

Spin·off Presents:

Spinning for Crochet





I love to crochet with handspun yarn. Crochet and handspinning are perfect partners—each brings out the best in the other. With crochet, you can literally go in any direction—the loops can be formed in straight organized lines or they can be piled on each other, building amazing textures and shapes. With crochet, you can make big chunky cat baskets or intricate fine blouses the color of sunsets and moonrises; you can make lacy bags to hold your yarn while you work or tightly worked bags to hold your oil bottle. As you form the loops, you'll see that the possibilities are seemingly endless—each creates more options, more directions you can go. The same is true for handspinning—you choose your fiber, color, texture, and grist. Do you want a fine soft cotton or lustrous wool with a touch of silk? Do you want a thick, chaffy, bulky rope or a fine laceweight yarn? Are you going to keep the natural brown or dye your fiber to reflect the color of the heavens?

All this choice, though, can get a little overwhelming. That's when it is nice to have a little structure and guidance. This eBook provides just that—a look at why spinning is so well paired with crochet and how to use the elements of both to produce beautiful, functional pieces that will inspire you for decades to come.

Happy spinning,

Amy

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Spin·off
It's about making yarn by hand

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Old World Crochet

A brief history

BY PRISCILLA A. GIBSON-ROBERTS

When is crochet not really crochet? Or at least not crochet as we commonly know it? When it goes by the name of shepherd's knitting (Scotland), pjoining or kroking (Norway), nocka (Lapland), crochet de Bosnie or Bosnian crochet (France), and simply, hooking (central Asia). For the sake of consistency I'll call it Old World crochet in this article. All these terms refer to a slip stitch structure worked with a short, flat hook often made from the upper portion of a spoon handle. Though referred to by many names, the technique varies from region to region only by which side of the chain loop is encircled when making a stitch. With all of these techniques, the structure is a spiraling tube and the pattern is developed in contrasting colors. When making a stitch, the lower bar of a stitch in the previous row is hooked and lifted, exposing the two ends. So colors are revealed as small vertical stitches. The design is decidedly bias, leaning to the left. The surface looks a lot like needlepoint, although it can look like it is beaded from a distance. The back of the work looks like the knitted stockinette stitch lying on its side when worked in only one color

HISTORY

While these Old World crochet techniques are simple to work, they have been difficult to trace historically be-

cause the technique is a folk art passed from generation to generation. I came across a pair of socks from Afghanistan while I was doing research for my book, *Ethnic Socks and Stockings*, that baffled me. I was familiar with "Bosnian crochet" (slip stitch crochet worked around the upper half of the chain loop of the previous round) and finally realized that the legs of these socks were made in a similar way, but the slip stitches were worked through the lower half of the loop. I searched through all possible references and found that this technique (slip stitch crochet worked through the lower half of the loop) was practiced in the northern-most reaches of Scotland and called "shepherd's knitting."

Shortly thereafter, the English translation of *Crochet: History and Technique* by Lis Paludan became available and it included several pages on this obscure technique. But the book didn't mention anything about slip stitch crochet in the Eastern world. In the meantime, Noel Thurner translated a Norwegian resource for me that indicated the technique came from the Orient.

One of the things that fascinated me about Old World crochet is the inherent slant toward the left of the patterning, whether worked through the top or bottom of the loop. Because of this slant it's impossible to achieve truly symmetrical patterning, although you can approach symmetry in small repeats.

As I developed a broader understanding of the technique, it became clear that it originated in central Asia. I have traced pieces as far east as Kashmir in northern India where it was used to create gloves with intricate floral patterns worked with very fine yarns. The gloves start at the wrist, often with a band worked through the upper loop to resist rolling.

CENTRAL ASIAN SOCKS

Among some of the nomadic peoples of central Asia (the mountainous regions of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan in particular), the Old World crochet techniques are used to create socks, and the designs are much less refined than the examples from Kashmir. Natural colors are often used for the simpler versions, but in the more elaborate pieces the colors are often intense. The structure of these socks is simple, consisting of a wide leg and a loosely shaped, over-sized foot. The socks are usually designed with bands of pattern on the leg, and then the design changes dramatically at the foot. On some the foot is knitted, but most are worked in a simple stripe spiraling around the foot. Others have smaller, elaborate overall patterns reminiscent of weaving designs. In most cases, these socks were worked from the top down.

In this region these socks are part of the traditional dress worn by men when they play a game similar to polo. Women also wear the socks. The dense structure in combination with the over-sized proportions makes it easy to layer the socks and keep warm in cold weather.

Old World crochet appears to have been taken on an overland route to the Middle East and beyond. In the Middle East I found examples of socks that are the conventional shape, contouring to the foot, though they don't fit as snugly as Western socks. The socks are worked from the toe to the top in most cases. The designs are small and controlled, making the slant less apparent. In these socks, there is limited use of



Middle Eastern socks purchased by a textile collector in Turkey. The colors and yarn indicate that they are from the early 1950s. The small, independent designs appear symmetrical—true of most of the work in this region. Courtesy of Rae Erdahl.



These socks were acquired in the 1960s by a Peace Corps volunteer in Faizabad, a remote village in the northeast corner of Afghanistan in the Hindu Kush mountain range. They are believed to be made by the Tadjik women—members of an ethnic group living in the area. The socks are part of a uniform worn by men as they play *bos-kashi*, a regional variation of polo. The over-sized proportions allow the women to layer the socks for warmth. Courtesy of Robert Miller.

working through the upper side of the chain loop—this contrasts the horizontal units against the vertical units of the main body of the sock. Bands made in this way were used around the ankle as a design element and around the top to prevent the fabric from curling.

BALKANS

In the Balkans, we find more extensive use of Old World crochet that is worked though the *upper* side of the loop. Here the technique is often used as a design element in combina-

tion with knitting. It can be worked in single crochet (allowing for vertical, symmetrical designs) as well as in slip stitch crochet. Further into the Balkans, we find socks that are made entirely by working through the upper side of the chain loop. In both cases, the socks more closely resemble booties with wide legs. For the first time, textured patterns in one color created by alternately working around the upper and lower sides of the loops can be found, most often in small bags

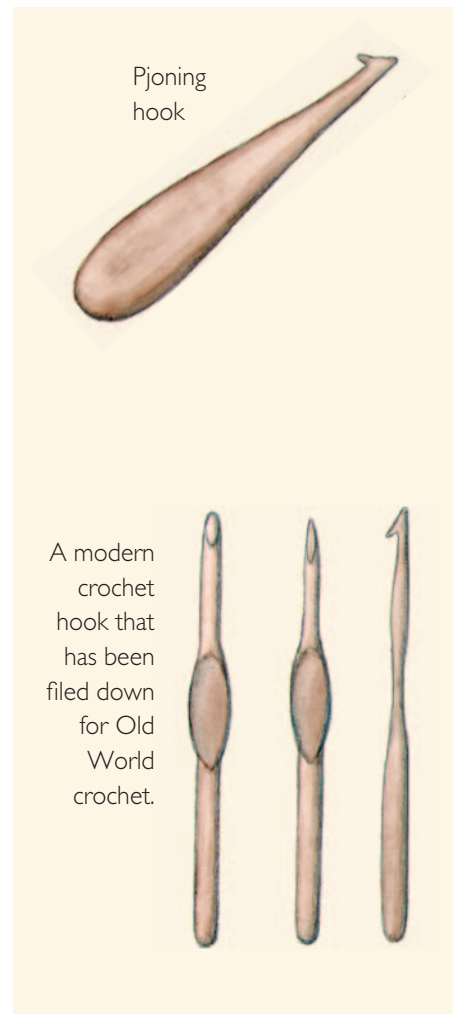
and bands. The bands were probably worked in large circles because, if worked flat, the yarn must be broken off at the end of a row and the following row worked again from right to left.

WESTERN EUROPE

Moving northward through Eastern Europe, once again the predominant Old World crochet technique involves working around the *lower* side of the loop. Here patterns are small and simple, used mostly in utilitarian mittens. According



These bootie-shaped socks with a wide leg were purchased in a marketplace in the former Yugoslavia. The pair is worked through the upper bar of the chain loop in its entirety—with the bias slant dominating the design. Courtesy of Rae Erdahl.



to the literature, utilitarian uses were also dominant in Scandinavia, although a contemporary craftswoman has indicated that it was used for more elegant purposes such as christening gowns. This is certainly true in Finland. In the Korsnas district of Finland, working through the upper loop in single crochet was done in a traditional regional sweater dating to the early 1800s. The use of single crochet allows for a vertical, symmetrical patterning that is not possible with the slant of slip stitching. The lower section and upper yoke of the body were worked in crochet, as were the lower and upper sections of the arms. Worked as a circular piece, openings were cut for the sleeves and to shape the neck. In Sweden, fabric for waistcoats was created in similar fashion, then cut and stitched into the garment with the rows of pattern positioned vertically.

We find some use of the slip stitch technique in Germany and France, but it is scarce in most of Great Britain (aside from northern Scotland) and the Americas. The only use of Old World crochet

in the United States appears to have been in mittens, primarily in the northeastern states where large populations of Europeans congregated. Because there were many isolated pockets of European groups involved in the settling of the Great Plains, I guess that you might find these sturdy, warm mittens in small, local historical museums, but I have been unable to follow this thread yet.

PRISCILLA GIBSON-ROBERTS of Bastrop, Texas, continues to study historical and ethnic socks with a passion, as evidenced by her book *Simple Socks—Plain and Fancy*. In her book, she has taken the design techniques gleaned from her research and applied them to thoroughly modern socks. The socks are shaped in both the heel and the toe with a short-row technique that takes the mystery out of turning heels and makes a toe that actually fits.

Resources

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Old World Crochet Bags

BY JOHN YERKOVICH

Delightful bags to carry small treasures



A while ago, when I was visiting Priscilla Gibson-Roberts, I noticed a small white crocheted bag hanging in her studio. It looked simple, but it was charming. Seeing my interest in this bag, Priscilla taught me the basics of an Old World crochet technique used to create this treasure.

Having been so charmed by the small white bag, I wanted to make my own bag. I stayed up until the early hours of the morning to complete my first one. It was simple—yellow and black triangles on a white background with a four-strand, braided neck cord. I was hooked.

Designing and making these small bags has been a great way to develop the crochet skills involved in this technique. These small projects have also improved my design skills. They offer a stress-free opportunity to play with colors and patterns. Without preparation or planning, I can pick up some yarns and a hook and go.

Bags are just the beginning. Before I tried crochet I was led to believe that crochet in general was limited in its possibilities. After a few projects, as far as I can tell, that isn't so. These techniques are well suited to making bags, socks, hats, gloves, and mittens. I've even wondered about shoes or, possibly, some type of coat.

YARNS FOR OLD WORLD CROCHET

I have used singles, two-ply, and three-ply yarns, both Z- and S-plied yarns, and both millspun and handspun yarns and all were suitable for Old World crochet. I have been most pleased with the projects that I have made from my handspun.

My preference is a singles yarn spun Z with a fairly high amount of twist. I find that it is easy to split the plies when working with a plied yarn, and that is annoying

These wonderful bags are great for holding treasures like precious rocks.

