully because there will be bias edges. If desired, stay-stitch around the perimeter, less than $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from the edge, to stabilize the unit.

7. Assemble the Mug Rug

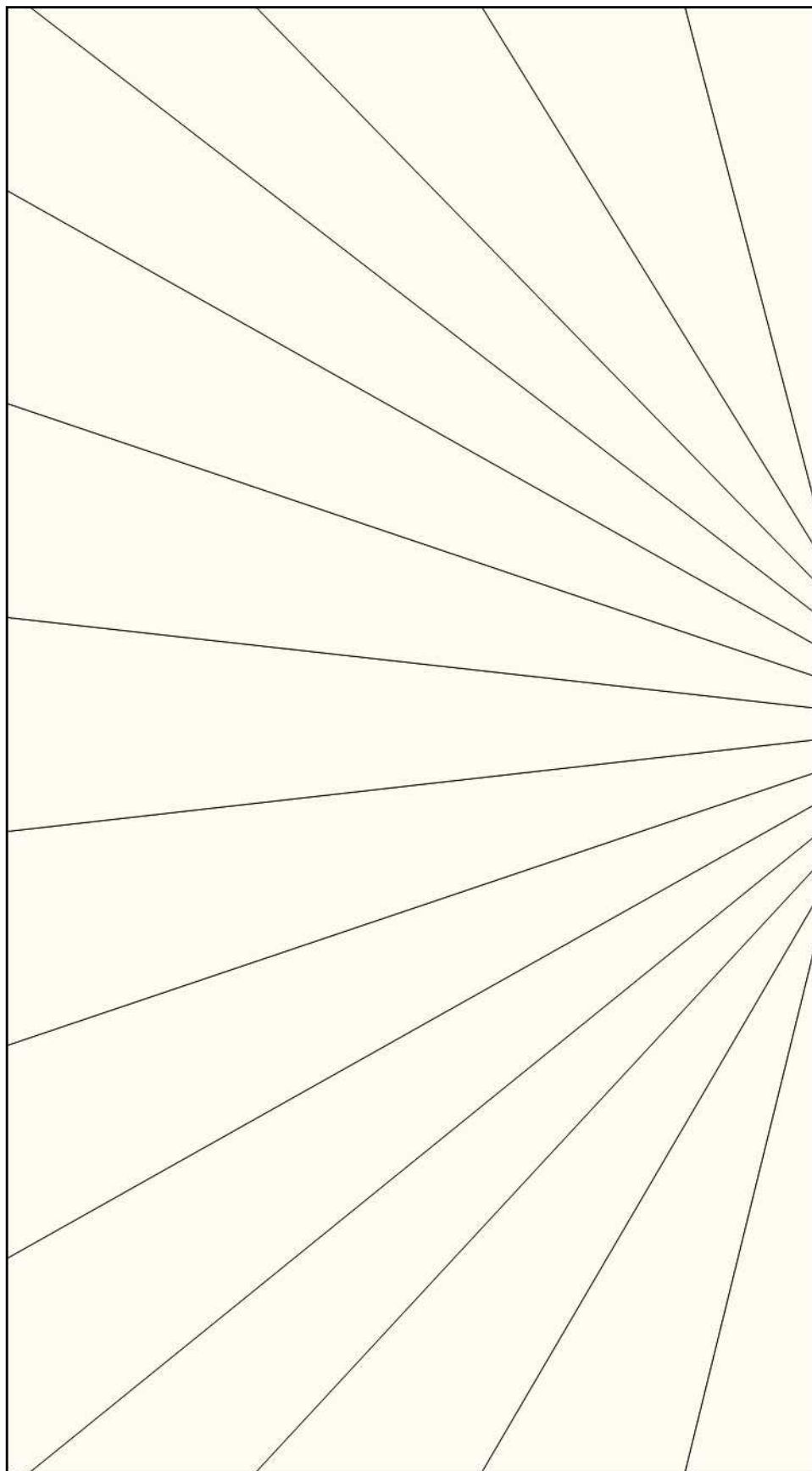
Layer the rainbow on top of the batting and backing to make a small quilt sandwich. Quilt the mug rug together by stitching in the ditch along each seam line. Trim the batting and backing even with the edges of the rainbow



And you're done! Enjoy your mug rug and take these newfound paper piecing skills with you on new quilting adventures.



Mug Rug Template





Rainbow Felt Ornament Template

By Jodie Rackley

If you like a little extra whimsy, look no further than a felt rainbow. Hang 'em on your own tree or stitch up a bunch for friends!

Level: Easy

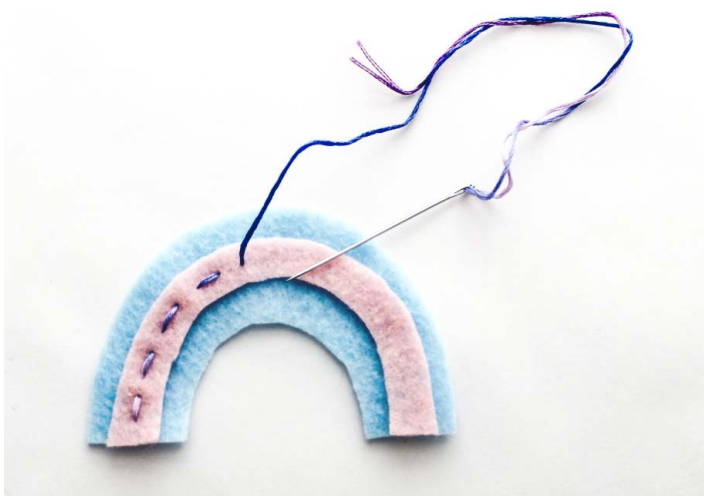
You will need the following:

- [Free PDF template](#)
- 3 or 4 colors of felt
- 1 piece of ribbon
- 1 variegated shade of floss, like DMC color variations 4250
- 2 large and 4 small white pom-poms
- Scissors
- Paper (for templates)
- Pins
- Sewing needle



1. Cut Out the Arcs

Print the templates onto paper or cardstock and cut them out. Pin the pieces directly to your felt and cut out two of the large background pieces. Then cut out your three rainbow stripes in different colors – I used aqua, pink, and purple felt for a pastel look.



