



Photos by George Boe

HELIANTHUS Mitts

by Stefanie Johnson

Marigolds are a very popular flower in the midwestern United States, as are sunflowers (the Kansas state flower). The Helianthus Mitts pattern pairs handspun marigold-dyed fiber with a stranded colorwork design featuring a sunflower. In addition, the project uses handspun fiber dyed with black walnut (the Missouri state nut), another local dyestuff found in the Midwest that is easy to use as a natural alternative to chemical dyes.

I divided the fiber into two batches and dyed it with marigolds and walnuts before spinning (see “Easy Methods of Dyeing Fiber Naturally with Ubiquitous Midwestern Plants” in *Spin Off* Summer 2018). I predrafted, then spun with a short forward draw with scotch tension. From the singles, which measured 36 wpi, I spun 449 yards of marigold and 421 yards of walnut yarn.

MATERIALS

Fiber 3½ oz Knit Picks Bare Stroll Roving, 75% superwash Merino/25% nylon.

Yarn MC (dyed with walnuts): 3-ply; 125 yd; 1,684 ypp; 14 wpi; sportweight.

CC (dyed with marigolds): Navajo-ply; 85 yd; 1,732 ypp; 14 wpi; sportweight.

Needles U.S. size 2 (2.75 mm). Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.

Notions Marker (m); stitch holder; tapestry needle.

Gauge 36 sts and 49 rnds = 4" in charted patt.

Finished Size 6¾" circumference and 6¾" tall.

Visit spinoffmagazine.com/spin-off-abbreviations for terms you don't know.

Note

- These mitts are worked in the round from the cuff up with a thumb gusset.

MITTS

With CC and using the old Norwegian method, loosely CO 57 sts. Place marker (pm) and join in the rnd.

Next rnd *K2 with CC, k1 with MC; rep from * to end.

Next rnd *K2 with CC, p1 with MC; rep from * to end.

Rep last rnd 19 more times.

Next rnd With MC, [k1f&b, k18] 3 times—60 sts.

If desired, pm to separate thumb gusset sts from rest of mitt to help with inc placement.

Left mitt only

Work Rows 1–39 of Left Mitt chart—82 sts.

Next rnd Place first 25 sts on holder for thumb, with MC and using the backward-loop method, CO 3 sts, knit to end—60 sts rem.

Right mitt only

Work Rows 1–39 of Right Mitt chart—82 sts.

Next rnd With MC, knit to last 25 sts, place next 25 sts on holder for thumb, using the backward-loop method, CO 3 sts—60 sts rem.

Both mitts

With MC, knit 1 rnd.

Next rnd *K2 with CC, p1 with MC; rep from * to end.

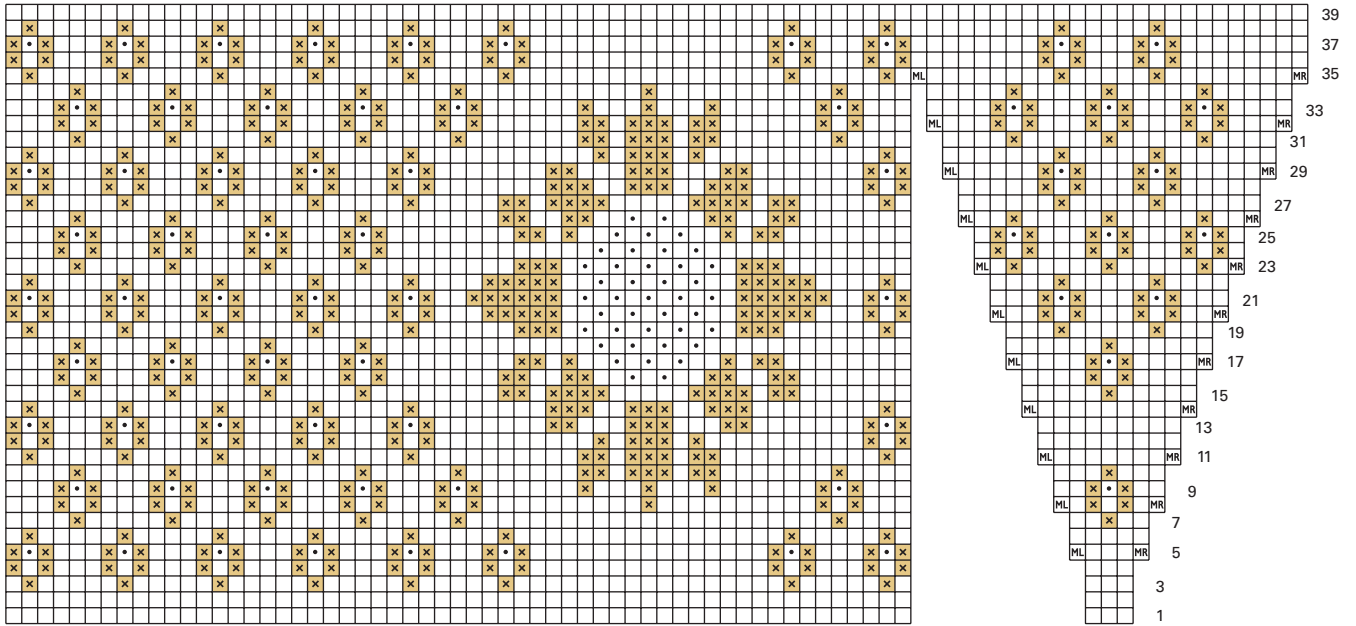
Rep last rnd 7 more times. With CC, BO all sts pwise.

