Snowdrop and Cranefly

The snowdrop, Galanthus nivalus, has been grown since early medieval times, when it was probably known as a 'bulbous white violet'. This elegant, winter-flowering bulb is made up of 'an outer whorl of three propeller-like white sepals protecting the inner "trumpet" of true petals, each stained with a delicate inverted green heart'. The graceful white flower, attached to the long, smooth stems by an arched green pedicel, is protected by the spathe (a pair of narrow green bracts). The green leaves are long and narrow.

The name Galanthus is derived from the Greek gala, 'milk', and anthos, 'flower', while 'snowdrop' originated from the sixteenth century German Schneetropfen, 'pendant'. Known throughout Europe for centuries, the snowdrop arrived in Britain during the 1850s, in the baggage of soldiers returning from the Crimean War. It became linked to Candlemas Day, the Church's candle blessing ritual on February 2, where altars were decorated with these simple white flowers. This ceremony also gave rise to the popular name for the snowdrop, Candlemas Bells. Since Victorian times, plant hunters have coveted and collected snowdrops to produce over 500 named cultivars.

This small stumpwork embroidery features the Snowdrop, *Galanthus nivalis*, a winter-flowering bulb, with detached flower petals and wrapped-wire stems. Inspired by the decorated pages of medieval manuscripts this design includes a Black-and-yellow Cranefly, *Nephrotoma maculosa*, with gauzy detached wings and extraordinarily long legs, and a Scarlet Tiger Moth, *Callimorpha dominula*, with silk-embroidered raised wings. An ornate border, worked in silk ribbon, gold thread and beads, surrounds the panel.

The sixteenth century illustration of the Snowdrop that provided the inspiration for my panel.

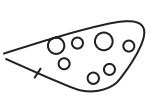
Bud petal outline

Inner petal outline

Petal outline 2

Petal outline 4

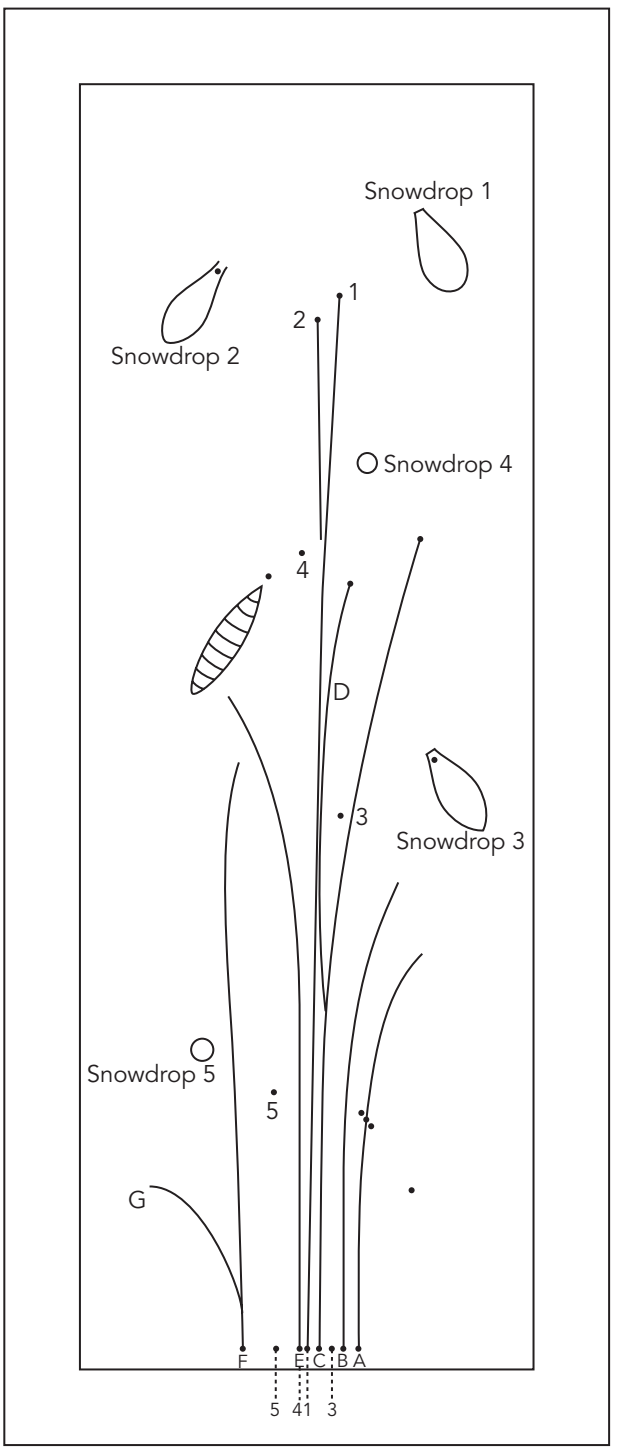
Snowdrop detached petal outlines



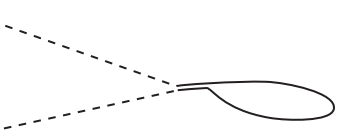
Fore wing

Hind wing

Tiger moth detached wing outlines



Skeleton outline



Cranefly detached wing outline

Thorax outline

Diagrams are actual size

Overall Requirements

This is the *complete* list of requirements for this panel. For ease of use, the requirements of each individual element are repeated under its heading—for example, Snowdrop requirements, Cranefly requirements.