2. Stitch the Middle Stripe

Center the middle stripe on one of the background pieces. Using a piece of your variegated floss, stitch it in place with a simple running stitch. Knot and tie on the reverse side when finished.



3. Place the Pom-poms

Place your larger arc and smaller arc above and below the one you just secured – but don't start stitching yet! Before you sew 'em on, pin them to the piece and then turn your attention to the pom-poms.

Center the large pom-poms in the middle of one of the rainbow's bases. Using a piece of floss, stitch through the background piece and up through your pom-pom to hold it in place. Add the two smaller pom-poms on either side of the large one and stitch them both into place. When all three are secure, tie them off in a knot on the backside of your rainbow and repeat for the other side.



4. Make the Final Stitches

Place your remaining background piece on the back of your rainbow and pin it in place. Starting at the bottom edge of the rainbow (where you just added your cloud), stitch a running stitch up the side of your rainbow, sewing the top stripe in place as you go.



When you get to the top center of your rainbow, add a length of ribbon for hanging. Place it in between the background pieces and stitch over it, sewing it firmly in place.



When you get to the top center of your rainbow, add a length of ribbon for hanging. Place it in between the background pieces and stitch over it, sewing it firmly in place.



This Amigurumi Duckling Makes a Fine Feathered Friend

By Craftsy Editors

Is there anything more adorable than a crocheted duckling? From the tuft of hair all the way down to his little duck toes, each stitch is cuter than the last. And if you're new to amigurumi, this little guy is a great beginner project: it comes together using simple stitches and just a bit of seaming for some festive Easter magic.

Level: Easy

Pattern: Lauren Espy

You will need the following:

- Worsted weight yarn (Sprightly Acrylic Worsted in Pale Yellow and Flame)
- Size F (3.75mm) crochet hook
- Pair of 9mm black safety eyes
- Polyester fiberfill stuffing
- Tapestry needle
- Stitch marker

- Straight pins (optional, though they're super helpful for attaching the pieces)
- Scissors

Gauge: Gauge is not critical to this project: just make sure the fabric you're making is on the tighter side with no holes, so your stuffing doesn't peek through.

Abbreviations:

- **Ch** - Chain
- **Hdc** - Half double crochet
- **Inv dec** - Invisible decrease
- **Inc** - Increase (work 2 sc into the same st)
- **Rnd** - Round
- **Sc** - Single crochet
- **Sl st** - Slip stitch
- **St(s)** - Stitch(es)
- ***** - Repeat the directions in between * and * as many times as stated.
- **()** - The number inside will indicate how many stitches you should have at the end of each round.



Instructions:

Make the Head

With pale yellow,

Rnd 1: 6 sc in magic ring. (6 sts)

Rnd 2: Inc in each st around. (12 sts)

Rnd 3: *Sc 1, inc* 6 times. (18 sts)

Rnd 4: *Sc 2, inc* 6 times. (24 sts)

Rnd 5: *Sc 3, inc* 6 times. (30 sts)

Rnd 6: *Sc 4, inc* 6 times. (36 sts)

Rnds 7-12: Sc 36.

Pro Tip: This chick is crocheted in spirals. Use a stitch marker to help you keep track of where your rounds begin and end.

Add safety eyes between rounds 10 and 11, 7 stitches apart.

Rnd 13: *Sc 4, inv dec 1* 6 times. (30 sts)

Rnd 14: *Sc 3, inv dec 1* 6 times. (24 sts)

Begin adding fiberfill and continue as you decrease.

Rnd 15: *Sc 2, inv dec 1* 6 times. (18 sts)

Rnd 16: *Sc 1, inv dec 1* 6 times. (12 sts)

Rnd 17: Inv dec around 6 times. (6 sts)

Fasten off and leave a long tail to close the piece.

Crochet the Beak

With flame,

Rnd 1: 6 sc in magic ring. (6 sts)

Rnd 2: Inc in each st around. (12 sts)

Rnd 3: *Sc 1, inc* 6 times. (18 sts)

Rnd 4: *Sc 1, inv dec 1* 6 times. (12 sts)

Rnd 5: Sc 12.

Fasten off and leave a tail for sewing. Sew the beak to the head, using the tail you left. Make sure to place the beak between the eyes, leaving 1 stitch on each side of the beak.

Make the Body

With pale yellow,

Rnd 1: 6 sc in magic ring. (6 sts)

Rnd 2: Inc in each st around. (12 sts)

Rnd 3: *Sc 1, inc* 6 times. (18 sts)

Rnd 4: *Sc 2, inc* 6 times. (24 sts)

Rnd 5: *Sc 3, inc* 6 times. (30 sts)

Rnd 6: *Sc 4, inc* 6 times. (36 sts)

Rnd 7: *Sc 5, inc* 6 times. (42 sts)

Rnd 8: Sc 42.

Rnd 9: *Sc 5, inv dec 1* 6 times. (36 sts)

Rnd 10: Sc 36.

Rnd 11: *Sc 4, inv dec 1* 6 times. (30 sts)

Rnds 12-13: Sc 30.

Rnd 14: *Sc 3, inv dec 1* 6 times. (24 sts)

Begin adding fiberfill and continue as you decrease.

Rnds 15-16: Sc 24.