Stranded Colorwork Tips

- Catching the unused color float on the wrong side of the fabric every 5 stitches will help keep a tidier interior that won't catch on fingers and jewelry as much. Stagger the catches to minimize peeking through of the unused color.
- Working a stranded colorwork project inside out with the stitches spread out a bit on the right needle can help to keep proper tension, as stranded colorwork isn't as stretchy as single color stockinette stitch.

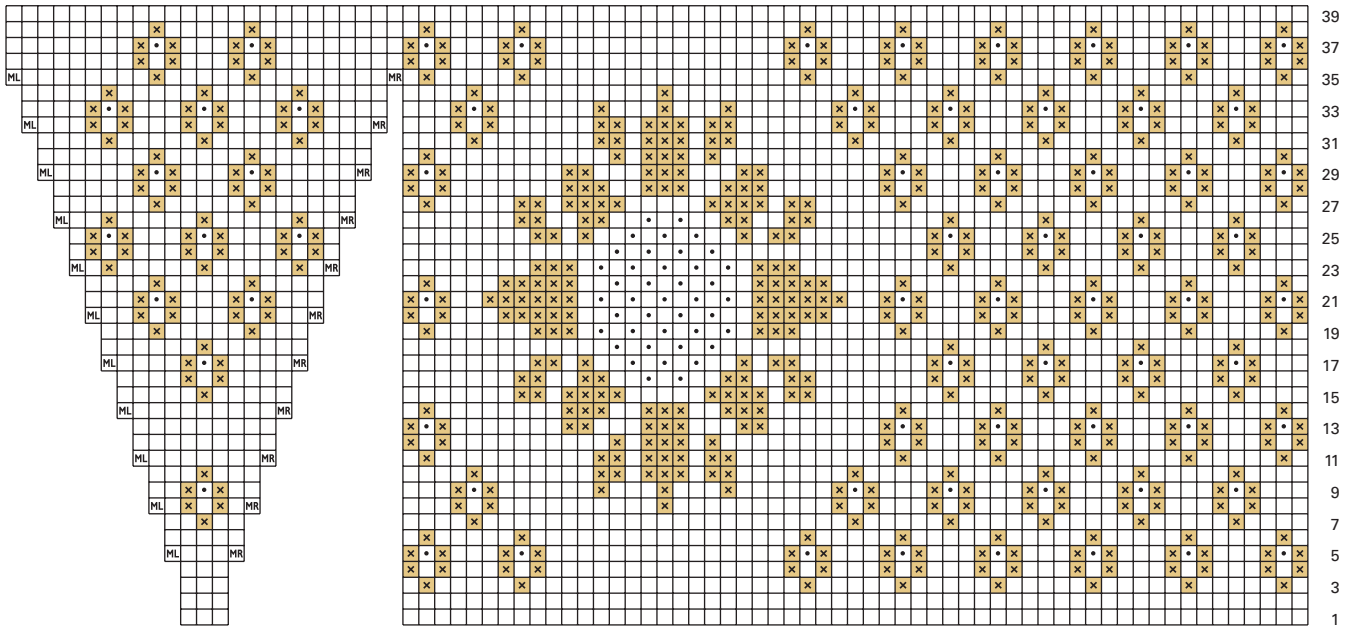
Project

Left Mitt



60 sts to 82 sts

Right Mitt



60 sts to 82 sts

- knit with MC
- purl with MC
- x knit with CC
- MR M1R with MC
- ML M1L with MC

Thumb

Place 25 thumb sts onto needles.

Next rnd With MC, pick up and knit 4 sts along crook of thumb, [k6, k2tog] 2 times, k7, [k2tog] 3 times—24 sts rem.

Pm and join in the rnd.

Next rnd *K2 with CC, p1 with MC; rep from * to end.

Rep last rnd 3 more times. With CC, knit 1 rnd. With CC, BO all sts pwise.

FINISHING

Weave in ends. Block to measurements. ●

When she is not protecting the public as a health inspector, **Stefanie Johnson** enjoys creating unique items and helping others learn to spin, knit, and weave. Along with her husband, Jason, and children, Samantha and Lincoln, she raises French Angora rabbits and a variety of chickens on their hobby farm, Settlers Grove, in Illinois.

