

Learning to Hand Quilt Using the Grandmother's Flower Garden Pattern

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Oak Bluffs Library



We used the English Paper Piecing technique to create a *Grandmother's Flower Garden*. It is also a basis for other patterns. Depending upon your choice of fabric, this pattern can be used to create a traditional or highly contemporary quilt.

The paper template is the exact size of the finished quilt piece. This template is a "hexagon" ~ sometimes called "hexie". We used a 1" template. You can download templates online (see resources below), print them out on card stock paper or trace them on template paper. Use a hole punch and punch a hole in the center of each template. You can order precut packages of paper or plastic templates as well.

To begin with, cut your fabric in 2 ½" strips and then 2 ½" squares. (This measurement will change dependent on the size of the template.) The seam allowances are folded over and basted at each point to secure the shape and prevent the fabric stretching on the bias seams.

Take your 2 ½" square, center your template on the wrong side of the square and pin the fabric through the hole, not pinning it to the template. If you have applique pins, they work best as they are short. Standard Quilting pins are fine; you need to occasionally move them as you sew. Thread your needle. You will hold the template with fabric in your hand and fold the seam allowance over the template with your fingers and start at one point, inserting the needle through the folded over fabric on the first point and going back over the same point once more, than folding over the seam allowance at the next point and doing the same, until you have returned to the starting point and insert needle, stitch and knot off tread. (At each point, insert needle at fold twice and then go to the next and end at the beginning with a knot.)

The Traditional Grandmother's Flower Garden is done in three colors per flower; one fabric color 1 for the center, six fabric color 2 for the next round and twelve fabric color 3 for the

last round. As you have two pieces basted, start with fabric color 1 and place one fabric color 2 right sides together. You hold the two together and whipstitch them together along one side. You can now open that piece and add another fabric color 2 beginning on the top of the one side of fabric color 2 you just joined and whipstitch it together and then stitch to center fabric color 1. You will continue to do round two and then add fabric color 3 for round 3. The templates can be reused again and again. They are removed as you progress in rounds.

You can make the flowers 2 rounds if you prefer. Whether you do 2, 3 or even 4 rounds you need to select another fabric color that will become “the Path”. You will cut the “path” fabric as you have your other fabric, baste the fabric along the templates and add them to a flower side before adding another flower. It joins the flowers and connects a path through the pattern.

Helpful tips:

Thread multiple needles and keep next to you so you can continue sewing when you run out of thread and need not stop and thread your needle each time. Use cotton thread. It is helpful to run your piece of thread through “wax” before you thread the needle as it will prevent it from tangling as you sew. It is recommended to use quilt weight thread to join your pieces, though I know some use basic cotton thread. I do not remove my basting thread; others do.

This truly is a on the go project as it is portable, you can work on it in stages and then put the flowers together as they build up. Make a “travel” sewing kit so you can pick it up and take it with you if you like: include small pincushion, pins, needles, needle threader, thread (you can make small bobbins of thread in neutral and say whatever color you need), cut fabric, thimble and small scissors or thread cutter. You can use graph paper to plan out your quilt design.

Resources:

[Quilting on the Go](#) by Jessica Alexandrakis. The book includes several projects, templates and helpful information.

www.quiltpati.tripod.com

www.mvheathhen.com

www.Paperpieces.com

www.texasfreckles.com