

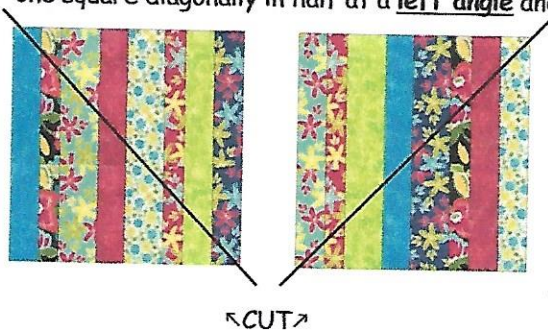


Pattern of the Month - July 2017 "Colorful Strippy Leaf Block"

By Evelyn George

Here's a fun way to use those pretty strips and scraps to make beautiful, reverse applique leaf blocks—all by machine! Great for a pillow cover, table runner or wall hanging. Our example is scrappy, but make it as controlled as you like, by choosing fabrics suitable for your project.

Start by making two different strippy blocks. Select 8 to 10 assorted strips between about 1" and 2" in width and cut them a little longer than needed—in this case, about 10". Sew about 8 or 10 together in any order you like to make a rough strippy block that is at least 9" wide. For the second one, you can use the same colors, but arrange them in a different order. Trim uneven edges and square each up to 9." Exact size could vary, but make both squares the same size. Place them side by side on your cutting board, both with stripes going vertically. Cut one square diagonally in half at a left angle and the other at a right angle, as shown below.



Note: It's important to position both blocks with stripes going the same direction, and make cuts at opposite angles, in order to get a right and left half for each leaf.

You can see in the illustration at top of page that the two halves of the leaf have their stripes angled differently; and this is the secret to making that happen.

When you have cut the two strippy blocks into halves, you have enough opposite halves for two leaves.

-For a scrappier look, first make all your strippy blocks (one for each leaf you need); carefully cut half of them at one angle and half at the other. Then pair together opposite sides, to make a variety of scrappy leaves.



For the center vein of each leaf, cut a 1" x 12" strip of black fabric. Lay it between two leaf halves, making sure they are a left and a right, ← so they will be angled at opposite directions.

Center one leaf half on top of the black strip, right sides together, and stitch. Press seam away from center strip, then stitch the second half at a slight angle on the center

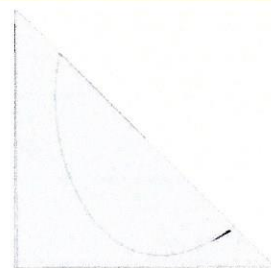
strip, to taper it very slightly so the center vein is narrower at the top. →

Or, you can make the center vein straight if you prefer. Press well, making sure there are no tucks and the seams are all lying flat.

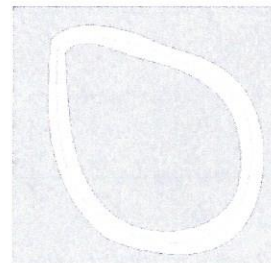
Trim blocks, squaring them all up to the same size, for example 9."



Make a leaf template by folding an 8" square of paper in half diagonally and drawing or freehand cutting half a leaf shape. It should be about 2" smaller than the strippy leaf square. Make it nice and rounded; if you don't like the results the first time, make another one, or several, until you are satisfied with the shape when you unfold the paper. Check the template by laying it on top of the leaf square, with the black vein centered. There should be at least 1" of coverage beyond outline of leaf, as you will be stitching the "background" fabric on top of leaf, using reverse applique. Adjust leaf size if necessary.



Cut a 12" "background" square from a coordinating fabric. Press in half diagonally to mark the center. Fusible method is used to hold fabrics in place for machine stitching. Trace leaf shape onto paper side of Wonder Under® paper-backed fusible. Trim paper away outside leaf, leaving about ½" outside the line; also trim about ½" away from line on inside of leaf, leaving just a leaf-shaped halo of paper. Position halo with fusible side down on wrong side of background square, using the pressed fold as a guide to center it diagonally where you want leaf to appear. Fuse according to package directions. Now cut carefully on drawn leaf outline to make leaf shaped opening in background fabric. (You can save the cut-out leaf for another project; attach a note to it, to remind you that it has fusible on its edges.)



Remove paper backing on wrong side of background opening. Center leaf opening over strippy square, fusible side down, with leaf vein centered. Check to make sure there is good coverage on all edges; when satisfied, fuse in place. Cool.



Select a wide zigzag, blanket stitch, feather stitch, or other decorative stitch. Select thread color to coordinate with your fabrics. If using a heavier thread, change to an appropriately sized needle. Stitch around opening, covering raw edge. Excess strippy ends can be trimmed from back side of piece. If planning to quilt the finished project, now is the time to consider how closely you might want to quilt around the leaf, and trim accordingly.

Leaves could be arranged in many ways, including on a whole cloth background rather than using blocks. Use a chalk marker to make placement grid on wrong side of background piece, as a guide for placement of fusible haloes where you want leaf cutouts.

