

Alpine Rose

by Nancy Prince



ALPINE ROSE, 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", by Nancy Prince

With just a sewing machine, a design to stitch, and a little bit of time, you can quickly master the technique of thread painting. A landscape quilt comes alive visually with the addition of thread-painted people, animals, or beautiful foliage. A simple flower may be all you need to enliven a traditional quilt and express your creativity and quilting personality. ALPINE ROSE is a small project that will give you the confidence to continue with this wonderful method of embellishing your work.

Thread-painting basics

To thread paint, you will drop the feed dogs and use three basic free-motion stitches. First, the underlay stitches fill an area with parallel rows of straight stitching to stabilize areas that will be filled with colored threads. Next, free-

motion zigzag stitches fill the area with color. Last, the straight stitch blends colors, softens edges, and fills any "holes" in the stitched design.

Before you begin your project, familiarize yourself with the method for each of the three stitches. Follow the directions in "Preparing for thread painting" and "Hooping the design" to prepare sample layers for practice stitching. Practicing first will help you develop a smooth stitching rhythm and give you confidence to thread paint your first flowers and leaves.

Free-motion underlay stitch

Set the machine for a straight stitch. As you work your way around the flower, position the hoop so the wide end of the petal you are stitching is closest to you.

Begin stitching at the bottom right

of the first petal and stitch to the left; use your right hand to hold and ease the hoop to the right as the stitching moves to the left (fig. 1).

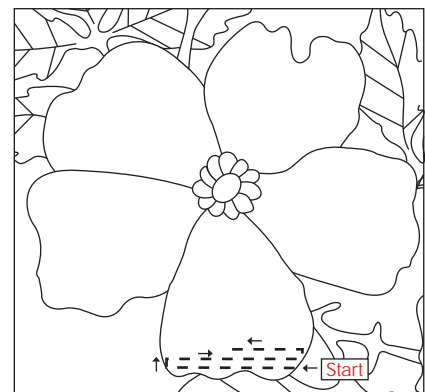


Fig. 1

At the left-hand edge of the petal, ease the hoop toward you to stitch "north" about $\frac{1}{8}$ ", and then stitch back to the right-hand edge of the petal.

Stitch north $\frac{1}{8}$ " and then stitch to the left. Continue stitching in this fashion to complete the first petal.

Rotate the hoop for each petal and fill each one with underlay stitches in the same manner.

Free-motion zigzag stitch

The free-motion zigzag stitch is the primary thread-painting stitch. Use it to fill the design with stitching before blending and filling with the free-motion straight stitch (see below).

By its nature, the zigzag stitch moves right to left. To fill a design, a straight line of stitches is required. In order to use the zigzag stitch to fill a line (or area), the design section to thread paint must be positioned parallel to the front edge of the table as you stitch.

For example, to thread paint one of the flower petals, you must rotate the hoop so one petal is lying on its side.

To execute the zigzag stitch, move the hoop right and then left in short, slow, controlled hoop movements to form a line of stitches parallel to the table edge in front of you (fig. 2). Continue moving the hoop right to left, positioning one line of stitches next to another to fill in each section of the design.

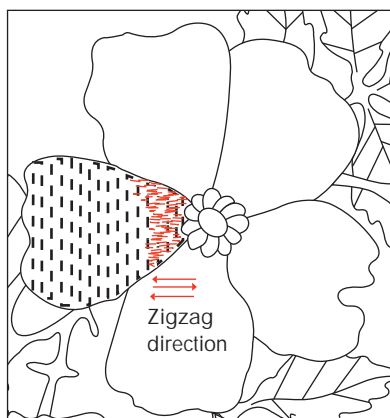


Fig. 2

Free-motion straight stitch

The straight stitch in this design is a "blending tool," used to blend one thread into another, softening the transition from one color to the next. It is also used to fill in any small holes in the design.