Notes

1. Slip stitch through the front loop makes up the majority of the work here. Most of the color work is developed in these areas.
2. Slip stitch through the back loop is used as a way to create decorative bands that act as transitional breaks between patterns, as the stabilizing edge at the top of a bag, or as a fold line for a hem.
3. There are some things the charts just can't show. It is necessary, at times, to add or subtract a stitch in the middle of a pattern to make the numbers work. Because of this, do not take the charts absolutely literally. To add a stitch, work into the front and then back of the same stitch. To subtract a stitch, work through two stitches together.
4. The braid is created in two rounds. The first round alternates a dark stitch with a light stitch. To throw both halves of the braid forward, the second round is worked through the stitch just behind the braid. This stitch is the same stitch that the braid was worked through.
5. When making eyelets, always skip the same number of stitches that you chained.
6. When working with more than one color, there may be floats that seem long. It is possible to catch long floats, but I usually opt not to because it almost always shows through on the right side. Try to strand these floats somewhat loosely. It takes practice to get the feel for this. When working with three colors at one time, hold the boundary or border color in the left hand and alternate the other two colors in the right hand, picking up and dropping them systematically to prevent twisting them into a tangled mess.
7. Charts are read from bottom to top and from right to left.
8. The symbols on the charts indicate how you work through the stitches on the previous round (i.e., back, front, behind, chain, etc.) and not how the current round you are working on will lay.
9. On a bag with a draw cord inside a hem, place the cord before you stitch down the hem. Hems can be stitched with a whip stitch.

and slows the work. A singles yarn with more twist is usually a smoother yarn and is less apt to split. The bags featured here are made with yarns spun from Navajo Churro—a dual-coated breed of sheep. At times, the Churro yarns were a little challenging because hairy wools can produce yarns that are difficult to work with because the hook gets caught in the hair easily. But I really like the look of the finished fabric. With the exception of the tan yarn, I dehaired the wool before handcarding to make the yarns easier to use. The undercoat was quite fine.

The yarns in the bags shown here are singles yarns spun Z at an average of 26 wraps per inch with an approximate twist angle of 30 degrees. An ounce or two of each color of fiber provided plenty of yarn for these three bags.

SHIFTS AND MANAGING THE CHARTS

The way stitches are worked in Old World crochet causes the beginning of the round to move one-half stitch to the left each round so the fabric slants or has a bias to the left. When making tubes, like these bags, this slant isn't seen in the shape of the finished tube but it does become noticeable in multicolor patterns.

When a multicolor pattern is worked into a bag it slants to the left, although the charts don't show this slant. So, you can't take the charts absolutely literally. Sometimes it is necessary to add or subtract a stitch in the middle of a pattern to make the pattern look right.

Another way to manage the effect of the bias when doing color work is to maintain a mostly vertical line at the beginning of the round. To do this it is occasionally necessary to make what I call “a shift.” A shift is done when the design is changing from one pattern to another. The last round of the current pattern should end so that it lines up above what appears to be the beginning of the round. The shifts have been marked on the charts.

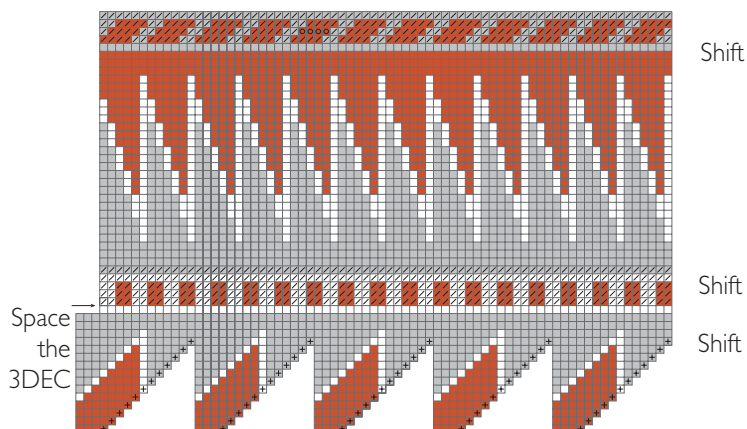
John used graph paper and colored pencils to create his designs.



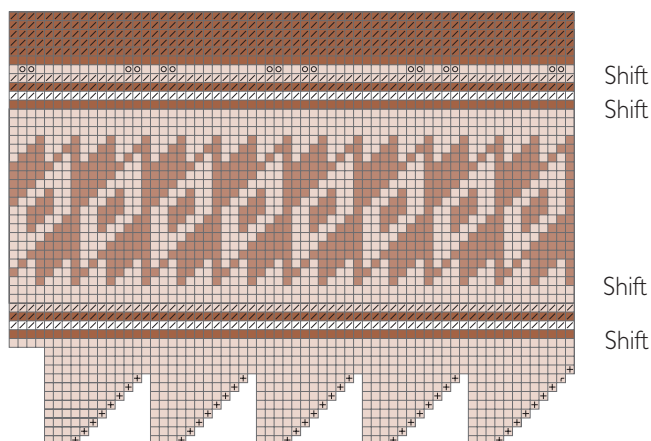
Key

-  SLST TFL
-  SLST TBL
-  SLST through stitch behind braid
-  Skip one stitch and work one CHST
-  SLST INC TFL

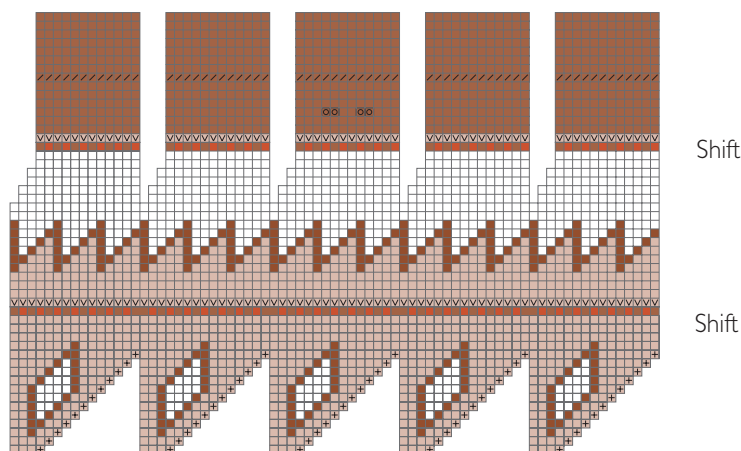
Worked through ST in round below



For each of the three bags in this column use the **Cast on for a round-bottom bag, in the glossary**. The first row of the chart shows the third round after the cast on. Space the 3 DEC in the solid while row evenly across the row.



For a variation in closures, this bag incorporates holes around the top edge for a drawstring to be woven through.



The uppermost row of SLST TBL stitches provides a neat fold to create a hem that holds a drawstring inside. Begin using this chart on second round after CO.

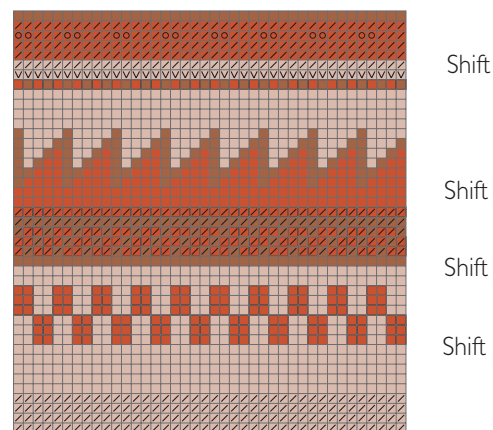
A shift isn't a particular type of stitch. It is an adjustment or realignment between the chart and the piece of work in your hands. The "shift" markings on the charts tell you to stop and take a moment to decide what stitch should be the beginning of the next round of the chart.

WHERE TO BEGIN

Before beginning work on any of the bags, spend some time looking at the charts. Use the sampler chart to acquaint yourself with the stitches that you'll be using. Read through the notes; they will help fill in any of the gaps in the drawings and charts.

The sampler introduces chain stitch, slip stitch through the back loop and through the front loop, how to use these stitches as textural and structural elements, some concepts in color work with both two- and three-color patterns, how to negotiate bias, and making eyelets for cords. Good luck and enjoy!

JOHN YERKOVICH lives on a small farm in the Fingerlakes region of New York with his partner, Jenifer, and their three children. He dabbles in designing and making fiber tools in addition to his interest in spinning, knitting, and crocheting. Currently, John assists a local glass artist in his studio.



Sampler Bag. All of these charts are read from bottom to top and right to left. Begin by working 40 chain stitches. Join into round by working a SLST TBL of first chain stitch. Then follow chart. Sew bottom edge together when finished.

Spinning for Crochet

Does twist direction matter?

BY MAGGIE CASEY WITH MARGARET TULLIS

I've often been asked if the direction of twist matters in a handspun crochet yarn. As a noncrocheting spinner, I didn't have a clue. Margaret Tullis teaches crochet and was curious as well, so we decided to find out. We knew that just by using yarn, you are changing the amount of twist whether you are knitting, crocheting, weaving, or even winding it into a ball. But does the direction of twist also make a difference? The first thing we did was look at the millspun crochet yarn we sell in the shop (Shuttles, Spindles and Skeins in Boulder, Colorado). While most yarns are spun Z (clockwise) and plied S (counterclockwise), our crochet yarns, Paton's Opera and DMC's Cebelia, are spun S and plied Z. Then we pulled out our spinning and crochet books and magazines. Most authors didn't mention the twist direction, but those who did had different opinions. What to do? Experiment!

I spun two skeins of singles yarn from Bluefaced Leicester (BFL) top using a worsted draft, one skein Z, one S, and passed them off to Margaret, who whipped up swatches. Margaret noticed a difference in the two yarns immediately, but we wanted to double-check our results, so we found some unsuspecting crocheters to test our samples. Each of our crocheters held the hook in the right hand and had the same results. When they crocheted the Z-twist singles, everyone ended up with more twist in the yarn between the work and the ball. With the S-twist singles, the yarn opened up and became softer and less twisted. Our next step was to see if the same thing happened with plied yarn. Was the last direction of twist the crucial factor?