Rnd 17: *Sc 2, inv dec 1* 6 times. (18 sts)

Rnd 18: Sc 18.

Fasten off and leave a tail for sewing. Sew the body to the head.

Make Two Feet

With flame,

Rnd 1: 6 sc in magic ring. (6 sts)

Rnd 2: *Sc 1, inc* 3 times. (9 sts)

Rnd 3: *Sc 2, inc* 3 times. (12 sts)

Rnds 4-5: Sc 12.

To make the toes: Fold the circle in half, lining up the stitches along the straight edge. You're going to crochet the edges together, working through the stitches on the front and back of the foot. To start, you'll skip one set of stitches next to the hook (we're not counting these). You'll have 5 sets of stitches to work into.

Rnd 6: *(Sc, hdc, sc) in the first set of stitches, sc in next set of stitches* 2 times, (sc, hdc, sc) in the last set of stitches. You'll have a total of 3 toe bumps.



Fasten off and leave a tail for sewing. Feet will remain unstuffed.

With a yarn needle, weave the tail through the foot toward the magic ring. Sew this area to the bottom of the chick body.

Make Two Wings

With pale yellow,

Rnd 1: 4 sc in magic ring. (4 sts)

Rnd 2: Inc in each st around. (8 sts)

Rnd 3: Sc 8.

Rnd 4: *Sc 1, inc* 4 times. (12 sts)

Rnd 5: Sc 12.

Rnd 6: *Sc 2, inc* 4 times. (16 sts)

Rnd 7: Sc 16.

Rnd 8: *Sc 2, inv dec 1* 4 times. (12 sts)

Rnd 9: *Sc 1, inv dec 1* 4 times. (8 sts)

Fasten off and leave a tail for sewing. Wings will remain unstuffed. Sew wings to the sides of the body.

Make Three Hair Pieces

With pale yellow Ch 4,

Row 1: In 2nd ch from hook, sl st in each ch across. (3 sts)

Fasten off and leave a tail for sewing. Attach hairs on the top of the head near the magic ring.



**Want To
Learn
More?**



Kawaii Amigurumi Crochet: Adorable Animals & Friends

Discover the basics of Kawaii crochet to stitch, build and decorate authentic amigurumi with instruction from crochet designer Stacey Trock. Using Japanese charts, you'll discover how to work spiral and joined rounds, add expressive features and customize projects for the perfect level of cuteness.



Easter Egg Shell Adorable Ornaments

By Crafts Editors

Hard boiled eggs are easy to work with because they don't float (which makes them easier to dye), however they have a very short shelf life that only allows you to enjoy them for a short period of time. I prefer to make blown Easter eggs, eggs that are hollowed out so that can last indefinitely and you can enjoy your decorations - especially the more elaborate ones - year after year.

My grandfather taught me the trick of blowing out eggshells when I was very young. He grew up during the depression and I imagine it was a way to ensure that the egg didn't go to waste just because you decorated it. He put a lot of time into his egg decorations, and I think that he liked to keep his favorites around, as well.

The technique is fairly simple, but it takes a little bit of practice.

You will need the following:

- A pin or fine needle
- Uncooked eggs
- A long needle with a large eye (I use a plastic one from a craft store)
- Twine or ribbon
- Anything that you would normally use to decorate eggs



Step 1:

Clean the outside of your eggs with soap and dry them thoroughly. Insert the pin into one end of the egg to make a small hole. Chip away at the hole with the pin until it is a bit larger, at least 1 millimeter in diameter. Repeat on the other side of the egg, making the hole in the base slightly larger than the hole on top.



If you try to make the hole too quickly, you can easily crack the egg. Chipping away at the initial hole does not take long and the extra minute is worth it so that you don't waste an egg.



Step 2:

Holding the egg over a bowl, place your mouth over one of the holes you just made (the smaller hole) and blow the egg out of the shell (through the larger hole). If it is very difficult to blow out the egg, you can use the pin to make your holes a bit larger.

Rinse off the egg shells and let them dry for a bit before you decorate them.



Step 3:

Decorate your eggs. You can use markers, stickers, glitter, dye or any other medium. I primarily used stickers and markers to decorate this batch of eggs.



Step 4:

Cut a 12 to 16-inch length of twine or ribbon and thread it through the eye of a needle that is long enough to go all the way through the egg.



Pull the needle all the way through the holes you made earlier, then thread it back through, making a loop at one end of the egg shell. Adjust the loop to the desired length, then tie a knot in the loose ends at the base of the egg.



You can tie a knot at the top to ensure that the twine never slips through the egg, but it really isn't necessary.



Step 5:

Repeat the process with all of your eggs and find a nice place to hang them! I use a stand that I bought for displaying holiday ornaments that really showcases the eggs.



Watercolor Egg Garland

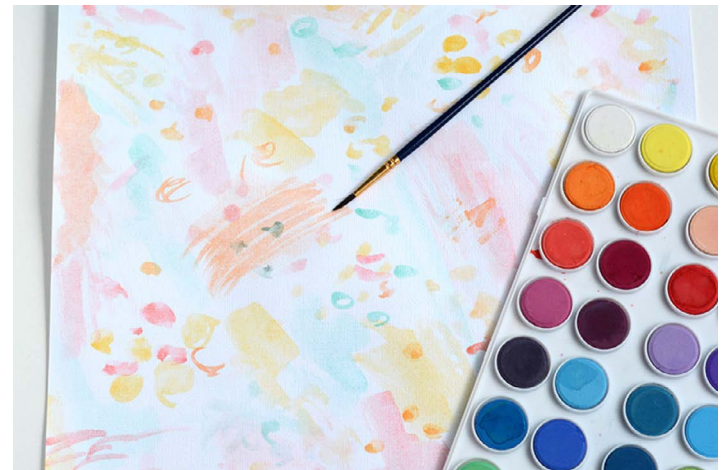
By Amy Robison

Get hoppin' and string up a colorful, festive garland before that Easter Bunny arrives! This project is easier than dyeing eggs (though that's another fun way to spend a crafternoon), and is a great way to get the whole fam in on the holiday action.