For example, to blend thread #4 into #3 (see the ALPINE ROSE Thread

FABRIC & CUTTING REQUIREMENTS

Skill level: Confident beginner

Quilt size: 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

- Requirements are based on 40" fabric width.
- Cut strips from selvage to selvage unless otherwise noted.
- A fat quarter is approximately 18" x 20".

Light green batik – $\frac{3}{4}$ yard*

- binding, 2 strips 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 40" for 67" of continuous binding
- border #3 top/bottom strips, 2 at 2" x 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
- border #3 side strips, 2 at 2" x 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
- backing, 1 panel 16" x 19"
- center panel, 1 at 8" x 11"

Pink batik – 1 fat quarter

- border #1 top/bottom strips, 2 at $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
- border #1 side strips, 2 at $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

Dark green batik – 1 fat quarter

- border #2 top/bottom strips, 2 at 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
- border #2 side strips, 2 at 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

Gray tulle – $\frac{1}{2}$ yard

- 2 rectangles, 10" x 11"

Batting

- 16" x 19"

* See cutting diagram

SUPPLIES: Black Pigma® pen; open-toe free-motion embroidery foot; 80/12 Microtex sharp needles; 6" diameter wooden or plastic machine-embroidery hoop; stencil cutter (optional); water-soluble glue; 2 rectangles 10" x 11" heavyweight water-soluble stabilizer (Super Solvy™ or Dissolve-4x™ by Superior); 40-weight polyester or rayon embroidery thread – 1 spool each of medium gray, dark pink, medium pink, light pink, light yellow, off-white, medium olive green, bright gold, dark cranberry, dark olive; 60-weight bobbin thread in white and black; clear monofilament thread

and Stitch Chart), rotate the hoop so the wide end of the petal is facing you. Move the hoop slowly north and then south in short movements, blending one thread into another (fig. 3).

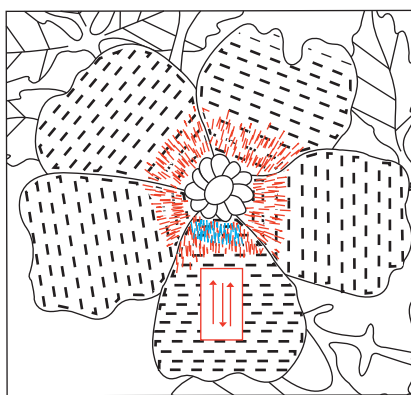


Fig. 3

To fill any small holes, move the hoop north and then south in short strokes to make a stitch that is a little like a vertical zigzag stitch.

Preparing for thread painting

Insert a new 80/12 Microtex Sharp needle in your sewing machine

and attach an open-toe, free-motion embroidery foot. Drop the feed dogs.

Fill one bobbin with white 60-wt. bobbin thread and another with black bobbin thread to use when stitching with dark threads.

Thread the needle with clear monofilament thread.

Note: If the bobbin thread pops to the surface while you are thread painting, decrease the top tension, normally toward zero or minus.

Using the Pigma pen, trace the ALPINE ROSE design in the center of one piece of water-soluble stabilizer; set aside.

Hooping the design

Working on a flat surface, place two pieces of tulle on top of the unmarked piece of water-soluble stabilizer. Place the stabilizer with the traced design on top of the tulle layers, making sure the design is right-side up.

Slide the outside ring of the hoop underneath the four layers with the screw in the six o'clock position. Using

ALPINE ROSE Thread and Stitch Chart

For each part of the design, refer to the chart below to select the correct thread color and stitch. Note: Use black bobbin thread when stitching with the dark olive green and dark cranberry threads. Use white bobbin thread for all other colors.