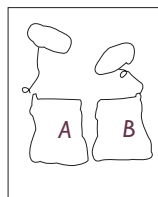
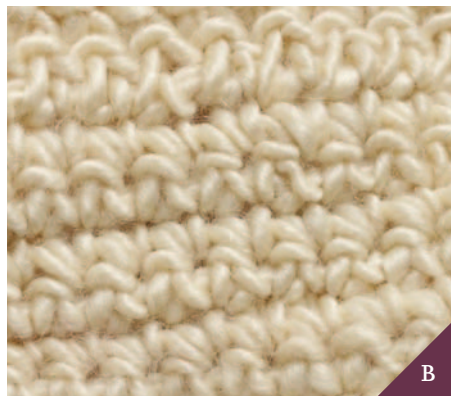
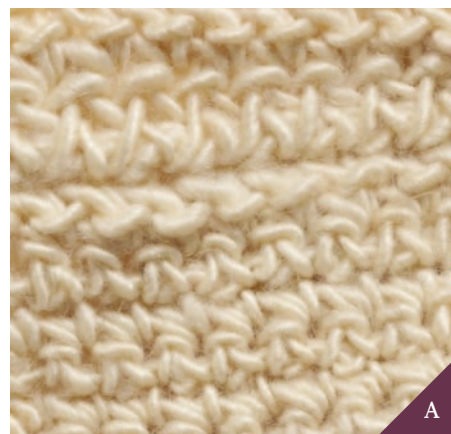
SPINNING

Maggie Casey: I tried to make almost identical yarns for Margaret with the only variable being the direction of twist. Before I started spinning, I thought I had the easy job—all I had to do was spin a little to the right and a little to the left; how hard could that be? Well, it turned out to be way harder than I thought it would be. Spinning the Z-twist yarns was easy, but matching the yarn in size and amount of twist while spinning in the opposite direction was difficult. Over the years, my twist-controlling hand had gotten very adept at controlling Z-twist. If I let too much twist enter the drafting triangle, I could slightly unroll the fiber and back off the twist as it en-

tered the triangle, but for this project, I had to untwist in the opposite direction. I finally got the hang of it, but in the early skeins, I had to compensate by going to a lower drive-wheel ratio to make the S-twist singles yarn the same size and with the same amount of twist as the Z samples. I spun two yarns, one Z and one S, for each sample: first a two-ply BFL and then a three-ply Polwarth (both spun worsted from combed fiber). Then I tried a two-ply yarn from carded wool spun woolen in both directions. For the sacque, Margaret requested Merino top, spun worsted. Plying wasn't a problem; I could ply in either direction without difficulty.

CROCHETING

Margaret Tullis: I think we can agree that twist direction matters, but the important thing to consider is what it means ultimately in the finished fabric. Do yarns plied in different directions show similar characteristics? I found that the S-spun/Z-plied yarn crocheted up into a firmer fabric, while the Z-spun/S-plied fabric was fluffier. The Z-plied sample seems to have more luster, and the S-plied yarn is duller. In the BFL yarn, there seems to be a slight color shift between the two samples, even though all the yarn was spun from the same fiber. I found that it was easier to crochet with the Z-plied yarn as the plies separated in the S-plied yarn. In the hat sample, the three-ply yarn was delightful (especially because I love working with the round three-ply yarns), but even then the Z-plied



In these singles samples, the **(B)** S-twist yarn is a bit softer and appears matte in the fabric compared to the **(A)** Z-twist yarn, which is harder and more lustrous in the final fabric.

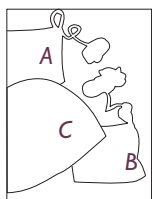
yarn was easier to manage and had more spring. The S-plied sample relaxed, and I felt like I was fighting with the yarn while crocheting. The hand of the final Z-plied fabric was not as soft as the S-plied. In the finished samples, I found that the third ply of the three-ply yarn distracted from stitch definition. In the woolen-spun samples, the S-plied yarn did untwist a little and the plies became more open when I was working with the yarn, while the Z-plied yarns worked up smoothly.

Stitch definition isn't the only consideration in crochet. Historically, crochet developed mainly in two forms—one decorative, the other utilitarian. In the nineteenth century in Europe, crochet was developed as an imitation of bobbin lace for embellishment. Slip-stitch crochet and Bosnian crochet are examples of sturdy, utilitarian crochet that was developed for strength and warmth. As I

was working with the three-ply yarns, I found that they lent themselves to this utilitarian form as did the woolen-spun samples. The S-plied woolen yarn didn't split as much as the worsted samples (maybe the random fiber direction keeps it together better), and the Z-plied yarn created a sturdier fabric. Stitch definition can be achieved with the air space or holes characteristic of many granny squares. Crocheting an afghan with the S-plied yarn would be a treat. The woolen yarns are lofty and cozy.

As we started to talk about the article's project sample, I tried to think of a small project that would show off our findings. We chose Ashland Bay Merino for the great colors. I asked Maggie to spin worsted because I knew it would show stitch definition the best in a two-tone pattern, and I hoped the simple act of crocheting would untwist the S-plied (rosewood) yarn enough to show

a matte contrast. I was particularly interested in the matte versus shiny possibilities. Fascinated as I am with felting and fulling, I wondered if some of the S-plied yarn that was unplying slightly as I crocheted would make a soft, open fabric that would be good for fulling. The first turquoise green S-ply yarn was underspun a bit so it was perfect for trying out the fulling experiment. The other yarns for the project had more twist than the first sample and worked well. There was not as much contrast as I would have liked (it is subtle). A woolen-spun S-plied yarn for the background (rosewood) would appear more matte than the worsted yarn. The Z-plied yarn certainly showed off the stitch design. I like working with the Z-twist yarns. I like the idea of being able to put in or take out twist as I crochet, and I'd like it even more if I could crochet equally with both hands!



In these 2-ply samples (**A** and **B**), the (**B**) Z-ply yarn is easier to crochet than the (**A**) S-ply yarn which splits during crocheting. In the final fabric, the S-ply

yarn is soft and more matte in appearance than the Z-ply yarn, which is harder and more lustrous. (**C**) In the hat, Margaret enjoyed working with the 3-ply Z-ply yarn best, but the final fabric was not as soft as the S-ply yarn. Margaret used the Z-ply 3-ply yarn to crochet from the top of the hat to the bottom of the popcorn row. From there on, she used the S-ply yarn.

I wondered if more yarnovers, such as in the taller stitches like treble crochet (tr), would make the effect more dramatic. I sampled some trebles and found that the added yarnovers did introduce more twist than single crochet stitches. In all of this, hook size and gauge can make a difference in the amount of twist added or subtracted to the yarn, but the real difference here seemed to come from the direction of twist of the final plied yarn. While the bag could have been made from yarn all spun the same direction, the bag is more distinctive because the accent pattern stitches are Z-ply and have a harder twist than the other stitches, making them stand out more.

Maggie and Margaret: The direction of twist does matter, but which direc-

tion is best? Of course, the answer is “it depends.”

It depends on what you are making; if you are doing fine lacy crochet where you want crisp stitch definition and if you are a right-handed crocheter, a final Z-twist will give you lovely defined stitches. If you are crocheting a baby blanket, afghan, or something where drape and softness are your first concerns, a final S-twist may give you a better result. Spinners who crochet with the left hand might try reversing these suggestions. The best way to know which direction to spin is to sample. Spin a little, crochet, and sample until you get a fabric you love, and enjoy the benefits of being able to spin your own yarn!

Project Notes

Fiber: Ashland Bay Merino top: 1½ oz turquoise green (1 oz for the S-plied yarn and ½ oz for the Z-plied yarn), 2 oz rosewood, and 1 oz peach.

Preparation: Not predrafted.

Drafting method: Worsted (short forward draw).

Wheel: Schacht Matchless.

Wheel system: Scotch tension.

Ratio (singles/plying): 1:1:1 (Z/S); 9:1 (S/Z).

Singles wraps per inch: 31.

Number of plies: 2.

Twist angle: 20°.

Plied bumps per inch: 9.

Plied wraps per inch: 18.

Total yardage: 332.

Yards per pound: 1,180.

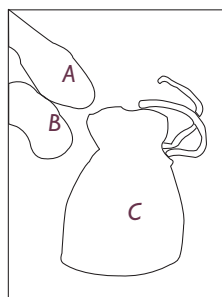
Yarn classification: Sportweight to DK.

Yardage used: 170.

Hook: U.S. sizes C and D; size B if you do not full the base; and size F for drawstring.

Gauge: 5 stitches and 5 rows in single crochet with D hook = 1".

Finished size: 7" wide, 8" high (excluding base).



Margaret Tullis worked with spinner Maggie Casey to create crocheting yarns for this bag that enhanced the stitch definition and that were pleasant to crochet with—by changing the twist direction of the yarns to create the effects desired. A) Z-plied turquoise, B) Z-plied peach, C) saque.

changing the twist direction of the yarns to create the effects desired. A) Z-plied turquoise, B) Z-plied peach, C) saque.



S-PLIED SACQUE

Base (a flat circle)

I began the bag by first crocheting the base with the S-plied Merino (Ashland Bay turquoise green) with a size D hook. For a stiffer, flatter base, full it by wetting it with hot soapy water and rolling it back and forth in a sushi mat or other ridged mat until the fabric hardens. Allow the bottom to dry completely on a flat surface before continuing. If you don't want to full the bottom, work the flat round with a size B hook.

FLAT, ROUND BASE OF BAG

Ch 4, sl st into 4th ch from hook to form a ring.

Rnd 1: Ch 1, 6 sc in ring.

Rnd 2: 2 sc in each sc around (12 sts).

Rnd 3: *1 sc in next sc, 2 sc in next sc; repeat from * around (18 sts).

Rnd 4: *1 sc in each of next 2 sc, 2 sc in next sc; repeat from * around (24 sts).

Rnd 5: *1 sc in each of next 3 sc, 2 sc in next sc; repeat from * around (30 sts).

Continue increasing each round by 6 sts until base is desired diameter (about 6" to allow for shrinkage if fulling, or 5" if you are using the smaller hook).

TURNING UP

With S-plied rosewood and a size C hook, work 1 round hdc through the back loop (no increases). Then work 1 rnd hdc through both loops, increasing or decreasing if necessary to make the number of sts in this round a multiple of 4.

PATTERN BAND 1

Cont with S-plied rosewood.

Rnd 1: *1 sc in each of next 3 sc, ch 1, skip 1 sc*; rep * to * around.

Rnd 2: 1 dc in each sc and in each ch around.

Rnd 3: With peach (S/Z), work *1 sc, ch 1, skip 1 sc, 1 sc, 1 tr in skipped sc 3 rows below (beneath ch 1 space)*; rep * to * around.

Rnd 4: Repeat Rnd 2 in rosewood.

Rnd 5: With turquoise (Z-plied), *sc in

next sc, 1 tr 3 rows below as before, sc in next sc, ch 1, skip 1 sc*; rep * to * around.

Repeat Rnds 2–5 once and then work Rnds 2–3.

Repeat Rnd 1 once.

Work 7 rounds hdc with rosewood (Z/S). On last round, adjust stitch count as necessary for a multiple of 6 sts.

PATTERN BAND 2 (OPEN FANS AND POPCORN)

Rnd 1: With Z-plied turquoise, work sc around.

Rnd 2: With peach (Z-plied), *skip 2 sc, work 1 dc, ch 1, 1 dc, ch 1, 1 dc into next sc (open fan made), skip 2 sc, sc in next sc; rep from * around.

Rnd 3: With turquoise, *ch 3 (counts as first dc; for subsequent repeats, work 4 dc into same sc instead of ch 3, 3 dc), 3 dc in same sc as base of ch. Remove hook and insert hook front to back through tops of the 4 dc just formed and bring yarn through to form a popcorn. Ch 2, sc in center st of open fan, ch 2*. Repeat * to * around.

Rnd 4: Repeat Rnd 2 placing each open fan above an open fan 2 rows below.

Rnd 5: With turquoise, sc into each stitch around.

EYELET BAND

Rnd 1: With rosewood (S-plied), work 1 sc in each sc around.

Rnd 2: *Sc in sc, ch 2, skip 2 sc*; rep * to * around.

Rnd 3: Rep Rnd 1.

Repeat Pattern Band 2 and end with 1 round sc with rosewood. Join last sc to first with slip st and cut yarn. Weave in all tails neatly on WS.