Level: Easy

You will need the following:

- Watercolor paints
- Watercolor paper or card stock
- Paintbrush
- Scissors
- Egg template
- Sewing machine and thread (or scotch tape and twine)



1. Paint Your Paper

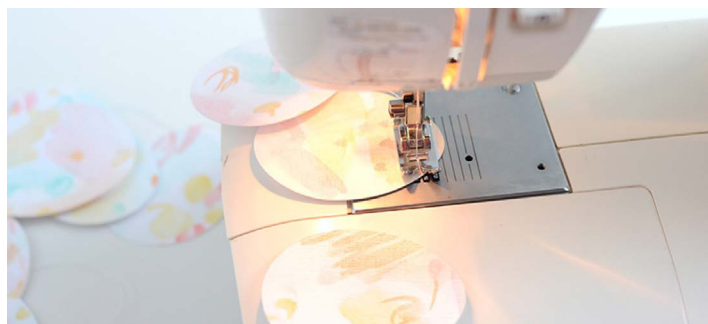
Grab your watercolors and let your inner artist come out and play. You can paint a pattern or keep it abstract with a variety of painting techniques that'll show you all the cool ways you can explore color.

To keep it in line with Easter, stick to a pastel color palette.



2. Cut Out the Easter Eggs

Print the PDF egg template, cut it out and trace it onto the back of your paper. Cut out each egg.



3. Assemble the Garland

There are two easy ways to turn your eggs into a garland: if you have a sewing machine, you can stitch the eggs together leaving a few inches between each egg to evenly space them out.

Pro Tip: Always test your stitches on a piece of scrap paper before sewing your garland. This way you can make any tension adjustments needed.



If you're not into sewing (or you wanna keep the whole process kid-friendly,) break out the scotch tape and assemble the garland with a length of twine.



4. Decorate

Once the garland is assembled, hang it up! These paper Easter eggs would also make adorable embellishments for scrapbook pages or handmade cards, or they can be used as gift tags for special Easter treats.



Watercolor Methods: Paint Application

Learn the secrets of unlocking two key ingredients for creating stunning watercolor paintings: the wet-on-wet and wet-on-dry techniques. Join artist and expert instructor Kateri Ewing as she helps you master these two essential methods for watercolor paint application.



Easter Goodies in These Fun Mini Paper Baskets

By Kristen Magee

Handmade mini paper baskets may just be the cutest way to gift candies, decorative eggs and other Easter treats. It's all thanks to a simple technique: paper weaving. Move the strips through one another, secure it with glue, stuff it with colorful artificial grass and say hello to your festive DIY gift wrap.

Level: Easy

Finished size: 2" tall x 2¾" wide

You will need the following:

- [The FREE Easter basket template PDF download](#) or SVG die cut files
- Lightweight cardstock
- Craft glue
- Scissors
- Washi or other low-tack tape



1. Print, Cut, Fold

Print and cut out the basket template pieces and score along all of the dotted lines. Fold all of the basket base strips along the score lines around the circle.

You'll also have five long paper strips and one shorter one. Set the short strip aside – you won't use it until the final step.



2. Glue the Strips

Use craft glue to attach the first paper strip to the inside of a basket strip, as close to the base as possible. Adhere the second strip just above the first, but this time on the outside of the basket base strip. Alternate adhering to the inside and outside until all five strips are glued to this one basket piece.

Pro Tip: Glue the strips as straight as possible and as close to each other as you can without overlapping.



3. Weave

Weave the first strip around the basket base, alternating from inside to outside as you go around.

Pro Tip: It's OK if the weaving is loose at this point. You'll tighten it up later.



4. Tape



5. Repeat

Weave the remainder of the long paper strips, pushing them toward the bottom of the basket as you work to tighten them. Adjust the vertical strips that are attached to the base as you work as well. (This also helps tighten them.)

Tape the end of each long paper strip to the base to keep them in place as you weave.

Continue to adjust, tighten and straighten the woven paper strips until you're happy with the tightness of the weave. There should be at least $\frac{1}{4}$ " of non-woven paper at the top of the vertical paper strips when you're finished.



Match up the cut ends with the horizontal woven strips on the far side of the basket. Don't sweat if they don't line up perfectly – real hand woven baskets aren't perfect, either!

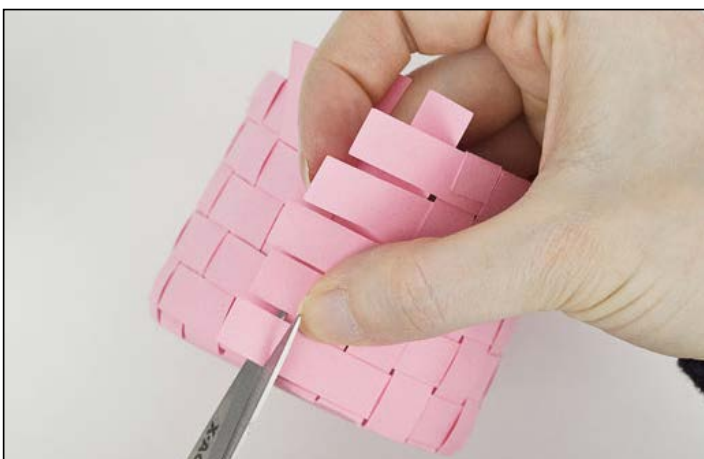
To close the basket, glue the ends to the same strip where you began. We glued the ends in an alternating fashion for uniformity, but you can glue all of them to the outside or the inside of the basket if you prefer.