Design Area	Thread Color	Stitch Type	Stitch Width
#1 Petal underlay	Clear monofilament	Straight	
#2 Petal outline	Medium gray	Straight	
#3 Petal: inner pink ring	Dark pink	Zigzag	2.0 mm
#4 Petal: middle pink ring	Medium pink	Zigzag	2.0 mm
#5 Petal: outer pink ring	Light pink	Zigzag	2.0 mm
#6 Petal: yellow ring	Light yellow	Zigzag	2.0 mm
#7 Petal: white ring	Off white	Zigzag	2.0 mm
#8 Flower center outline	Medium olive green	Straight	
#9 Flower center fill	Bright gold	Zigzag	1.25 mm
#10 Center fill	Light yellow	Zigzag	2.0 mm
#11 Leaf stem and center vein	Dark cranberry	Zigzag	1.5 mm
#12 Leaf stem and center vein	Dark olive	Zigzag	1.5 mm
Inner leaf section	Dark olive	Zigzag	2.0 mm
#13 Outer leaf section	Medium olive green	Zigzag	2.0 mm
#14 Bud stem and outer leaf	Dark cranberry	Straight	
#15 Stem and outer bud leaf	Dark olive green	Zigzag	2.0 mm
#16 Inside bud leaf	Dark pink	Zigzag	2.0 mm
#17 Inside bud leaf	Medium olive green	Zigzag	2.0 mm
#18 Bud highlight	Light pink	Straight	

your fingertips, push the inner hoop into the bottom hoop to secure the layers.

While holding the inner hoop down with your fingertips, pull on the top layer of stabilizer to remove any wrinkles; repeat with the bottom piece of stabilizer.

Slide the hoop to the edge of the table with your fingertips still on the inner hoop and adjust the screw to about 95% tight. Evaluate and adjust the top and bottom stabilizers until there are no ripples in either one before

tightening the screw all the way.

Use your thumbs to press down on the inner hoop so it shifts $\frac{1}{8}$ " below the edge of the bottom hoop; you should be able to feel it protruding slightly beyond the outer hoop edge on the underside. This adds extra tension on the inside hoop so the stabilizers are held drum tight.

Slide the embroidery hoop under the machine needle and then lower and raise the needle to pull the bobbin thread to the surface. Take a few stitches before cutting the thread

tails close to the surface of the stabilizer. You are ready to thread paint the design.

Thread painting the petals

Following the order in the ALPINE ROSE Thread and Stitch Chart, you will thread paint each flower and leaf. Complete each step in the two flowers before changing to the next thread color. In the directions that follow, the numbers preceded with a number sign (#) indicate the line in the thread chart to follow for thread colors, stitch type, and zigzag width in the area you are thread painting.

Begin by filling each flower petal with underlay stitches using monofilament thread #1 as directed under the "Free-motion underlay stitch" section. Position the hoop under the machine needle with the wide end of one petal facing you. Note the direction of the underlay stitch on each petal (fig. 4)

Note: The stems and leaves do not require underlay stitches.



Fig. 4

Outline the petals in medium gray #2 using the straight stitch. If the outline is not dark enough, stitch again on top of the first stitches.

Use the free-motion zigzag stitch and dark pink thread #3 to thread paint the inner ring of each petal, laying one line of stitches next to another. Note that the outer edge of the ring of stitches is jagged, not smooth, and that the dark pink thread butts next to the flower center (fig 5).

As you thread paint, take care not to stitch over the gray stitching that outlines each petal edge. Instead, raise the needle to move from one petal to the next.

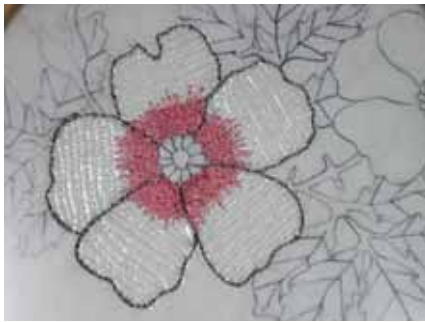


Fig. 5

Complete all petals in both flowers, rotating the hoop clockwise from petal to petal before changing to the next thread color.