DRAWSTRING

With rosewood (Z/S) and a size C hook, crochet a chain about 3 times the desired finished length. Then recrochet this chain with a size F hook. Thread the drawstring through the eyelets.

MAGGIE CASEY, author of *Start Spinning* (Interweave, 2007) and *Start Spinning DVD* (Interweave, 2009), spends her day working and teaching at Shuttles, Spindles, and Skeins in Boulder, Colorado. She loves teaching spinning because she learns so much from her students. MARGARET TULLIS is a crocheter first, but has explored fabric construction for over fifty years. She weaves baskets and cloth professionally, sometimes adding paper and felt. She teaches fibers at the Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design, Lakewood, Colorado.

Resources

Buchanan, Rita. "Spinner's Question: Crochet with Handspun." *Spin-Off* 24, 1 (Spring 2000), 35–36.
Linder, Harry. "Spinning Fibers for Crochet," *Spin-Off* 10, 1 (Spring 1986), 30–31.
Linder, Olive, and Harry Linder. *Handspinning Flax*. Bizarre Butterfly Publishing: Phoenix, Arizona, 1986.

Polwarth combed top from Ashland Bay spun worsted with a short forward draw (singles, 50 wpi; 3-ply, 20 wpi washed, 16 bpi; 2-ply, 12 bpi).



Crocheted Bag

For holding yarn

BY META THOMPSON



In the summer of 2002, I spent a wonderful week in Sweden with my mother and daughters visiting relatives. During our visit, a second cousin showed me a small crocheted bag that had been her grandmother's. It is worn on the wrist and used to hold a ball of yarn while knitting. Because I was the only one in the family she thought might actually use the bag, she passed it on to me. I was touched by the memento because it was my travels to Sweden as a child that first sparked my interest in textiles and in making them. I was also fascinated because I love little bags, and this one was simple and useful, unlike any I had seen before. Upon my return home I set about trying to reconstruct the bag (the original bag was showing signs of wear so I didn't want to use it). The original measures 5½ inches across and appears to have been crocheted with pearl cotton at about 9 to 10 stitches per inch. A *Spin-Off* article¹ had mentioned that spinning yarns S and plying Z makes a good crochet yarn, and that technique worked very well for me.

I wanted to use cotton to replicate the original bag; but unwilling to take the time necessary to spin the cotton on my charkha

Meta Thompson recreated this family heirloom, a bag suitable for every wandering yarn enthusiast.

I thought I could speed the process by combining cotton and hemp to spin on my Timbertops chair wheel. I carded together equal parts of colored cotton sliver from New World Textiles and hemp top from Aurora Silk on cotton cards. Then, using a semiworsted technique on my wheel, I spun S at a ratio of 25:1. The yarn was wound into a center-pull ball and using one strand from each end of the ball was Z-plied to create a two-ply yarn measuring 20 wraps per inch. I handwashed the yarn in hot water with dish soap, rinsed it in clear water, and hung it to dry without weights.

¹ Pulliam, Deborah. "Spinning for Slip-Stitch Crochet," *Spin-Off* 28, 2 (Summer 2004), 42–44.

The cotton/hemp bag turned out larger and more firm than I had hoped. I decided to spin a finer yarn of silk I had in my stash. The two-ply yarns for the silk bag were S-spun and Z-plied from a cultivated silk brick that I received in exchange for a spinning lesson. I broke off a length of top, separated it into thinner strips, and spun it in a semiworsted style from one end on a Timbertops chair wheel at a 30:1 ratio. I plied and washed the silk yarns as I had the cotton/hemp yarn. After dividing the silk into two skeins, I dyed both green with Lanaset dye, then overdyed one skein with blue. The yarns measure 22 wraps per inch.

I am not an expert crocheter, so I had to rely on my friend and weaving/crocheting mentor, Victoria Johansson, to figure out how to finish each round so it would not make a dogleg. The technique is incorporated into the pattern. Pam Perkins, a member of my guild, created a bag pattern modeled on mine by crocheting two medallions, joining them at the sides, and adding a strap. I'm sure there are a lot more possibilities.

CROCHETING (BOTH BAGS ARE WORKED THE SAME WAY)

For bag front, ch 8, sl st to close ring.
Round 1: Ch 1, 5 sc in ring, (ch 8, 5 sc into ring) 4 times, ch 5, tr into ring. Results in 5 loops around ring.
Round 2: Ch 3, sc in first loop of previous round, (ch 8, sc in same loop) 2 times, [ch 3 between loops, sc in next loop, (ch 8, sc in same loop) 2 times] 3 times around, ch 3, sc in final loop, ch 8, sc in same loop, ch 4, dtr in same loop. Results in 10 loops and 5 connectors between pairs.
Round 3: (Ch 5, sc in next loop) 9 times, ch 5, sl st into top of dtr. Results in 10 loops.
Round 4: 8 sc around each loop of 5 chains. Join to beginning of round with sl st. Results in 10 loops covered with sc.



Meta had read in *Spin-Off* that spinning S and plying Z makes good yarns for crocheting—so she spun her crochet yarn to reconstruct the heirloom bag that was showing signs of wear.



While she was visiting family in Sweden, Meta Thompson's cousin gave her this, a crocheted family heirloom bag to hold her yarn.

Cotton/hemp Bag Project Notes

Finished size: 6½" in diameter.

Fiber: 4 ounces each cotton top from New World Textiles and hemp top from Aurora Silk. The bag uses 1 ounce of yarn.

Yarn: 115 yards 2-ply (S-spun and Z-plied), 20 wraps per inch.

Hook: U.S. D/3 (3.25mm).

Silk Bag Project Notes

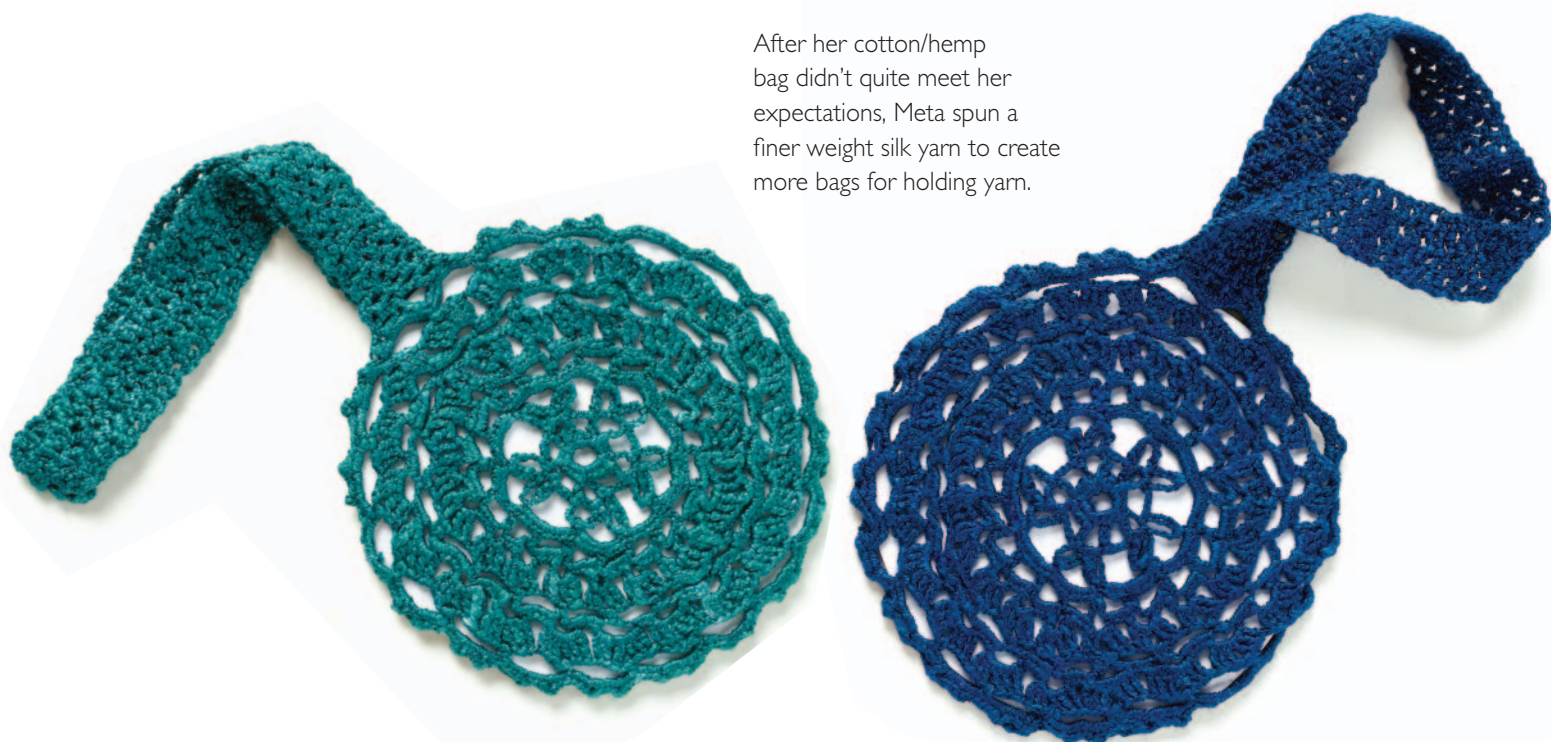
Finished size: 5" in diameter.

Fiber: 8 ounces cultivated silk brick. Each silk bag uses .70 ounces of yarn.

Yarn: 125 yards 2-ply (S-spun and Z-plied), 22 wraps per inch.

Hook: U.S. B/1 (2.25mm).

After her cotton/hemp bag didn't quite meet her expectations, Meta spun a finer weight silk yarn to create more bags for holding yarn.



Round 5: (Ch 6, sc in every fourth st around) 19 times; end with ch 3, tr in stitch beside first loop. Results in 20 loops.

Round 6: (Ch 5, 4 sc in next loop) 20 times; end with a sl st each into first and second stitches of first ch 5 loop. Results in 20 loops.

Round 7: (Ch 4, tr, ch 2, 2 tr) all in first loop, [(ch 1, 2 tr, ch 2, 2 tr) all in next loop] 19 times. Ch 1, sl st in top of ch 4, sl st in tr, sl st in ch.

Round 8: *Sc over ch 2 bar, ch 6; rep from * around and end with ch 4, dc in first sc of round.

Round 9: *Ch 5, 4 sc in loop; rep from * around and end with sl st in first st of ch 6. Results in 20 loops.

Round 10: (Ch 4, 2 tr, ch 2, 3 tr) all in first loop. [(Ch 1, 3 tr, ch 2, 3 tr) in next loop around] 19 times. Connect end of round with beginning by working ch 1, sl st in top of ch 4, sl st in next 2 tr, sl st in ch.

Round 11: *Sc over ch 2 bar, ch 7; rep from * around and end with sl st into first sc.

Round 12: *3 sc in loop, ch 3, 3 sc in

same loop, ch 3, 3 sc in same loop; rep from * in each loop of round. Join to first sc with sl st. Break thread.

For bag back, work rounds 1 to 11 as for front.

