

How Does Your Garden Grow?

A winter garden of flowers



Designed by: Roxie Day

Description

On a recent trip to Newbury Street in Boston. I skipped the boutiques and headed into the Society of Arts and Crafts, where an incredible display of felted items was being showcased. There were vases, chairs, and ornamentals oddities as well as garments. One look at the price tags on the scarves and hats, and I was plotting my own creation.

Yarn Used

2 skeins green Frog Tree Alpaca, 100% DK weight alpaca, 130 yd per skein and a partial skein of dark red

NOTE: I selected this yarn because it is produced by a non-profit cooperative in Bolivia. Purchases of the yarn provide support to this cooperative and allows the cooperative to provide work to a number of women to supplement their household income.

Yarn Substitution Recommendations

Wool or alpaca that has not been bleached white or processed into a Superwash fiber will felt nicely. This project is a great stash buster and would look incredible if the stem and leaves were of multiple shades of green and the flowers different colors. Just gather up 3 or 4 ounces of odd balls that would make great leaves and have fun with it. Who says leaves can't be neon colored or even glittery?

Supplies

- US #10 Circular or DPN needles
- Safety pins or markers
- Access to a washing machine and two old pillowcase – or just a large glass bowl if you want to try felting by hand
- Laundry detergent or dishwashing liquid

Gauge (before felting)

Felting is very, very forgiving so gauge isn't critical. If you come close to 2.5 to 3 stitches per inch by using size 10 needles with fine yarn, you'll be happy. The project will look ugly while you're knitting it because the needles are far too big for the yarn, but felting will bring out its beauty.

Knitting Instructions

I-Cord Long Stem

Cast on 9 stitches in your basic stem color.

Row 1: Knit, do not turn your work at the end of the row.

Row 2: Slide stitches from the left side of the needle to the right side of the needle. Put this needle back in your left hand and knit the next row as always, pulling yarn firmly to close gap. Do not turn work at end of row.

Repeat row 2 for about 60 inches. (Felting will reduce length to about 2/3rds the knit length. Adjust your i-cord length, accordingly, to lengthen or shorten the piece.)

Leaves

To decide where you'd like leaves, place pins along both the inner and outer edge of the cord about one foot apart starting about one foot in from the end of the cord. I deliberately put most of the ornamentation closer to the ends of the cord rather than all over so that nothing would hang down in the back.

Long Stemmed Leaves

At each pin, pick up 5 stitches in the leaf color of your choice and work 9 rows of i-cord just as you did for the long stem.

Row 10: Increase 1 stitch at each end for total of 7 stitches.

Row 11: K 3, yo, K1, yo, K 3

All even rows: P

Row 13: K 4, yo, K1, yo, K 4

Row 15: K 5, yo, K1, yo, K 5

Row 17: SSK, K 9, SSK

Row 19: SSK, K 7, SSK

Row 21: SSK, K 5, SSK

Row 23: SSK, K 3, SSK

Row 24: Sl 1 purlwise, purl 2 together and fasten off and weave in any loose ends.

Make an equal number of five long-stemmed leaves at both sides of the scarf unless you want some creative asymmetry. I made two at each end point and four pairs opposing each other at the 1-foot and 2-foot pin markers.

Shorter Stemmed Leaves

To populate your garden, pick up along each of the completed leaf stems as many leaves as you'd like. I created triple leaves along the opposing pairs and double leaves at the ends. For the shorter stemmed leaves, work as above but make the i-cord only 5 rows long instead of 9 rows.

Roses

Make as many as you like in a contrasting color to the leaves. I made three for a little asymmetry. For each, cast on 37 stitches.

Row 1: K1, *P1, K1; repeat from * across.

Even rows: Knit the knits and purl the purl stitches.

Row 3: K1, *P1, M1 purlwise, K1; repeat from * across.

Row 5: K1, *P2, M1 purlwise, K1; repeat from * across.

Row 7: K1, *P3, M1 purlwise, K1; repeat from * across.

Row 9: K1, *P4, M1 purlwise, K1; repeat from * across.

Bind off all stitches and roll into a flower securing with the cast on tail.

Felting Instructions

If you use a washing machine and want to prevent fiber build-up in it, toss the scarf and roses into an old pillowcase. If you're worried about the yarn dyes running (the Frog Tree colors did not), use separate pillowcases for the stems and roses but wash at the same time. Pin the case closed. Run the bag and contents through the washer with a small amount of detergent at regular agitation and with hot water. Check after 15 minutes to see if you like the size. You can always run it through a bit longer. When you're happy, rinse the scarf in cool water and lay it out to air dry.

If you prefer to hand felt, put you can put a small amount of dishwashing liquid and very hot water into a big bowl or sink, drop in the scarf and massage the parts until they felt. It takes patience but is very simple.

Finishing

Pin the roses where they look good. Wrap the scarf around your favorite neckline or waist or even around your teddy bear and enjoy.



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