Thread paint a ring of medium pink #4 free-motion zigzag stitches in each petal, stitching the medium pink into the darker pink at the jagged edges. The new color should just cross into the previous dark pink between the jagged lines of stitching at its outer edge (fig 6). As with the previous dark pink ring of color, the outer edge of color should be jagged to accept the next thread color.

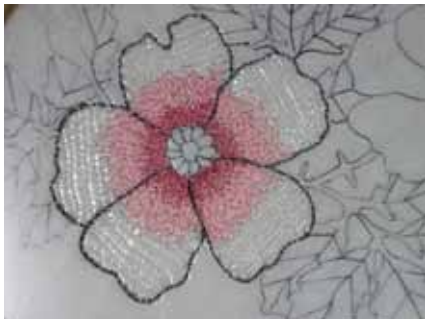


Fig. 6

To smooth out the transition from the medium to dark pink, switch to a free-motion straight stitch. Leave the medium pink thread in the needle. For each petal, rotate the hoop so the wide end of the petal faces you. Move the hoop north and then south (this is like a vertical zigzag stitch) to fill in holes and to smooth the color transition.

Thread paint a ring of light pink #5 zigzag stitches in each petal, stitching into the previous ring of color (fig 7). Smooth the transition with light pink thread and straight stitching into the medium pink ring.

Thread paint a ring of light yellow #6 free-motion zigzag (fig. 8) and

then smooth the transition into the light pink ring with yellow stitching as described above.



Fig. 7

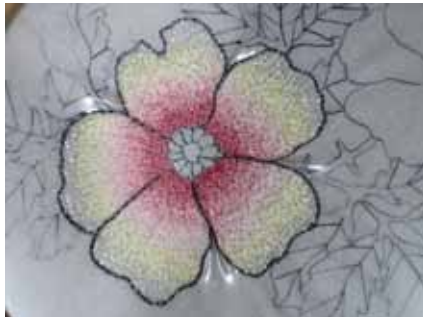


Fig. 8

Thread paint a ring of off-white #7 stitching in the same manner to complete each petal of each flower. At the gray outline, make sure the white stitching butts completely into the gray outline (fig. 9) so the completed work won't fall apart when the stabilizer and tulle are removed later. Blend the off-white into the yellow ring. If necessary, use gray thread to touch up any areas of the outline.

Note: Blending between colors should be subtle and you should not be able to see where one color stops and the next one starts.



Fig. 9

Evaluate the completed petals and fill in any small holes with free-motion straight stitching.

Next, outline the petal centers with free-motion straight stitches in medium olive green #8. Stitch a second time if the first stitches don't seem dark enough.

Thread paint bright gold #9 free-motion zigzag to fill the loops in the flower center (fig 10), stitching with the side of each loop parallel to the front edge of the table.



Fig. 10

Use light yellow #10 thread to fill the flower centers with free-motion zigzag.

Thread painting the leaves

With the stem of one leaf parallel to the front edge of the table, use dark cranberry #11 and free-motion zigzag to thread paint the stem and center vein of each leaf (fig. 11). The center vein should be thick enough to be seen, but not so heavy that it overpowers the leaf.



Fig. 11

Rotate the hoop as needed, keeping the area that is being thread painted parallel to the table edge. Stitch the stem and center vein in each leaf in the hooped area of the design. Complete all leaves in the hooped area before re-hooping to thread paint the remaining ones.

With dark olive #12 thread, thread paint the stems (no veins) again, taking

care not to overpower the cranberry thread. Fill any holes on the stems.

To fill the center of one leaf, begin by rotating the hoop so the first diagonal line on the petal is parallel to the front edge of the table. Thread paint the line, moving the hoop right and then left to fill the center section of the leaf. Butt the dark olive thread against the cranberry, taking care not to stitch into it and making sure the cranberry vein still shows. Fill the inside section of the leaf between diagonal lines (fig. 12).



Fig. 12

Locate the second diagonal line and rotate the hoop slightly so it is parallel to the table edge. Thread paint as you did the first line. Rotating the hoop to keep each successive diagonal line parallel to the table edge, fill in the remaining areas until the center of the leaf is complete (fig. 13). Repeat with the remaining leaves.