On round 12 of back, work over 2 loops as for front. For next 14 loops, join to front of bag. Hold back of bag over the front. On back, sc 3 into next loop, ch 1, sc into "ear" of the ch 3 loop on round 12 of front, 3 sc into same loop of back, ch 1, sc into next ear on the same loop on front of bag, 3 sc on same loop on back of bag. Continue, joining the two parts of the bag in this manner until the last 4 loops. Finish round 12 on back of bag without joining to front. Finish round by sl st into first sc at beginning of round.

STRAP

Turn work.

Row 1: Ch 1, sc in next ear from ch 3 loop of previous round. *Ch 3, sc in next ear on the same loop; rep from * over the next 2 ears resulting in 3 new loops.

Row 2: Turn work. (Ch 3, sc over next

loop) 3 times, ch 3, sc into middle st of final ch 3 loop. Work all following rows as for Row 2 until strap measures 14 inches. Cut thread, leaving enough yarn to sew loose end of strap onto the center 4 ears at the top bag front.

META THOMPSON works by day as a stitcher in Charlotte, North Carolina. By night she putters away on her spinning, knitting, weaving, and crochet projects. Outside of working with fibers, she enjoys walking her dog, reading, eating good food, and thinking about fibers.

Resources

Aurora Silk, 434 N.E. Buffalo St., Portland, OR 97211. (503) 286-4149; www.aurorasilk.com.

New World Textiles, PO Box 1484-W, Black Mountain, NC 28711-1484. (828) 669-1870; www.charkha.biz.

Natural-Dyed Crochet Vest

BY ERDA KAPPELER

Gathering plants and yarn over time yields a colorful vest



Erda gathered most of the plants she used to dye the yarn for this crocheted vest from the area around her house in northern California.

After years spent dyeing, spinning, and crocheting, I finally finished my crocheted vest! I had spun the yarns for a warp I never wove, so the yarn is strong. I prefer fairly coarse wools such as New Zealand Perendale that can take mordants, handling, and heat with very little matting because I like to use natural dyes and sometimes dye the yarn several times to get the colors I want. I crocheted 164 squares, and then sewed them together to make the vest. I knitted the border after the vest was assembled.

DYEING WITH NATURAL DYES

Even though I have dyed for many years, each time I dye it is always another experiment and never feels routine. Mostly I work with clean carded batts that are free of lanolin and grease. After the dye process, the batts need loosening and carding once more before they are ready to spin.

I mordant well before dyeing and frequently add more mordant at the end of the dyebath. Also I found that the final color can depend on when the dye plants were collected. My colors are brighter when the plants are fresh rather than dried or frozen.

With the exception of logwood, I'm able to find many vegetable dyes locally. I have harvested blackberry, artichoke, hairlike lady-bedstraw roots for red and pink, onion, the flaky bark and leaves of the Madrona tree, iris, the green of gold-enrod and mistletoe (when the storms bring the clumps down right before Christmas), various eucalyptus (for near-black dye and bright orange), rock lichens (that need a three-week ammonia soak for vivid purple), mushrooms, and the California milkweed.

I spin very comfortably on my more than 39-year-old Norwegian wheel with a 23-inch wheelbase. It works easily and I can stay with it for hours. I try to spin for a project but often I get waylaid and end up with a lot of small amounts of yarns. I have used these colorful leftovers and samples for the granny squares in my vest.

After I crocheted the squares, I laid them out over a paper pattern of the

vest and sewed them together using sewing thread, only to find that the sewing took up more space. To solve that problem I figured for seam allowance and I crocheted more squares. The idea for a vest had percolated for a long time in my mind, only I could not figure out how to crochet odd triangles. Until one night the bold idea struck me to machine stitch the shapes as needed and cut off the unwanted corners and edges. Not only did this technique work for the front, but it also worked for the armholes and the shoulder seams.

From the beginning I wanted to knit the trim, I tried several samples and decided to use a narrow trim with a crisp fold and chain-stitch finish.

GRANNY SQUARES:

With color A, ch 6, join in a ring with sl st in beginning ch.

Rnd 1: Ch 2 (counts as first dc), 11 dc in ring, sl st to 2nd of beginning ch.

Rnd 2: Ch 1 (counts as first sc), *(dc, ch 1, tr, ch 1, dc) in next st, sc in next st, ch 3, sc in next st; rep from *, ending with sl st in beginning ch. Fasten off.

Rnd 3: Attach color B at the sl st at the end of previous rnd, ch 4 (counts as last tr), *sc in next tr, (3 tr, ch 3, 3 tr) in next ch-3 loop; rep from * twice, sc in next tr, (3 tr, ch 3, 2 tr) in next ch-3 loop, sl st in 4th of beginning ch.

Rnd 4: Ch 2 (counts as first sc), sc in next 4 sts, *(2 sc, ch 2, 2 sc) in ch-3 loop, skip next tr, sc in next 6 sts; rep from * twice, (2 sc, ch 2, 2 sc) in ch-3 loop, sc in next st.

With a wool needle, fasten off the last st in the beginning sc in that round. Darn in the loose ends of yarn. Make 164 squares. Pin the finished squares to size and shape on an ironing board. Cover them with a damp terry cloth and very gently steam press them.

ASSEMBLY

Place one square on top of another with wrong sides together. Stitch the squares together along one edge by hand with a neutral colored sewing thread. Make

the stitches inside and right next to the outermost chain of the final rows of crochet. When opened flat, the seam leaves a slightly raised chained margin around each square. Assemble all the squares according to the layout in Diagram 1.

With wrong sides together, match the back and front shoulders. Stitch them together along the seam line and press the seam open. (You may wish to baste the seam and try the vest on before stitching the seam.) With a sewing machine, make 2 rows of straight stitching and 1 row of zigzag stitching along each seam allowance, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the seam. Trim the allowances close to the stitching, then loosely slip-stitch the allowances to the wrong side of the garment.

At the neckline and armholes, machine stitch along the seam line twice and again $\frac{1}{8}$ inch outside the seam line. Trim the excess fabric just outside the lines of stitching.

Knitted trim: With the long circular needle and working on the wrong side, pick up and knit 1 stitch in each crochet stitch along the lower edge of the vest.

Row 1: (Right side facing) Purl.

Row 2: Knit.

Rows 3, 4, 5: Purl.

Row 6: Knit.

Row 7: Purl.

Row 8: Knit.

Bind off in purl. Fold the trim to the right side to cover the picked-up stitches and sew in place with sewing thread. Make a similar edging for the front and neck edge. Use the set of 5 double-pointed needles to make a similar edging around each armhole, working in the round.

ERDA KAPPELER of northern California learned to spindle spin in 1963 and a year later her mother-in-law gave her the wheel that she still spins on. Her

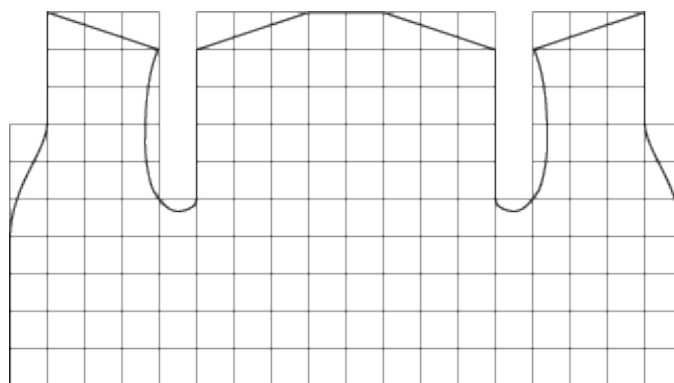


Diagram 1. Layout for crocheted squares. The heavy outline indicates the seam lines for assembling the vest.

friend and teacher, the late Esther McKinley, egged her on to try natural dyeing.

Resources

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- Bolten, Eileen M. *Lichens for Vegetable Dyeing*. Newton, Massachusetts: Charles T. Branford Co., 1960.
- Dye Plants and Dyeing*. Brooklyn, New York: Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, 1964.
- Grae, Ida. *Nature's Colors*. New York, New York: Macmillan, 1974 (in reprint).
- Rice, Miriam. *Mushrooms for Color*. Eureka, California: Mad River Press, Inc., 1980.

Project Notes

Size: Women's small-medium.

The vest measures 36 inches in circumference at the chest and is 21½ inches long.

Yarn: Singles yarn spun to about fingering weight (about 1,675 to 2,100 yards per pound); small quantities of several colors totaling about 11 ounces plus a sufficient amount of one color for the knitted trim.

Hook and Needles: Aluminum crochet hook, size C; 29-inch circular knitting needles and set of 5 double-pointed knitting needles, U. S. size 1.

Notions: Neutral colored sewing thread and needle.

Gauge: Each finished motif measures 2 inches square.

Making Cat Baskets

BY ROSANNE ANDERSON

Using *chaffy* wool



There are many ways to end up with a chaff-ridden fleece¹—you could have received it as a “gift,” you could have obtained it from your own carefully tended flock (usually a favorite animal), or—horrors—you could have purchased it, convincing yourself that all the chaff would fall out as you worked with the fleece.

Whenever I’ve spun fleece that had chaff, it never completely fell out. It just seemed to break up and scatter frivolously throughout the fleece, and I was left to do the spin-pick-spin technique.

¹ Fleece containing organic matter like hay.

Rosanne needed to use up some of the chaffy wool she had stashed away. So she created cat baskets!

Project Notes

Finished size: 15 inches wide, 5 inches high.

Fiber: Chaffy roving, drafted out to 1-inch thickness.

Hook: Rosanne used the giant crochet hook for rag rugs. Select the crochet hook to match your roving and the size of the stitches you want.

Gauge: The basket shown here has 2 stitches in 4 inches. Your gauge will vary depending on your roving and crochet hook size.

When I first learned to spin I used to hoard every little scrap of wool. If it came from my pampered flock of five (two Romneys, a Coopworth, and two Moorits), it had to be good. Right? Well, after years of my sheep producing fleece upon fleece, I no longer have the time to deal with a marginal fleece. Lack of storage space finally forced me to deal with my box of less than perfect fleece. What could I create that a little weed seed would not detract from? Cat baskets! Around the ranch I had observed my cats curled up in anything small and cozy they could find—from suitcases to boxes, knitting baskets, and fresh laundry. I knew they wouldn't mind the chaffy wool—they'd love it!

With quick and easy projects like this, sometimes it is hard to know when to quit. The large hook and thick wool work up quickly but they require hand motions larger than normal crochet projects. When I crochet too long, my hands get really tired. So I try to work in smaller time increments to minimize this stress.

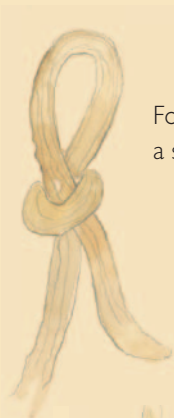
Predraft your roving so that it is about 1 inch in diameter or a thickness that works for the size hook you plan to use. Make a slipknot and chain two stitches. Make 1 single crochet in the slipknot and then single crochet



To make this basket, simply draft out some carded roving and crochet in a spiral to make a base, then decrease and work straight up for the sides.



Use a wool roving to crochet the basket. A little bit of 2-ply handspun yarn makes a nice crocheted edge.



For the base, make a slip knot to begin,



then join the end and single crochet in a spiral, increasing occasionally.



Increase by making two single crochet stitches in one stitch.



Decrease by skipping a stitch.

around the chain; continue working around in a spiral increasing occasionally to keep the base flat. Continue until the base is large enough for your cat. My kitties love to snuggle so I made mine big enough for two cats.