Fold and glue the remaining vertical strip ends to finish the basket.

6. Fold the Top

Fold the non-woven ends of the vertical strips over the top of the basket. The woven paper will tell you how to fold: When the top horizontal paper strip is outside of the vertical strip, fold the end over to the outside of the basket; when the horizontal paper strip is on the inside of the vertical strip, fold the vertical strip toward the inside of the basket.

Pro Tip: Don't glue two or three of the vertical strip ends where you taped the horizontal strips. This makes it easier to do any final adjustments in the next step.



6. Finish the Basket

Remove the washi tape from the long paper pieces and tighten and adjust as needed. Trim any excess length with scissors.



8. Add a Handle

Add glue to each end of the shorter paper strip you set aside in step 1, and attach it to the basket to make a handle. Your basket is now ready to be personalized with a bow, stickers, glitter or anything else you're feeling!



3 Great Easter Egg Decorating Ideas

By Craftsy Editors

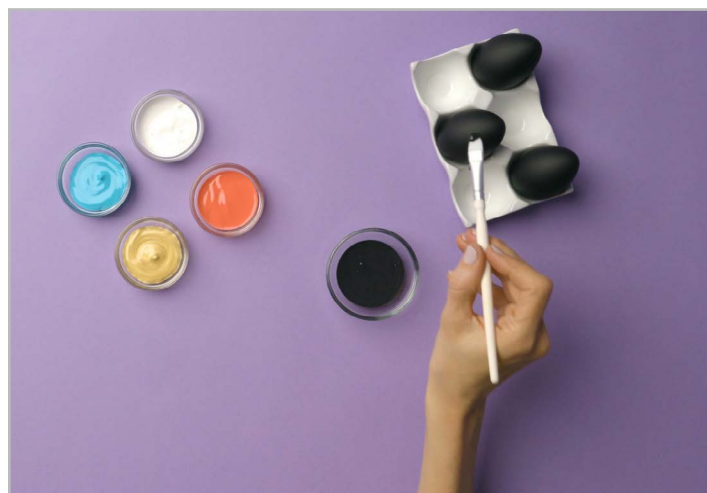
This Easter is all about keeping things fresh, and that means thinking way beyond basic dyed eggs. These beauties take cues from some of our favorite crafts – think painting, paper crafting and gardening – for totally original designs that are way too cool to hide.

GALAXY EGGS

Level: Easy

You will need the following:

- Eggs
- Fluid acrylic craft paint in black, orange, white, gold and blue
- Flat paint brush
- Thick round paint brush
- Toothbrush



1. Paint It Black

Paint a black coat onto your eggs, making sure to cover the entire surface.



2. Brush on Colors

Using a thick paintbrush with a flat, rounded head, dry brush the gold, orange and blue onto the eggs. Play around with the colors and create cool clusters of light, just like an actual galaxy.



3. Splatter the Stars

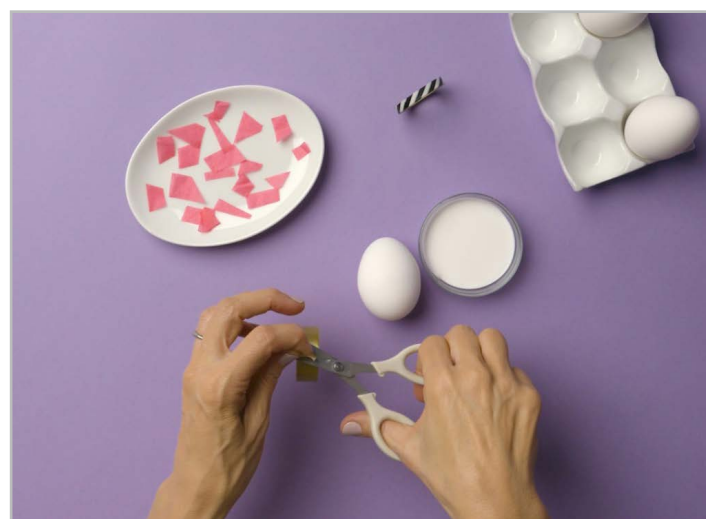
Dip a toothbrush in white paint and use your finger to splatter paint all around the egg.

ABSTRACT EGGS

Level: Easy

You will need the following:

- Eggs
- Tissue paper
- Scissors
- Washi tape in various colors and patterns
- Mod Podge
- Flat paint brush



1. Cut and Stick

Cut the tissue paper into little pieces and set them aside.



Cut off pieces of washi tape and stick them randomly around each egg. There are no rules here, so just go with what you like.



2. Paste on Tissue Paper

Use Mod Podge to brush on the scraps of tissue paper to the eggs, still keeping that random, abstract pattern.



1. Dye the Eggs

Dye your eggs various shades of green, then set 'em aside to dry.



BOTANICAL EGGS

Level: Easy

You will need the following:

- Eggs
- Tissue paper
- Scissors
- Washi tape in various colors and patterns
- Mod Podge
- Flat paint brush



2. Add Pretty Plants

Paint an area of your egg with Mod Podge and stick on some herb and plant trimmings. This can be anything, from some dill you have in your kitchen to little leaves and flowers from your garden.

Once you place each embellishment, brush more Mod Podge onto the plants to make sure they stick to the egg's surface.

Note: all of these egg tutorials are decorative. Not all of the supplies used are food-safe.