Fig. 13

Using medium olive green #13 thread, thread paint the outer portion of each leaf in the same manner (fig. 14). Make sure the thread is solidly stitched against the outer edge of the design and that there are no visible holes in the design. Fill holes if necessary with the free-motion straight stitch as described above.



Fig. 14

With the dark olive #12 thread and a straight stitch, soften the transition between the dark and medium olive green. Rotate the hoop so the leaf is facing you (fig. 15) and move it right and then left to thread paint from the darker green edge into the lighter green edge, following the already established direction of stitching.



Fig. 15

Evaluate the completed stems and leaves to make sure the outer lines are solid, with no visible holes in the design. Use free-motion straight stitching to fill any areas that need it.

Reposition the hoop as needed to complete the remaining leaves in the same manner.

Thread painting the bud

Outline the bud stem and leaf with at least two rounds of dark cranberry #14 and free-motion straight stitches (fig. 16).



Fig. 16

Thread paint over the cranberry thread with free-motion zigzag in dark olive green #15 to soften the dark cranberry without covering it entirely. Thread paint the body of the leaves but don't fill them entirely with stitches (fig. 17).



Fig. 17

Using dark pink #16, thread paint the bud and into the bud leaf (fig. 18).

Using medium olive green #17, complete the leaves and then add light pink #18 highlights to the bud (fig. 19).

Evaluate the bud and add any touch-up stitches where needed to fill holes and complete the design (fig. 20).



Fig. 18



Fig. 19



Fig. 20

Removing stabilizers and tulle

Unhoop the embroidery and trim away the stabilizer and tulle to within ½" of the outer edge of the stitched flowers and leaves. Remove the stabilizer by running water over the thread appliqué; see the manufacturer's directions for water temperature. After removing the majority of the gooey stabilizer, thoroughly rub liquid soap into the stitches to help break down the stabilizer trapped inside the design.

Soak the piece in a basin of water of similar temperature, checking every 20 minutes to see if it still feels sticky or tacky. Change the water and continue soaking; check and change the water until no sticky residue remains and the design is no longer tacky. If you leave stabilizer in the stitches, it will be stiff when dry.

Tip: Try adding a bit of fabric softener to the final rinse to help soften the piece.

Blot the thread appliqué between two towels and allow to air dry. Place it face down on a pressing cloth, cover with another pressing cloth, and steam to block the design. Caution: Avoid touching the thread appliqué with the iron.

Use sharp embroidery scissors to cut away the excess tulle close to the edge of the thread appliqué. You will machine appliqué this piece to the finished quilt.

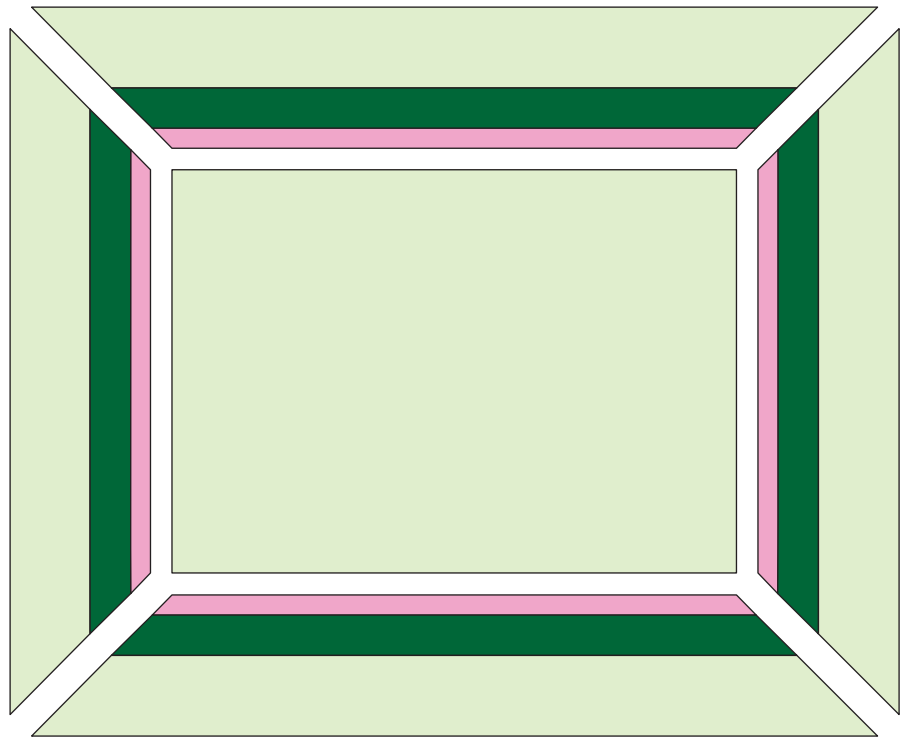
Tip: For best results, place the thread-painted appliqué on a piece of glass or tile and run the hot tip of a stencil cutter around the outer edge. The heat will melt the tulle and seal the outside edges, assuring a strong, sturdy edge.