To create the basket sides, begin to decrease every few stitches to pull the sides up as you continue to crochet around. You can make straight sides or decrease so that the top of the basket is smaller in circumference than the sides. Finish by pulling the end of the roving through the last stitch and weaving in the end.

You'll probably want to wash your cat basket occasionally—a gentle washing according to typical wool washing directions will work wonderfully. Your basket will get fuzzier each time you wash it. Or your cats might like a felted basket—just throw it in the wash cycle with some jeans and wool-safe detergent.

ROSANNE ANDERSON lives on a ranch near Spokane, Washington, where she raises a few cows, chickens, and sheep, and cares for elderly horses. She loves teaching middle school, knitting, spinning, and attending as many conferences as she can afford. She's a freelance writer in her spare time.

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Sunrise Moonset Vest

BY *LYNNE VOGEL*

Capturing a mood with
fiber, twist, and color

Lynne Vogel saw a simultaneous sunrise and moonset that inspired her to capture the mood and colors of the scene in this crocheted and knitted vest.



After living on the Oregon coast for thirteen years and being accustomed to seeing the sun set into the Pacific Ocean, I was excited at a rare opportunity to visit North Carolina and watch the sun rise in the Atlantic. For four days my husband Jim and I watched each sunrise. By the fifth day, it was full moon, and we saw the sun rising and the moon setting simultaneously. The moon was smoky lavender descending into a soft peach sky, while the sun gave off its tones of coral, apricot, and gold. The rosy colors from the new sun's rays seemed to reach around the dome of the heavens and swallow the lavender moon as it set.

On our return home, I lost no time capturing what I had seen and felt in a fiber piece. Time was of the essence because I was going to my first SOAR (*Spin·Off* Autumn Retreat) and I wanted this piece to be worthy of the handspun gallery of participants' work always featured there. It was already five days into September, and SOAR was at the end of October. A sleeveless shell or vest would be a lot more reasonable in that amount of time than the kimono jacket I really wanted to make. Also, I had only a pound of Bluefaced Leicester top that I could dye right away. Earlier that summer I had crocheted some remarkably delicate granny squares with energized singles spun from space-dyed Bluefaced Leicester top. Bluefaced Leicester can be easily worsted-spun into a consistently fine, smooth yarn that really holds stitch definition well, a very desirable quality when you're working with energized singles.¹ I found that the ever-changing solid colors formed small abstract geometric shapes instead of stripes when worked in crochet. I spun the singles yarn using a semi-worsted spinning

technique that I learned from Kathryn Alexander. I did this by drafting with my natural drafting hand (left) as I would for long draw, but controlling the smoothness and thickness by holding the point of twist and following my drafting hand at the same rhythm with my right hand. Moving both hands in this manner prevents too much twist from being introduced into the yarn.

When I'm designing new pieces, I always think about two or three things at once. As the colorways were swimming through my head, I pored over



my crochet-stitch manuals and spun and brainstormed as I tried different stitches. A shell pattern reminded me of the repeating crescent pattern the sun left on my retina when I gazed indirectly at it for a second, blinked, and gazed again. I fell in love with the beauty of each stitch. I had some

Bluefaced Leicester roving already dyed in old fashioned sunflower colors (gold, pink, russet) that were reminiscent of the sunrise. I sketched some preliminary ideas in colored pencil, crocheted a few panels of different stitches that might speak of sunrises and moonsets, and then sketched some overall garment shapes.

As I swatched, I paid close attention to the consistent thickness of yarn I had spun with a Z-twist. I use Z-twist singles when I crochet because I have found that singles either untwist or twist more as I work with them. When I crochet, I usually twist a Z-twist tighter and untwist an S-twist yarn. When the yarn untwists, it loses the crispness I like in a crochet stitch. Using the lively quality of an energized yarn in crocheting allows more stitch definition than a finished singles or a plied yarn.

Working with colored pencils, I came up with three different colorways (Sunrise, Moonset, and Lavender Sand) that reminded me of that morning. Sunrise combined gold, soft coral, peach, dusky rust, and lavender. Moonset was lavender, peach, and soft apricot. Lavender Sand combined several muted lavenders to serve as a cool background to the warm tones. I separated the pound of fiber into thirds and dyed each colorway on one-third pound. I chose the hot pour method that I describe in detail in *The Twisted Sisters Sock Workbook* (Interweave Press, 2002) and in the "Dyeing with the Twisted Sisters" article in the Winter 2002 issue of *Spin·Off*, because I wanted soft muted colors that shifted somewhat gradually into each other. I mixed the colors I wanted beforehand, diluting the shades so they couldn't possibly turn out too dark. Since this dye method dilutes the colors even further, I started pouring with medium shades. They became lighter pastel shades in the finished top.

¹ For more information about using energized singles, see Kathryn Alexander's article, "Knitting with Singles," from the Spring 2002 issue of *Spin·Off*.

By the time my tops were dyed and dried, I had sketched a tentative pattern for my vest. I wanted to represent the sunrise on the back and the moonset on the front with ripples of garter stitch along the sides to represent the soft sand at the water's edge. I worked out my gauge, decided on the measurements of the completed piece, and set to work. I made swatches of both the filet pattern and the shell-stitch patterns and blocked them before I decided on the number of stitches in the front and back panels.

I find that blocking is an important part of crochet, so much so that it must be part of the swatching process. Block crochet fabric by pressing it gently into very warm water with the tiniest drop of shampoo or dishwashing liquid, then rinse in the very same temperature of water. Roll the fabric in a towel to get the excess moisture out. I don't use a washing-machine for spinning because it can be too rough and torque the fabric. After removing as much moisture as possible, lay the piece out on a foamcore board and pin it into shape with rustproof sewing pins. I use loads of pins and begin from the center of the piece and work toward the edges, gently stretching the fabric as I go, pushing the pins into the center of a firm stitch such as the center of a fan or the base of a double crochet so that I don't stretch the fabric so much that I distort the stitches. Even still, a large blocked crochet piece (such as the front or back of the vest) can be up to an inch or two larger than the unblocked piece. Once the piece is pinned, let it dry thoroughly before removing it from the board (this may take several days in a damp or cold climate). The resulting piece will stay blocked after it is removed from the board.

Project Notes

Finished size: Front Panel: 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ " wide by 22 $\frac{5}{8}$ " long.

Back Panel: 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ " wide by 22 $\frac{1}{8}$ " long.

Circumference at hem: 35".

Armhole depth: 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Width at shoulders: 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Width of neck opening: 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Fiber: 16 ounces of Bluefaced Leicester top (the finished vest weighs 9 ounces).

Yarn: Singles yarn spun with a Z-twist that measures 15–18 wraps per inch and about 25 degree angle of twist. Three colorways: (A) Laven-der Sand, (B) Sunrise, (C) Moonset, 5 $\frac{1}{3}$ ounces of each color.

Hook: U.S. size B.

Needles: U.S. size 2 straight knitting needles.

Gauge: 8 sts per inch in both knit-ting and crochet. To obtain gauge, work a sample 4 × 4" swatch as fol-lows.

Make a slip knot and chain 32 sts.

Row 1: Sc every st.

Row 2: Dc every st.

Repeat rows 1 and 2 until swatch measures 4 inches.

Note: Work all crochet stitches through both loops.

Note: The front is longer than the back to create a better fit without shaping the neck in the back.

SUNRISE PATTERN

Small shell

Multiple of 3 plus 2 sts.

Row 1: Work 3 dc in fifth chain from hook. * Skip 2, 3 dc in next; rep from * across row, skip 1, 1 dc in next. Chain 3, turn.

Row 2 and all subsequent rows: Skip one, 3 dc in next, *skip 2, 3 dc in next;

rep from * across row; end skip 1, 1 dc in next, chain 3 turn.

MOONSET PATTERN

Large shell

Multiple of 8 plus 1 st.

Row 1: 1 sc in next *skip 3, 9 dc in next, skip 3, 1 sc in next; rep from * across row. Ch 4, turn.

Row 2: 1 dc in sc below, *ch 2, sc in fifth dc below (center st of shell below), ch 2, 1 dc in sc below, ch 1, 1 dc in same sc below; rep from * across; end with ch 2, sc in fifth dc below, ch 2, 2 dc, in sc below. Ch 3, turn.

Row 3: 4 dc in space between 2 dc below, skip 3, sc into sc below, *skip 3, 9 dc into space between 2 dc below, skip 3, 1 sc into sc below; rep from * across; end with skip 3, 5 dc into space between 2 dc below. Ch 1 turn.

Row 4: *1 sc in sc below, ch 2, 1 dc in sc below, ch 1, 1 dc in same sc below, ch 2; rep from * across; end with 1 sc in sc below. Ch 1, turn.

FRONT PANEL

Bottom front panel (horizontal):

Chain 14 in colorway A.

Work 37 rows or 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches in small shell pattern.

End last row with dc. Ch 1, turn panel sideways so that long edge of panel is on top with your hook on the right side of the panel. Sc 89 sts into selvedge edge of panel (approx 8 sts per inch). Ch 3, turn.

VERTICAL FRONT PANEL

Row 1: Still using colorway A, dc across row (89 sts), ch 1, turn.

Row 2: Sc across row, ch 3, turn.

Row 3: Dc.

Row 4: Sc.

Rows 5–7: Work small shell pattern.

Row 8: Sc.

Row 9: Dc.

Row 10: Sc.

Rows 11–17: Work small shell pattern.

Row 18: Sc.

Change to colorway B.

Rows 19–20: Sc.
 Row 21: Dc.
 Row 22: Sc.
 Rows 23–31: Work small shell pattern.
 Row 32: Sc.
 Change to colorway C.
 Row 33: Dc.
 Rows 34–36: Sc.
 Rows 37–79: Work large shell pattern, ending on row 3 of the small shell pattern.

SHAPE NECKLINE

Row 80: Repeat row 4 of large shell pattern 5 times, sc into center dc below, ch 1 turn.
 Row 81 and all odd rows: (eliminating the normal sc in the pattern) 9 dc into space between 2 dc below, finish row in pattern.
 Row 82: Repeat row 2, 4 times, chain 1, turn.
 Row 84: Repeat row 4, 4 times, chain 1, turn.
 Continue decreasing in this manner to row 92: Ch 3, turn.
 Row 93: Dc.
 Work right side of neckline in a mirror image of left side.

BACK PANEL

Work horizontal panel in colorway A as for front. Continuing in colorway A, work back (vertical) panel.
 Row 1: Dc.
 Row 2: Sc.
 Row 3: Dc.
 Row 4: Sc.
 Row 5: Work small shell pattern.
 Row 6: Sc.
 Change to colorway C.
 Row 7: Sc.
 Row 8: Dc.
 Row 9: Sc.
 Rows 10–11: Work small shell pattern.
 Row 12: Dc.
 Row 13: Sc.

Rows 14–27: Work small shell pattern.
 Row 28: Dc.
 Row 29: Sc.
 Rows 30–31: Small shell.
 Row 32: Dc.
 Rows 33–35: Sc.
 Change to colorway B.
 Rows 36–92: Work large shell pattern.
 Change to colorway A.
 Row 93: Dc.
 Block front and back panels before proceeding to side panels.

