

Spring Purse

Difficulty: Intermediate

I love this little purse which was designed for one of the daughters of a friend of mine. I wanted something that a seven-year-old could carry with pride and would reflect all the beauty of a spring day with the sun shining and the flowers blooming. If you listen closely, you can even hear the little birds chirping!

FINISHED MEASUREMENTS

Circumference (at widest point): 15 inches (before felting); 14 inches (after felting)

Length: 14.5 inches (before felting); 9 inches (after felting)

MATERIALS

Brown Sheep Nature Spun (100% wool; 245 yards/224 m per 100g/3.5oz skein)

Colors: 1 skein each of 108W-Cherry Delight (pink), 144W Limestone (green), 115 Bit of Blue (blue) and 740 Snow (white).

1 set US #8/5.0mm straight needles

1 set US #8/5.0mm double-point needles

Tapestry needle

Heavy sewing thread or embroidery floss to match the green yarn and the pink yarn and sewing or embroidery needle

Small paperback book to wrap tassel (or other tassel-making tool)

GAUGE

18 sts/21.5 rows = 4" in stockinette stitch (before felting)

PATTERN NOTES

The pattern is written here for flat knitting because many people have difficulty working with double pointed needles when starting out with such a small number of stitches. However, my first model was done in the round and you can easily work it that way. Just knit every row to work the stockinette stitch and change the rows to rounds. If knitting in the round, while working the cloud chart, you'll need to carefully bring the working yarn back to the beginning of each of the cloud patterns or carry the white all the way around the piece. Whichever way you do it, be careful not to pull the floats too tight. The floats will be tacked down by the felting process.

If you're substituting a different yarn, be sure to test the white to make sure it will felt. Because of the way they're processed, some white yarns don't felt too well. I love to use this yarn for felting because it retains its depth of color and felts like a dream.



The flowers: My original flowers were crocheted but I have included my knitted version here. Because the flowers would be felted, I didn't feel a need to be too careful about wrapping my yarn before turning for the short rows on the petals.

PATTERN

Purse body

With pink yarn, cast on 4 stitches.

Row 1: Knit

Row 2: Purl

Row 3: K1, M1, *YO, K1*, repeat from * to * to end of row.

Row 4: Purl

Row 5: Knit

Row 6: Purl

Row 7: Repeat Row 3

Rows 8-12: Work stockinette stitch

Row 13: Repeat Row 3

Rows 14-20: Work stockinette stitch

Row 21: Repeat Row 3 (64 stitches)

Rows 22-26: Work stockinette stitch

Change to green yarn.

Rows 27-28: Work stockinette stitch

Row 29: *K6, K2tog*, repeat from * to * to end of row.

Rows 30-42: Work stockinette stitch

Row 43: Knit across, decreasing 4 stitches evenly across the row.

Row 44: Purl

Rows 45-48: Repeat rows 43 & 44 two more times. (44 stitches)

Rows 49-52: Work stockinette stitch

Row 53: Knit across, increasing 4 stitches even across the row.

Row 54: Purl

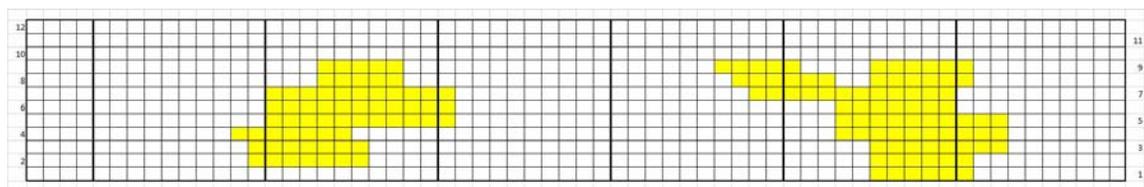
Rows 55-58: Repeat rows 53 & 54 two more times (56 stitches)

Change to blue yarn.

Row 59: Knit

Row 60: Purl

Rows 61-64: Repeat rows 59 & 60 two more times (64 stitches)



Begin working cloud chart, using the blue yarn as background and the white yarn for the clouds.

Bind off loosely. Use the tails from changing colors to sew up the edge. Be sure to sew this edge loosely so you don't have a heavy seam after felting.