DIY a Sweet Watercolor Mother's Day Card

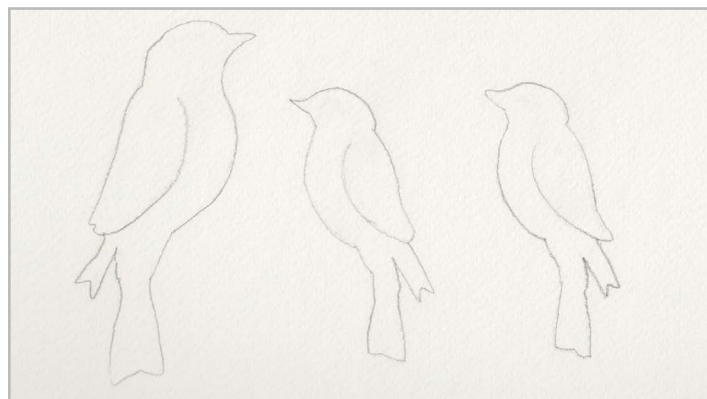
By Kateri Ewing

Mama and baby birds are a first sign of spring – and the perfect way to celebrate Mother's Day. This card is fun to customize to your family, and it'll come out great even if you've never tried watercolor before. Tweet!

Level: Easy

You will need the following:

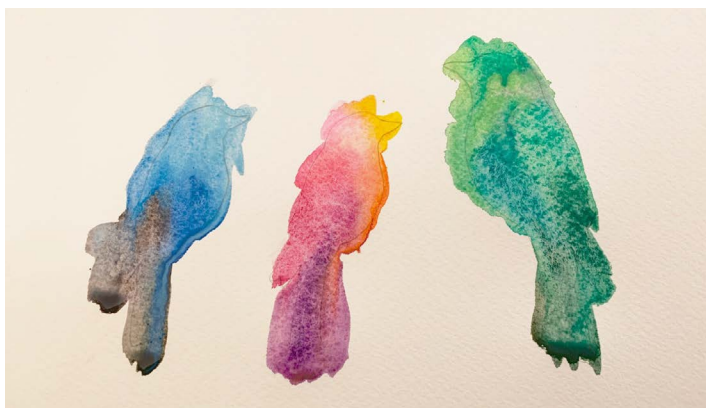
- Strathmore watercolor notecard, or a piece of card stock cut to 10×7 inches and folded in half
- One 9"x12" sheet of cold press watercolor paper
- [Birds template](#)
- Brightly colored watercolor paints in a variety of hues
- Watercolor paint brush (we used a size 8 pointed round)
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Very thin Washi tape (1/8"), twine or a brightly colored marker
- Tiny foam double-sided tape blocks (sold with scrapbooking supplies)



1. Trace the Template

Print your bird templates and trace them onto a piece of cold pressed watercolor paper. You can use a lightbox to trace, or just hold your paper up to a sunny window. Make a large bird for the mother, and smaller birds for the babies. We created our card with one mama bird and two littles.

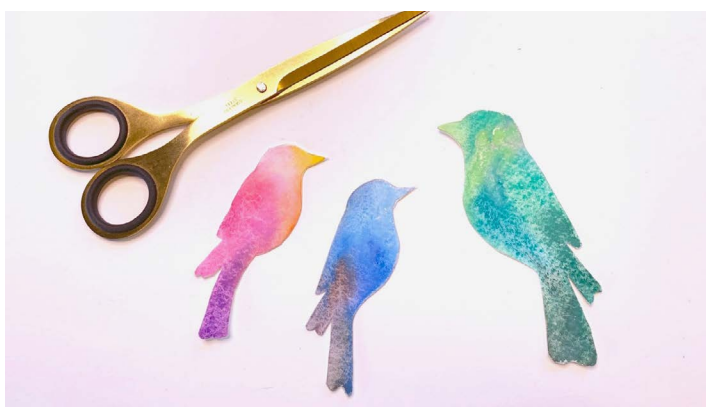
Pro Tip: Because we'll be cutting out these birds, placement doesn't matter. Trace them onto your watercolor paper wherever they fit.



2. Paint

Now for the fun! Decide on a color scheme for each bird, but before putting pigment to paper, paint a light water glaze over the first bird. Don't be afraid to go over the edges (remember, we're going to cut these out later). Once you have a water glaze, begin dropping in different colors until you have a look you love, and every part of the bird is covered.

Create one bird at a time, otherwise the paint might dry too fast before you complete them all. Once you have painted all the bird shapes, let them dry completely before continuing.



3. Cut Them Out

Once the paint is dry, use a pair of scissors to carefully cut out the birds. For the best results, try to stay just outside of the pencil line.

Pro Tip: If the birds get bent at all during the cutting process, place them under a heavy book until they lie flat.



4. Give 'Em Something to Sit On

Before sticking your birdies onto the notecard, play around with the layout to see what looks best. If you've got a big family (three or more baby birds), you can overlap them just a bit to fit more onto the card. Once you decide on your composition, give the birds a wire to sit on. This can be a painted or drawn line, a length of twine or a piece of thin washi tape (which is what we used).

Place or draw your "wire" line. Now attach three double-sided tape blocks on the back of each bird, evenly spaced at the top, middle and bottom. Position each bird on the card with the bottom of its belly resting on the wire.



Now just write a message inside and your handmade Mother's Day card is complete!



Grow Happy Embroidery Pattern

By Noa Aga

Everywhere we look, hoops are going green – literally! The #PlantLady trend has made it into the embroidery world, and we couldn't be more excited about it. (Especially those of us who aren't the best at remembering to water the real deal.)

Level: Easy

Finished size: 2" tall x 2¾" wide

You will need the following:

- [FREE embroidery pattern](#)
- 6" embroidery hoop
- 10" square piece of fabric (like linen or cotton)
- Embroidery floss in green (we used three different shades!), pink, and black
- Embroidery needle
- Scissors
- Transfer pen

1. Transfer the Pattern

To do this, print out the pattern and then lay your fabric on top of the page. Lightly trace the design onto the fabric with a wash-away fabric marker. (If you're having trouble seeing through, try taping the paper and fabric up against a sunny window. The design will shine right through.)