- ivory satin background fabric: 30 cm (12 in) square
- quilter's muslin or calico backing fabric: 30 cm (12 in) square
- quilter's muslin: four 20 cm (8 in) squares
- purple/gold shot crystal organza: 15 cm (6 in) square
- pearl metal organdie: 15 cm (6 in) square
- paper-backed fusible web: 15 cm (6 in) square
- black snakeskin: 2.5 cm (1 in) square
- 25 cm (10 in) embroidery hoop or stretcher bars
- 15 cm (6 in) embroidery hoop
- 10 cm (4 in) embroidery hoops
- needles:

  crewel/embroidery sizes 8–10

  milliners/straw sizes 8 and 9

  sharps size 12

  tapestry size 28

  chenille size 18

  sharp yarn darners sizes 14–18
- embroidery equipment (see page 266)

- dark green stranded thread (stems, leaves): Soie d'Alger 2115 *or* DMC 3345
- medium green stranded thread (pedicel): Soie d'Alger 2114 *or* DMC 3346 *or* 3347
- white stranded thread (flowers): Soie d'Alger Blanc *or* DMC Blanc

- yellow stranded thread (flowers): Soie d'Alger 536 *or* DMC 726
- dark gold stranded thread (cranefly, moth): Soie d'Alger 2526 *or* DMC 783
- medium gold stranded thread (cranefly): Soie d'Alger 2525 *or* DMC 728
- dark purple stranded thread (cranefly): Soie d'Alger 3326 *or* DMC 939
- dark navy stranded thread (moth): Soie d'Alger 165 *or* Noir *or* DMC 310
- scarlet stranded thread (moth): Soie d'Alger 636 *or* DMC 349
- cream stranded thread (moth): Soie d'Alger 2522 *or* DMC 3823
- rust stranded thread (moth): Soie d'Alger 2636 *or* DMC 919
- dark gold stranded thread (border): DMC 783

- brown/black metallic thread (cranefly): Kreinik Cord 201c
- black metallic thread (moth): Kreinik Cord 005c
- red metallic thread (moth): Kreinik Cord 003c
- gold/bronze metallic thread (moth): Madeira Metallic Art 9842 col. 482
- grey metallic thread (cranefly): Madeira Metallic 40 col. 360
- black soft metallic thread (cranefly): Madeira Metallic 40 col. 70
- gold metallic thread (border): Madeira Metallic Art 9803 col. 3007
- gold couching thread (border): Couching Thread 371 (Dark/Jacobean gold)
- gilt 3-ply twist (border)

- fine gold silk thread (border): YLI Silk stitch 50 col. 79
- dark gold thick pearl cotton (border): DMC Coton Perlé No. 3 col. 783
- variegated gold/black chenille thread (moth): col. Fire
- slate rayon machine thread (cranefly): Madeira Rayon 40 col. 1164
- polyester machine thread for couching wire: any colour
- nylon clear thread: Madeira Monofil 60 col. 1001
- Hannah bias-cut silk ribbon: 1 cm (7/16 in) wide col. African Violet (border)

- 4 mm green pearl beads
- 3 mm bronze/purple bead
- Mill Hill seed beads 374 (blue/purple)
- Mill Hill petite beads 40374 (blue/purple)
- Mill Hill petite beads 42014 (black)
- gold seed beads: Metallic Delica DBR 31 *or* Mill Hill Magnifica 10076

- 33 gauge white covered wire (bud, outer petals): twelve 15 cm (6 in) lengths
- 33 gauge white covered wire (inner petals): eight 9 cm (3 1/2 in) lengths
- 33 gauge white covered wire (pedicel 4 and 5): two 12 cm (4 3/4 in) lengths
- 33 gauge white covered wire (moth): four 12 cm (4 1/2 in) lengths (colour wire red and purple if desired, Copic R17 Lipstick Orange, Copic BV08 Blue Violet)
- 30 gauge green covered wire (spathe): two 36 cm (14 in) lengths
- 30 gauge green covered wire (stem): one 18 cm (7 in) lengths

- 30 gauge green covered wire (spathe, stem): four 15 cm (6 in) lengths
- 30 gauge green covered wire (stem): one 6 cm (2¼ in) lengths
- 28 gauge uncovered wire (cranefly wings): two 11 cm (4¼ in) lengths