FRONT SIDE PANELS

The changes for the back side panels are in parentheses.
 Left side (if you are wearing the vest):
 Hold front panel with right side of fabric facing you. Beginning at bottom hem, in colorway C, sc 8 sts per inch into the selvedge edge of the front panel, total 178 (174) sts.
 Work two more rows in sc, chain 1, turn.

With size U.S. size 2 straight knitting needles, pick up and knit one st for each sc along row, total 178 sts. Begin knitting.
 Rows 1–2: Using colorway C, knit.
 Rows 3–12: Using colorway A, knit.
 Row 13: Knit.
 Row 14 (Armhole shaping begins): Bind off 58 (54) sts, knit to end of row.
 Row 15 and all odd rows: Knit.
 Row 16 and all even rows to row 30: Sl 1, k2tog, k across.
 Rows 31–32: Knit.
 Row 33: K28, sr.
 Row 34 and all even rows: Knit.
 Row 35: K55, sr.
 Row 37: K65, sr.
 Row 39: K75, sr.
 Row 41: Knit.
 Bind off.

Work right side as a mirror image to the left side. Work back side panels to correspond to front panels, using the numbers in parentheses for stitch counts. Join front to back at shoulders and join side seams to finish.

LYNNE VOGEL is an avid dyer, spinner, knitter, and crocheter. She is also the author of *The Twisted Sisters Sock Workbook*. She and her husband Jim live in Tennessee.



1) Regina consults with her aunt Susi Ernst about the details for crocheting the shawl that has been passed down through four generations.

2) Hélène Hösli-Maurer, Regina's grandmother.

3) Hedwig Maurer, Regina Rooney's great-grandmother, wearing the family's shawl.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY REGINA ROONEY

The Four-Generation Shawl

BY REGINA ROONEY

Traditions in warmth and giving

For as long as I can remember, this crocheted shawl pattern has been a part of my family's history. I grew up in Switzerland during a time when the needle arts were still considered an integral part of a girl's upbringing, and I have always had some knitting, sewing, or crochet project in the works ever since my great-aunt taught me how to knit at age six.

Soon after I taught myself to spin, about eight years ago, I started to think about making my own version of our family shawl in celebration of my love of all the fiber arts and in gratitude to the generations of women in my family who inspired and encouraged this love in me.


It started with my great-grandmother Hedwig, who, as a young widow with a small child (my grandmother Hélène), made her living as a dressmaker. I always remember her with a lovely mauve shawl draped around her shoulders.

Although my grandmother worked all her life, managing the office of the family's road construction business, she always found time to knit or crochet. My great-grandmother (who lived with my grandparents) taught my grandmother the shawl pattern in the 1960s, but my grandmother did not start making the shawls until her retirement a decade later. At that point, she made dozens of these shawls for family and friends and gave away many more to be sold at charity bazaars. My Aunt Susi took up the tradition next and now it is my turn.

While no one in my family knows the origin of the shawl pattern, some speculate that it could be based on a French design that was popular about fifty years ago. A couple of unique construction features have contributed to the enduring popularity of the design within my family. The shawl is initially worked as a dodecagon (a twelve-sided polygon), starting from the center and working out in ever-widening circles. Eventually the dodecagon is folded in half when it reaches a size that covers the shoulders comfortably. At this point the lacy border is crocheted onto the doubled shoulder section. This creates a shawl with double thickness around the shoulders for warmth, but with a more delicate single thickness of lace at the edge. The pie shape sits on the shoulders in a very flattering way and doesn't slip off as much as a more traditional triangular shawl. The lacy border covers the arms to about the elbow, allowing full range of motion, and it covers most of the back. The shawl I crocheted has only ten wedges and still fits nicely; however, the pattern below is for the full twelve-wedge shawl.

SPINNING

For my version of the shawl, I started with a pound of roving from Kai Ranch Colored Angora Goats in Lexington, Texas, that caught my eye at the Estes Park Wool Market a number of years ago for its lovely fawn color. It is a 75 percent kid mohair/25 percent colored Rambouillet/Merino fine wool blend.



Regina Rooney shares her family's shawl pattern, one that has been passed down through four generations so far.

The machine-carded roving had a soft hand and had only a small amount of vegetable matter that I easily picked out during spinning. Both the moorit colored wool and the silvery kid mohair had staple lengths of between 3 and 4 inches. The similar fiber lengths produced a well-balanced blend, although visually the two fibers are distinct because of their colors and textures. The wool has a fine crimp and the mohair is a smooth and silky fiber.

Using the short-draw method, I spun a semi-worsted singles in the conventional clockwise direction on my Schacht wheel. Putting two bobbins on my lazy kate, I then plied the singles

in the opposite direction to produce a two-ply yarn that measures 12 to 13 wraps per inch and 5 to 6 twists per inch. Measuring with a McMorran balance, I determined the yarn to be about 850 yards per pound. I handwashed the yarn and hung it to dry unweighted. The finished yarn has a soft and silky feel to it with a lovely sheen. I knew that it would drape beautifully as a finished shawl.

Before starting to crochet the shawl, I consulted with my aunt during a trip to Switzerland to make sure that I knew how to work the pattern. The pattern worked up quickly, and the yarn was very comfortable to work



Regina spun 14 ounces of a 75% kid mohair/25% fine wool roving from Kai Ranch into 2-ply yarn with 5–6 twists per inch; it measures 12–13 wraps per inch and 850 yards per pound.

with. I noticed, however, that the mohair has a tendency to shed. I am hopeful that after a few washings that will stop. I think adding more twist to my singles may have helped with the shedding, but I decided to take the risk of some shedding in favor of a softer and loftier yarn.

After completing the shawl, I hand-washed and blocked it. I then entered it in the Boulder County Fair and, to my great delight, received a first place blue ribbon in the handspun category.

This shawl was a gift to Aunt Susi in Switzerland for her eightieth birthday on December 25th, 2005.

Round 1: Leave a short tail and form a loop with the yarn as indicated in figure 1. Hold this loop at yarn junction with the thumb and middle finger of the left

hand. Insert crochet hook into loop from back to front and crochet a chain stitch. Make 2 more chain stitches for a total of 3 chain stitches.

Dc into center loop, followed by ch 1. Repeat 10 more times. Join last ch to first column of 3 chain stitches with slip st. This completes a circle with 11 double crochets and one “pseudo-double crochet” (the 3 chain stitches at beginning of round = 1 dc + ch 1) with a chain stitch between each double crochet. This is the first round. *Note:* The shawl consists of concentric circles of double crochets. It is not worked as a spiral.



Regina's shawl measures 59" across at the widest point and 25" long at center back.

Round 2: Ch 3, dc into next space between the double crochets in the round below, ch 1. In each of the next ch 1 spaces around, work (1 dc, ch 1) two times. Join last chain st to top of first chain of 3 with slip st. There should be two double crochets in each space, separated by a chain st (see figure 2).

Project Notes

Finished size: 59" across at widest point; 25" long at center back.

Fiber: 1 pound 75 percent kid mohair/ 25 percent fine wool roving from Kai Ranch, www.kairanch.com.

Yarn: 14 ounces 2-ply with 5–6 twists per inch, measuring 12–13 wraps per inch and 850 yards per pound.

Hook: U.S. size H or size needed to obtain gauge.

Gauge: 1 shell repeat of (2 dc, ch 1) two times = 1" wide and $\frac{5}{8}$ " high.

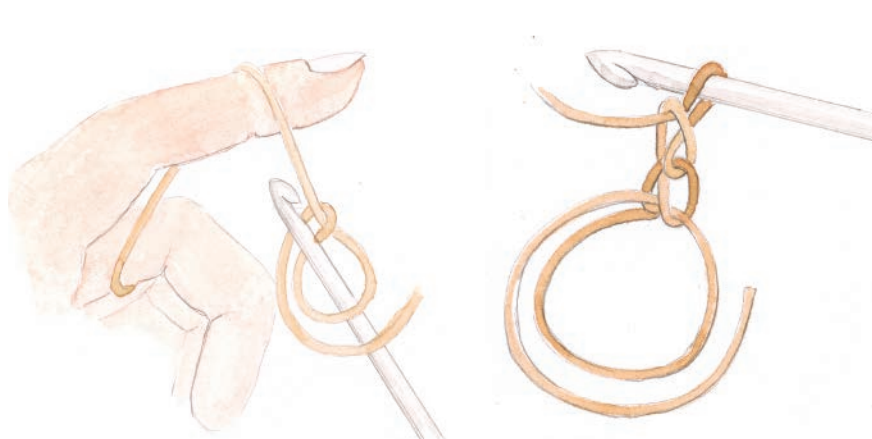


Figure 1: Round 1



Figure 2: Beginning of first circle.

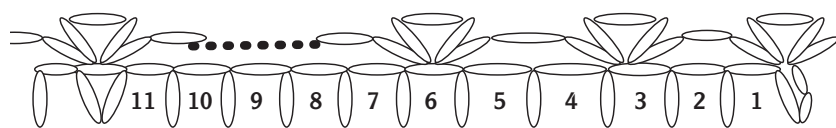


Figure 3

Round 3: Ch 3, dc into first space, ch 1. Work (1 dc, ch 1) into next ch 1 space and (1 dc, ch 1) two times into the space between the two paired double crochets from the round below. Repeat this sequence to end of round, joining last chain 1 to top of first chain of 3 with slip st.

Round 4: Ch 3, dc into first space, ch 1. Work (1 dc, ch 1) two times in each ch 1 space between the two double crochets forming a pair (this creates a line of paired double crochets between each wedge of the circle). Work (1 dc, ch 1) in the spaces between double crochet pairs, always ending the round by attaching the last chain 1 to the chain of 3. In each subsequent round, there will be one more single double crochet between the paired double crochets. This is how the concentric circles grow larger (see figure 2). Continue in this

manner until the shawl comfortably covers the shoulders when folded in half (12 to 14 inches).

Note: It is important to end the circular part of the shawl with a round in which the number of spaces between one paired double crochet and the middle of next paired double crochet is divisible by 3 (see figure 3).

LACE BORDER

Fold circle in half, carefully lining up the rows of paired double crochets. Make sure that the line of chain 3 and double crochets from the beginning of each round form one edge of the semicircle.

Into that first space between the chain 3 and double crochet make (2 dc, ch 1) two times. Into the third space make (2 dc, ch 1) two times, making sure to work through both layers of the folded circle. Work (2 dc, ch 1) two times into every third space to the end

of the semicircle, ending with ch 3. Turn. It is very important that the two layers of the shawl and all the holes are aligned; otherwise, the count will be off at the end of the row.

Next row: The chain 3 from the end of the previous row forms the first double crochet of (2 dc, ch1) two times. Repeat (2 dc, ch 1) two times in the ch 1 space between the two pairs of double crochets across row. Continue in this way until lace border is desired length (about 12 inches).

Weave in the ends. Wash with a wool-safe soap and block shawl.

Born and raised in Switzerland, REGINA ROONEY now lives on a thirty-acre farm outside Boulder, Colorado, with her husband, Doug, and two daughters, Isabelle and Linnea. When she is not busy with her family and numerous horses, chickens, dogs, and cats, she works as a knitwear designer and knitting teacher.