Making the quilt

Press the center panel. Sew the border strips together in numerical order in sets of 3. Press the seam allowances toward border #3.

Matching centers, sew the borders to corresponding edges of the center panel. Begin and end the stitching precisely ¼" from the corners of the center panel. Miter the corners. Trim the seam allowances to ¼", and press them open.

Layer the backing, batting, and quilt top. Baste the layers together.



Quilt assembly

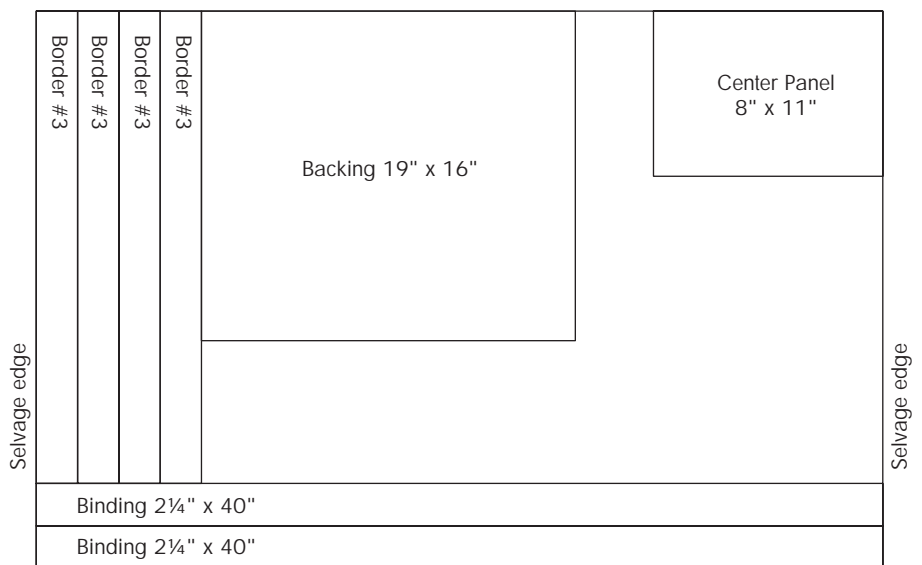
Quilt as desired. The photographed quilt is stipple quilted in the center, the border seams are quilted in the ditch, and the outer border is quilted with a gently curved line.

Sew the binding strips together with bias seams to make 67" of continuous binding. Use the strip to finish the edges of the quilt with double-fold binding.

Adding the thread appliqué

Place a dot of water-soluble glue on the back of the thread appliqué and center it on the quilt.

Using monofilament thread and 1.5mm width stitch, zigzag around the outer edge of the appliqué to attach it to the completed quilt.



Cutting chart

ALPINE ROSE
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