2. Set Your Embroidery Hoop

Place the fabric between the embroidery hoops and secure by adjusting the screw. Make sure the fabric is nice and tight – it'll make your stitching easier!



3. Embroider the Plant Pot

Here you'll use a satin stitch, which is an easy way to fill out shapes. Start by pulling your needle up from one side of the shape, like the bottom right corner. Then pulling your needle all the way over and down through the bottom left corner of the pot.



Keep going like that until you fill up the whole shape. (If you run out of thread, don't worry! Just make one to two knots close to the fabric on the wrong side of your art. Then cut the thread, leaving about ½ inch loose. Keep going where you left off with new thread.)



4. Embroider the Plant

Stitch the stem from bottom to top using the back stitch. Start by making one regular stitch, going up and down with your thread and needle. For your next stitch, you will take a step forward, leaving a space between the stitches, and come up with your needle through the fabric ¼ inch from where the last stitch ended. Then take a step back and go down with your needle right where the last stitch ended.



When you get to the top of the branch, make another stitch through the last leaf. Then use satin stitch to fill the leaf in. (The end of your last back stitch will create the point of the leaf.)



Continue stitching the remaining stems and leaves as you did the first one, varying colors as you like.



5. Embroider the Text

We'll stitch the letters using back stitch, but because the letters are small, we'll use a thinner thread.

Usually embroidery threads are made from a 6-strand floss, which is great for filling out shapes like those we did before. For your letters, carefully pull the strands apart to make a 3-strand floss. This thinner thread will make it easier to stitch small letters with curves.



Start with the edge of the letter and remember to make small stitches. You don't need to switch threads with every letter. Just keep going from one letter to the next until your happy message is complete!

Photo via Flickr Creative Commons user [Patrick](#)

Start Planning Your Spring Garden

By Meredith Skyer

Take it from a gardener who has made every mistake in the book, it pays to plan out your garden thoroughly. It's not the most fun gardening task, but it's entirely essential to a successful spring planting. Before you ever open a seed catalog or dig out those gardening tools, put pen to paper and start planning with these early spring gardening tips!

I keep a gardening notebook every year. I sketch out a layout for the garden, including bed sizes and container placements. Each plot in the garden is carefully configured and every detail is written, down to the variety planted and how many per space. Keeping good gardening records will be a huge help for planning out next year's garden.

There are a number of things you'll need to think about and decisions to make before you get planting. This

guide will help you to get it all on paper before you head to the garden center for the first time.

Things to consider for your spring garden plan:

SIZE

If you're just getting into gardening for the first time, it helps to start small. It's very easy to get overly ambitious and plant more seeds than you have time to care for. For beginners, somewhere between a 5' x 5' and 10' x 10' foot plot will be plenty.

The size of your garden matters a great deal. Some plants are space hogs and some can be tucked into corners here and there and be just fine. If you're hoping to grow behemoths like corn and melons, make sure right off the bat that you have the space for them. There's a reason these guys are usually grown in wide open fields – they need it.

Photo via Flickr Creative Commons user [Ruth Hartnup](#)

LOCATION

The next step to planning out your garden will be to decide on a location. Some would say this is the most important step. A good garden needs fertile soil, good drainage, plenty of sun and protection from pests. Make sure your location will allow you to put up a fence if needed, and be sure it won't be a point of contention with your neighbors.

It pays to get the soil from your chosen location tested early on to be sure it can support your plants. If it needs to be amended, it's good to know sooner rather than later. Also pay close attention to the type of soil you're dealing with. If it's clay or sand based, it may not drain properly and cause problems down the road. Your local cooperative extension can help with soil types and tests.

It's safe to say most plants enjoy a space with full sun and fertile soil. Make sure the place you choose will get sun for most of the day, as well as most of the season. The last thing you need is for your beautiful, sunny spot to become suddenly shaded by trees as the seasons change.