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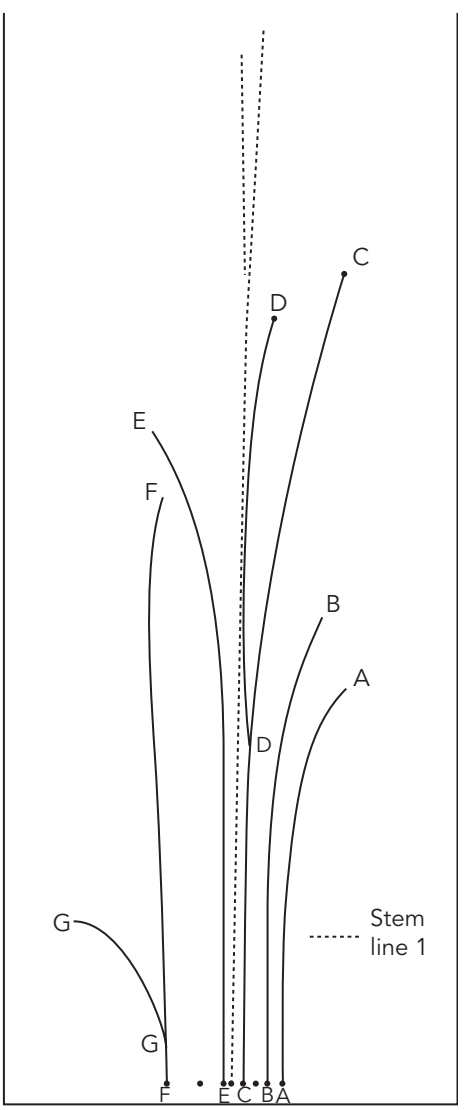
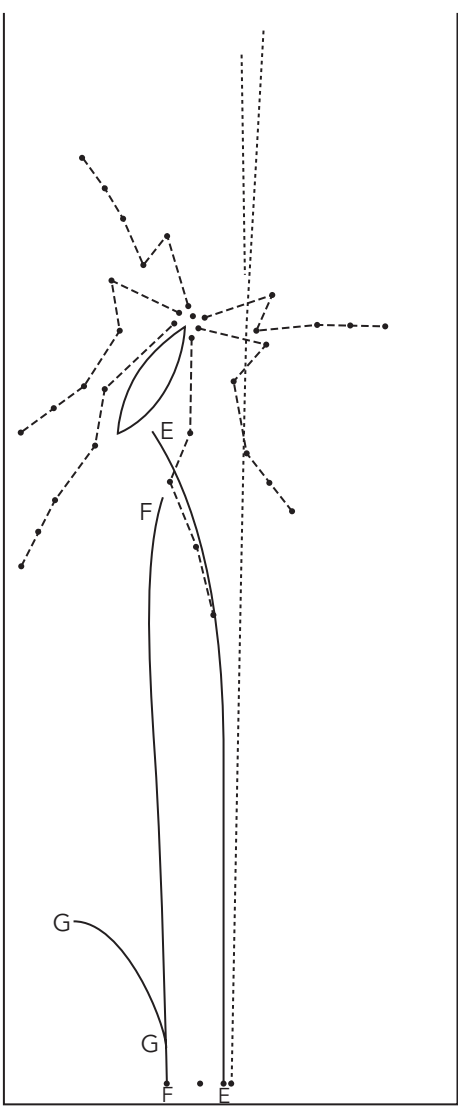
- clear self-adhesive plastic (used for covering books): five 6 cm (2½ in) squares
- brown Pigma Micron 01 marking pen (optional)



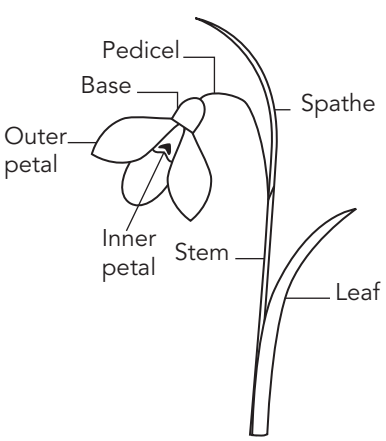
Leaf lines diagram
(diagram actual size)

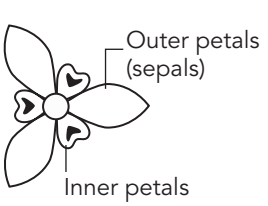


Cranefly leg template
(diagram actual size)

Preparation

1. Mount the satin background fabric and the muslin/calico backing into the 25 cm (10 in) embroidery hoop or frame.
2. Using a fine lead pencil, trace the skeleton outlines of the design and the border onto tracing paper (including the dots at the end of each stem). Turn the tracing paper over and draw over the outlines on the back.
3. With the tracing paper right side up, transfer the design and the border outlines to the satin with a stylus.
4. Using fine gold silk thread in a sharps needle, work a row of tacking/running stitches along both border lines (the lead pencil lines tend to fade). As the border threads will be applied over these stitches, they need to be quite small and accurate.





The Snowdrop

It will help to know a little about this winter-flowering bulb before you start the embroidery. The flowers are borne at the end of smooth green stems which rise above the long flat leaves. A snowdrop flower is made up of an outer circle of three propeller-shaped white petals (actually sepals) surrounding an inner circle of three smaller 'true' petals (these petals are white, with a green inverted heart shape near the edge). Bright yellow stamens are found in the centre of the flower. The green bead-like base of the snowdrop is attached to the stem by an arched green pedicel. Enclosing the base of the pedicel (where it joins the stem) is the spathe, a pair of narrow green bracts (leaves) which protect the flowers.