Purse handle

Using the green yarn and 2 of the double pointed needles, cast on 5 stitches. Work an I-cord for 30 inches. Bind off.

The handle will be attached after the pieces have been felted.

Flowers

Flowers:

If attaching flowers only to the front, make 1 medium flower or 2 small flowers. If attaching to front and back, make 1 medium flower and 1 small flower.

Use the pink yarn and straight needles. The flowers are made using short rows.

Small flower (work petals 1-10):

Petal 1:

Cast on 4 stitches.

P4

K3, M1, K1

P4, turn

K3, M1, K1

P4, turn

K3, M1, K1

P1, P2tog, P3, turn

K2, K2tog, K1

Bind off 3 stitches, P1 (2 stitches remain)

Petals 2-5:

K2, cast on 2 stitches (4 stitches)

Purl 4

K3, M1, K1

P4, turn

K3, M1, K1

P4, turn

K3, M1, K1

P1, P2tog, P3, turn

K2, K2tog, K1

Bind off 3 stitches, P1 (2 stitches remain)

After completing first 5 petals, knit one row, purl one row and knit one row.

Petal 6:

K2, cast on 5 (7 stitches)

P6, turn

K5, M1, K1

P5, turn

K4, M1, K1

P7, turn

K4, K2tog, K1

P7, turn

K4, K2tog, K1
Bind off 4 stitches, P2 (3 stitches remain)

Petals 7-10:

K3, cast on 4 (7 stitches)
P6, turn
K5, M1, K1
P5, turn
K4, M1, K1
P7, turn
K4, K2tog, K1
P7, turn
K4, K2tog, K1
Bind off 4 stitches, P2 (3 stitches remain)
(for small flower, bind off all stitches)

After completing second 5 petals, knit one row and purl one row twice.

Medium flower (petals 1-15)

Petal 11:

K3, cast on 8 (11 stitches)
P9, turn
K8, M1, K1
P5, turn
K4, M1, K1
P7, turn
K6, M1, K1
P9, turn
K6, K2tog, K1
P9, turn
K6, K2tog, K1
P11, turn
K8, K2tog, K1
Bind off 7 stitches, P3 (4 stitches remain)

Petals 12-17:

K4, cast on 7 (11 stitches)
P9, turn
K8, M1, K1
P5, turn
K4, M1, K1
P7, turn
K6, M1, K1
P9, turn
K6, K2tog, K1
P9, turn
K6, K2tog, K1
P11, turn
K8, K2tog, K1

Bind off 7 stitches, P3 (4 stitches remain)

(for medium flower, bind off all stitches)

Once the desired number of petals has been completed and all stitches bound off, cut the yarn. Thread the cast on tail into the tapestry needle. Arrange the first layer of five petals into a circle and make a stitch to bind the beginning petal to the 5th petal. Next, arrange the second layer of five petals below the first, making sure the second layer of petals lay in between the petals of the first layer. Make a stitch to anchor the second layer of petals to the first. Stitch the first and second layers together around the inside of the loop. Add any additional layers in the same way. With your fingers, stretch the petals out length and width-wise.

Tassel

Using the pink yarn, wrap the yarn about 30 times around the short edge of the paperback book (or other tassel-making tool). Tie at one side, slide the wraps off the book and then wrap the yarn several times around all 60 strands about an inch down from the top to make a bulb. Cut the bottom loops to complete the tassel.

FINISHING

Felting

Place all the pieces into a lingerie bag. Set your washing machine to hot, add a small amount of wool soap or dish soap and add the lingerie bag. Let the machine agitate, for about 5 minutes before checking the pieces. I keep a bowl or basin next to the washing machine so I can pull the bag out without dripping water everywhere.

With this yarn, the flowers and handle will reach the right level of felting first so be sure to check them often during the felting process. The body of the bag will require a few additional minutes. To allow the body of the purse to keep its shape while drying, carefully stuff it with newspaper and stand it upside down.

When the pieces have reached the desired level of felting, rinse them, squeeze as much water as possible out and lay them out to dry. You can roll them in a towel to draw out more water if desired.

Once all the pieces are felted and dried, use the sewing thread or embroidery floss to securely sew on the handles and flowers. Attach the tassel.

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