GARDENING SYSTEM

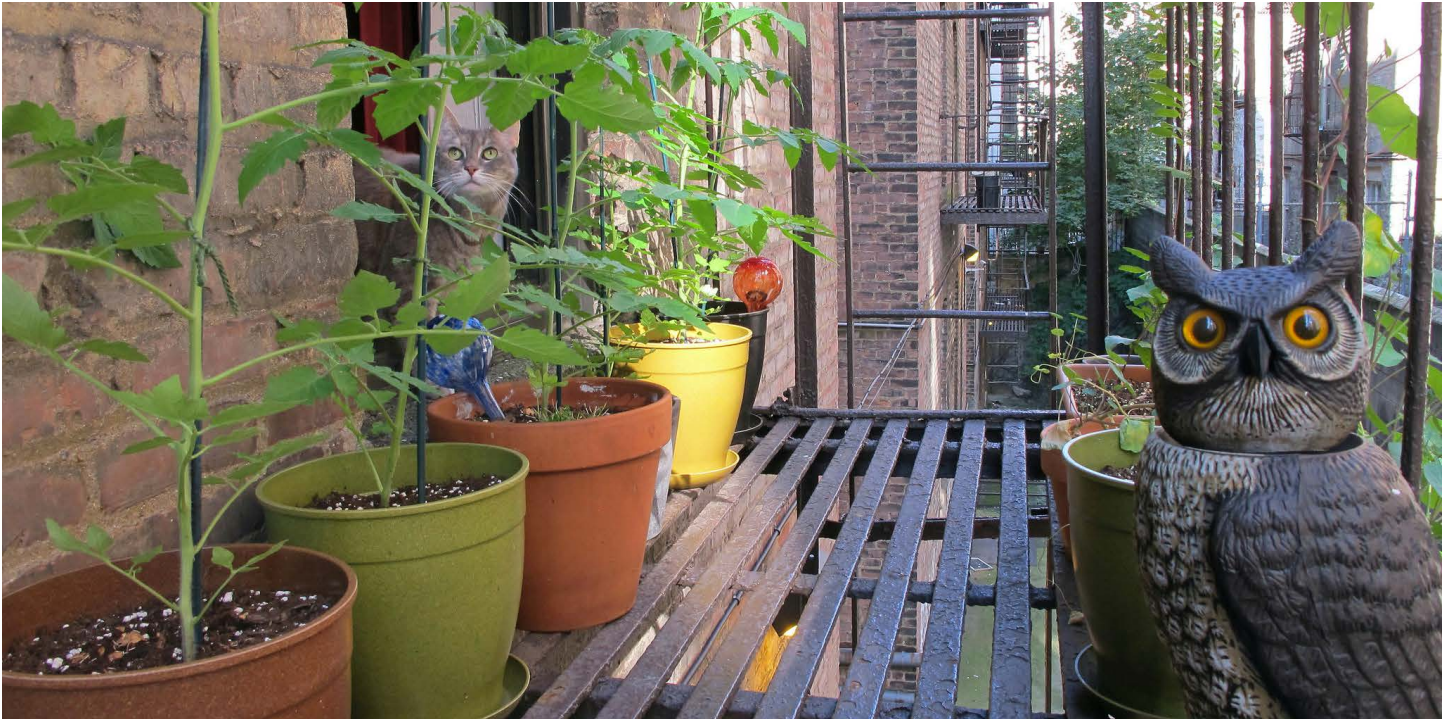
Do you want to grow in raised beds? Dying to try out square foot gardening? Feel safe with the classic row garden? There are planting systems to fit every individual need. Decide on your planting system now so you'll know how much space you need and which supplies to purchase

CLASSIC ROW GARDENING

While row gardening has fallen out of fashion in recent years, it's still a perfectly reliable system if you have the space for it. Planting in neat little rows is also great for the health and pollination of many common crops. If you're planning to plant in rows, think ahead and make a plan for pest control, weed defense and trellis use.

CONTAINER GARDENING

If you've been dreaming of a beautiful backyard garden but don't have a lot of space, a container garden is your answer. An abundance of plants can be grown in containers on patios, decks, balconies and rooftops. As long as you have access to some sun, you can grow in pots. Plants of almost every sort, from flowers and veggies to fruit trees can grow comfortably in a container.

Photo via Flickr Creative Commons user [Kristine Paulus](#)

RAISED BEDS

Similar to container gardening, raised bed gardening is great if you have limited space, terrible soil or mobility problems.

Raised beds are a favorite among gardeners for many reasons. For starters, the soil can be catered to your needs, as you will be filling your beds rather than using what's already available. The soil in these beds is never stepped on, which means it never becomes compacted. This allows it to drain excess water out quickly. The soil in these beds also warms more quickly in the spring, giving you a longer growing season.

SQUARE FOOT GARDENING

Square foot gardening is basically employing the use of a raised bed, but involves the use of a grid and specially made soil to plant crops close together. Square foot garden beds are perfect for gardeners in urban or suburban areas who don't have a lot of space to work with. They also boast less weed and pest problems and more prolific plants.

CHOOSE PLANT VARIETIES

A general rule of vegetable gardening is to plant

what you eat. It may seem obvious, but many gardeners make the mistake of planting a whole bed of a crop they've never tried, then have to find homes for their veggies when they discover they don't care for the flavor. It's too easy to fall into the seed catalog ploy of buying colorful chard or super-sized beans, but if you don't eat them, what's the point?

If you're a first-time gardener, consider trying some easy-to-grow plants, such as mixed greens, beans or zucchini (and see our post on the 5 easiest vegetables for your first garden). If you have more experience, try venturing into the land of melons, pumpkins or peppers.

When choosing plant varieties, think about how long your growing season is (the time between last frost and first frost), and how much space you have to grow the plant. These two factors will help you decide which seeds or starts to get. Don't forget to have fun with it! Practicality is a wonderful thing, but part of the joy of seed catalogs and garden centers is the abundance of beautiful and interesting crops inside.



CONSIDER COMPANION PLANTING

Once you've planned out your gardening system and plant varieties, you may consider looking into companion planting. In companion planting, plants are placed near their plant "buddies" who help them to thrive. Some plant buddies ward off pests and disease, others boost the flavor of the crops around them, and help each other grow by providing shade or something to climb.

The traditional three sisters garden is a great example of companion planting. The corn grows fastest, and provides a hearty stalk for the next crop, beans, climb up. Squash is planted at the base of the plants and the large leaves provide cover for the ground to eliminate water evaporation. Beans are nitrogen fixers, and their presence improves the soil so the corn and squash can thrive. All the plants live within harmony and help each other to be their best.



Photo via Flickr Creative Commons user [Lollykniit](#)

If you're interested in companion planting, there are an abundance of books on the market to help you out, and you can keep your eye on us for future posts on companion planting!

Now it's time to stop reading, get out that notebook, and get planning, spring is coming!



Designing Elegant Edible Gardens

Explore the history of kitchen gardens and gather inspiration for your own unique space. Then, map out your design on paper, create a five-year plan for your space, and learn the steps for success! Discover the essentials of the four-square design model and the many benefits of this crop rotation system before properly grouping and placing your plants.



Vegetable Know-How: Techniques for Best Results

Confidently cook any vegetable for crave-worthy results. Veg out with tips for blanching broccoli, spinach, and more, and expertly sauté corn, grape tomatoes, and basil for a refreshing summer dish. Then, whip up a versatile glaze that transforms your favorite vegetables into dishes you can't get enough of.



<https://go.craftandhobby.com/learn/>