Project Notes

Size: Women's small to medium, to fit head measurement of 20" to 23" (cap shown is size small).

Fiber: 100 g Polwarth combed top from Wendy Dennis, Tarndwarn-coort.

Drafting method: Short forward draw.

Wheel: Ashford Joy.

Wheel system: Scotch tension.

Ratio (singles/plying): 8:1.

Singles direction spun: Z.

Singles wraps per inch: 28.

Plied direction spun: S.

Plied wraps per inch: 15.

Total yardage: 200.

Hook: U.S. size F (3.75mm) or U.S. size E (3.5mm).

Gauge: Fingering-weight yarn, 15 wraps per inch: 20 sts and 12 rows = 4" in double crochet.

Double knitting yarn, 12 wraps per inch: 16 sts and 9 rows = 4" in double crochet.

This pattern is written for two different sizes of yarn. Numbers in parentheses refer to instructions for fingering-weight yarn. Where only one number occurs, it refers to both gauges.

Notions: 24" (60 cm) of $\frac{5}{8}$ " wide (1 cm) satin ribbon.

Note: For a larger size, use heavier yarn or work two additional increase rounds before the first shell insertion (one extra rnd of dc before the second shell insertion and one rnd of dc before the tr rnd, for four extra rounds total).

Isobel

BY DIANE MULHOLLAND

A crocheted cap

I purchased a couple of packs of prepared Polwarth top at the Australian Sheep and Wool Show in Bendigo in 2006. One pack became socks fairly quickly, but I asked my mother to dye the other for me in a subtle mix of blues, greens, and mauves and then saved it for a special project.

Diane's mother dyed the Polwarth top in lovely shades of blue, green, and mauve—and Diane saved it for a special project.



Finally, I was inspired and spun a light and airy two-ply yarn on my Ashford Joy. Although spinning with a semiworsted drafting technique, I avoided smoothing the yarn too much with my forward hand, allowing air to be trapped between the fibers. After splitting the top lengthwise, I allowed the colors to follow one another randomly in the singles. The plied yarn is a wonderful mix of blue on blue, green on blue, mauve on green, and a wealth of other combinations.

While planning Isobel, I looked through many knitting stitch dictionaries before I realized that crochet would give me the perfect, subtly textured look that I wanted for this project. The hat worked up quickly, almost seeming to design itself, and it is now my favorite girlie accessory.

CROWN

To begin, ch 5, and join into a ring with a slip stitch.

Rnd 1: Ch 3 (counts as first dc here and throughout pattern), 9 dc into ring, sl st in top of 3 ch (= total of 10 sts).

Rnd 2: Ch 3, dc in same st, 2 dc in each stitch around; join (= 20 sts).

Rnd 3: Ch 3, 2 dc in next st, *dc in next st, 2 dc in next st; rep from * to end; join (= 30 sts).

Continue in this manner, increasing 10 sts evenly spaced around for 3 (5) more rnds, 60 (80) sts.

Next rnd: Work as for previous rounds but increase 12 sts evenly spaced around (= 72 [92] sts total).

MAIN SECTION

Rnd 1: Ch 3, 4 dc in next sp between two dc, *skip 4 dc, 5 dc in next sp; rep from * to end; join.

Rnd 2: Ch 3, 4 dc in space between first and last dc groups of previous rnd, 5 dc in each sp between groups of 4 dc to end; join.

Rnd 3: Ch 3, dc in each of next 3 dc, *skip 1 dc, dc in each of next 4 dc; rep from * to end; join (= 72 [92] sts).

Rnds 4–6: Ch 3, dc in each st around; join.

For double knitting yarn: Work Rnds 1–6



1) Polwarth locks from Tamdwarcoort, 2) fingering-weight yarn, 3) dyed Polwarth top, and 4) crocheted cap.

once more. On the next round, begin with ch 4 and then work 1 tr in each st around, 11 rnds total.

For fingering-weight yarn: Work 1 rnd, then work Rnd 2 twice, followed by Rnds 3–4. On the next rnd, begin with ch 4 and then work tr in each st around, 12 rnds total.

EDGING

Next rnd: Ch 3, (4 tr, 1 dc) in next sp, *skip 4 dc, (1 dc, 4 tr, 1 dc) in next sp; rep from * to end; join and fasten off.

FLOWER

To begin, ch 20.

Row 1: Dc in fifth ch from hook, *ch 1, 1 dc in next ch; rep from * to end; turn.

Row 2: Ch 3, (4 tr, 1 dc) in next sp, *(1 dc, 4 tr, 1 dc) in next sp; rep from * to end; turn.

Row 3 (optional): *Sc in next st, ch 1; rep from * to end.

Fasten off; coil and secure flower shape using yarn ends.

FINISHING

Measure and cut ribbon to length around head, allowing 1" overlap. Thread through last round before edging as shown and stitch ends together. Stitch flower in place, covering join in ribbon. Darn in all ends.

DIANE MULHOLLAND had the very good fortune to grow up on an Australian sheep farm, and a love of all things fiber-related was a natural result. A long way from home now, she tries her best to fit as much wool as possible into her tiny London flat. Read about what she's been up to at www.dianemulholland.com/blog.

Abbreviations

Here are some abbreviations and techniques you'll find used in some of the patterns presented here. Stitches unique to a given hat are explained within the pattern.

beg	beginning; begin; begins
BO	bind off
bet	between
CC	contrasting color
ch	chain
cm	centimeter(s)
CO	cast on
dc	double crochet
dec(s)	decrease(s); decreasing
dpn	double-pointed needles
inc	increase(s); increasing
k	knit
k2tog	knit two stitches together
kwise	knitwise
MC	main color
mm	millimeter(s)
M1	make one (increase)
p	purl
psso	pass slipped stitch over
rem	remain; remains; remain- ing
rep	repeat
rev St st	reverse stockinette stitch (purl on RS, knit on WS)
rib	ribbing
rnd	round
RS	right side
sc	single crochet
sk	skip
sl	slip
sl st	slip stitch
ssk	slip 1 kwise, slip 1 kwise, k2 sl sts tog tbl
st(s)	stitch(es)
St st	stockinette stitch
tbl	through back loop
tog	together
tr	treble crochet
WS	wrong side
wyb	with yarn in back
wyf	with yarn in front
yo	yarn over
*	repeat starting point (i.e., rep from *)

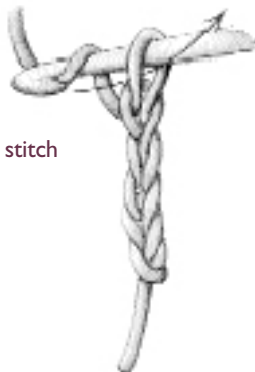
READING CHARTS

Unless otherwise indicated, charts are read from the bottom up. When knitting in the round, read chart from right to left for all rows.

Techniques

CROCHET STITCHES

Chain stitch (ch): Make a slipknot on the hook. Yarn over the hook and draw it through the loop of the slipknot. Repeat, drawing the yarn through the last loop formed.



Crochet chain stitch

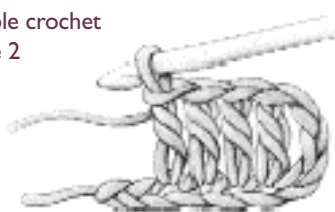
Double crochet (dc): Yarn over hook, insert the hook into a stitch, yarn over the hook (figure 1) and draw a loop

Double crochet
figure 1



through the stitch (three loops on hook), yarn over the hook and draw it through two loops, yarn over the hook and draw it through the remaining two loops (figure 2).

Double crochet
figure 2



Single crochet (sc): Insert the hook into a stitch, yarn over the hook and draw a loop through the stitch, yarn over the hook (figure 1) and draw it through both loops on the hook (figure 2).

Single crochet
figure 1



Single crochet
figure 2



Slip stitch (sl st): Insert the hook into a stitch, yarn over the hook and draw a loop through the stitch on the hook.

Slip-stitch crochet



To join a round with a slip stitch, insert the hook into the first stitch, yarn over and draw a loop through the work and the stitch on the hook.

Slip-stitch join



Abbreviations and basic stitches

Abbreviations

CHST = chain stitch
 SLST = slip stitch
 TBL = through back loop
 TFL = through front loop
 CO = cast on
 SC = single crochet
 INC = increase
 DEC = decrease
 ST(S) = stitch(es)
 RND = round
 BRD = braid

Slip stitch through the front loop

Slip stitch through the front loop



Insert the hook through the front half of the next stitch.

Catch the yarn and draw it through both loops.

Slip stitch through the back loop

Slip stitch through the back loop



Insert hook through the back half of the next stitch.

Catch the yarn and draw it through both loops.

Slip stitch braid

Slip stitch braid



Insert the hook into the stitch behind both halves of the braid.

Catch the yarn and draw it through both loops.

Chain stitch eyelets and buttonholes

Skip one stitch and work one chain stitch



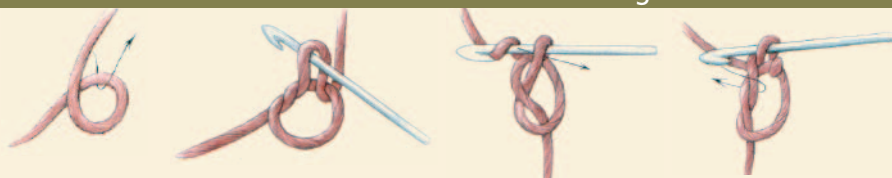
Without going into a stitch, catch the yarn and draw it through.

Single crochet increase

A SLST TFL has just been worked. Insert the hook back through this same stitch, catch the yarn and draw it through the stitch but not through the loop on the hook. Catch the yarn again and draw it through both loops. Note that the stitch this increase is worked into is the one just above the bump created by the previous increases.



Cast on for a round-bottom bag

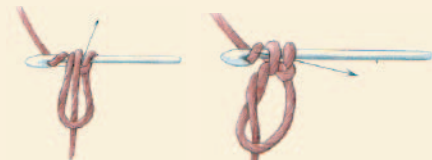


Make a ring by crossing the yarn over itself.

Form a loop by pulling the long end up through the ring; insert hook.

Catch the yarn and draw it through the loop.

Insert the hook through the ring.



Catch the yarn and draw it back through the ring but not through the loop on the hook.

Catch the yarn again and draw it through both loops.



One cast-on stitch complete. Work 6 more single crochet stitches around the ring and tail yarns.



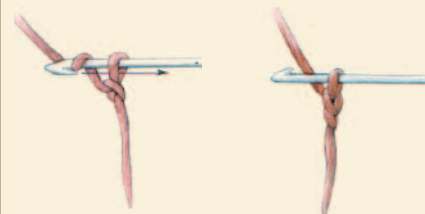
Cast on of 7 single crochet stitches complete. Draw the ring tight by pulling the tail yarn.

Slip knot and chain stitch



The first loop of a chain is made by tying a slip knot.

Insert the hook through the loop and draw up the slack in the knot and the loop.



Catch the yarn and draw it through the loop.

One completed chain stitch. Repeat to desired number of stitches.

First row: work a SLST TFL on the first cast-on stitch. Increase to 14 stitches by working a SLST into the back and then front of each stitch 7 times. Work 1 SLST TFL of next stitch and then begin work from graph. It is a good idea to mark the beginning of the round row.