

A Garden in My Heart

Robyn Rich



Robyn began embroidering thirteen years ago after developing some serious health problems, and found she really loved it. Robyn has always had a strong interest in the creative arts, particularly enjoying drawing and painting. She has also completed a Visual Merchandising Course at the Melbourne College of Decoration.

Robyn's embroidery business came about after she received an Achievement Award in a competition advertised in one of Australia's top embroidery magazines and made the front cover of the magazine. The phone didn't stop ringing and thus the mail order embroidery business, Robyn Rich Creations, specialising in hand-painted backgrounds, was born.

Initially Robyn designed a range of six embroidery kits with hand-painted backgrounds but as demand increased the range grew. The magazines also kept ringing and Robyn has now had over 30 pieces published in embroidery and craft magazines.

Robyn was thrilled to participate in *Embroidery from the Heart*. 'I knew straight away it was something I wanted to be involved in. Having health problems myself and spending quite a lot of time in hospital you get to see the wonderful job these Foundations do for research and to support people.'

When contemplating the theme for her piece, Robyn spoke to many nurses and people in hospital to find out what people go through with heart problems. 'It took me quite a while to come up with this piece; it needed to have meaning and I wanted it to be something that you see something new in every time you look at it ... This is a heart full of life. I chose the cottage, because home is where the heart is; the path for the journey through life; the parterre garden for the crossroads in life; trees, flowers and gardens for renewing life, the lifeblood of our world; little quilts to represent friendship of the heart; and the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, representing the goodness in our hearts.'

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Stitches used: Back stitch, bullion stitch, detached chain stitch, fly stitch, French knot, lazy daisy stitch, running stitch, straight stitch.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

32 inch (80 cm) square seeded cream homespun

DMC stranded cotton:

1 skein each: white, 422, 926, 928, 95, 3022, 3023, 3042

2 skeins each: 224, 225

4 skeins: 523

Zig permanent pigment pen (brush #62 TC-4000), or brown double-ended marker, or fabric marker of your choice (must have fine tip)

Plaid folk art paints:

Italian Sage Green 467

Terracotta 433

Coffee Bean 940

Settler's Blue 607

Rose Chiffon 753

Plaid textile medium (optional)

16 inch (40 cm) diameter embroidery hoop

paint brushes, sizes 2, 4, 6

needles:

#8 straw

#8 crewel

Please read the complete instructions before commencing.

Preparation for painting

Lay the design down on a firm surface and tape into place, then lay the piece of seeded homespun over the top and tape into place as well, centring the design and paying particular attention that the grain of the fabric is straight. The design should show through the fabric enough, but if you have trouble you can tape your work to a lightbox. Using the brush end of the Zig textile marker, mark in all of the lines on the design. Now carefully remove the design sheet from underneath. I suggest putting a blank piece of paper underneath and keeping the fabric taped down for painting.

Painting

The Plaid folk art paints can be used both full strength and diluted with water. If you want to wash your design you will need to add the textile medium. Make yourself up a palette of all five

colours in different strengths—full strength, medium diluted, and very diluted in each colour.

You need to keep the brush as dry as possible when painting to prevent the colours from bleeding into each other. I suggest you practise on some scrap fabric until you get the desired effect.

Complete one little section at a time. Do not do all of the green areas over the whole design, for example, then all of the next colour, as you run the risk of smudging the paint. I also suggest ironing regularly to set the colour; press with a piece of cotton fabric over the top of your design with a warm iron.

Home is where the heart is

Terracotta Begin with the cottage roof, door and window boxes; using the size 4 brush apply soft strokes of medium diluted paint. Then again in soft strokes, using the same brush, paint the walls of the cottage and the path in very diluted paint.

Coffee Bean Using the size 4 brush, paint the tree trunks with soft strokes in a combination of medium and very diluted paint; make them darker on one side to create a shadow.

Sage Green Using the size 4 brush paint the foliage of the trees, these are painted using dabs of paint rather than strokes, in a combination of medium and very diluted paint, making them appear to be darker at the bottom. In full strength paint, using the size 2 brush, dab in the foliage in the window boxes and the garden.

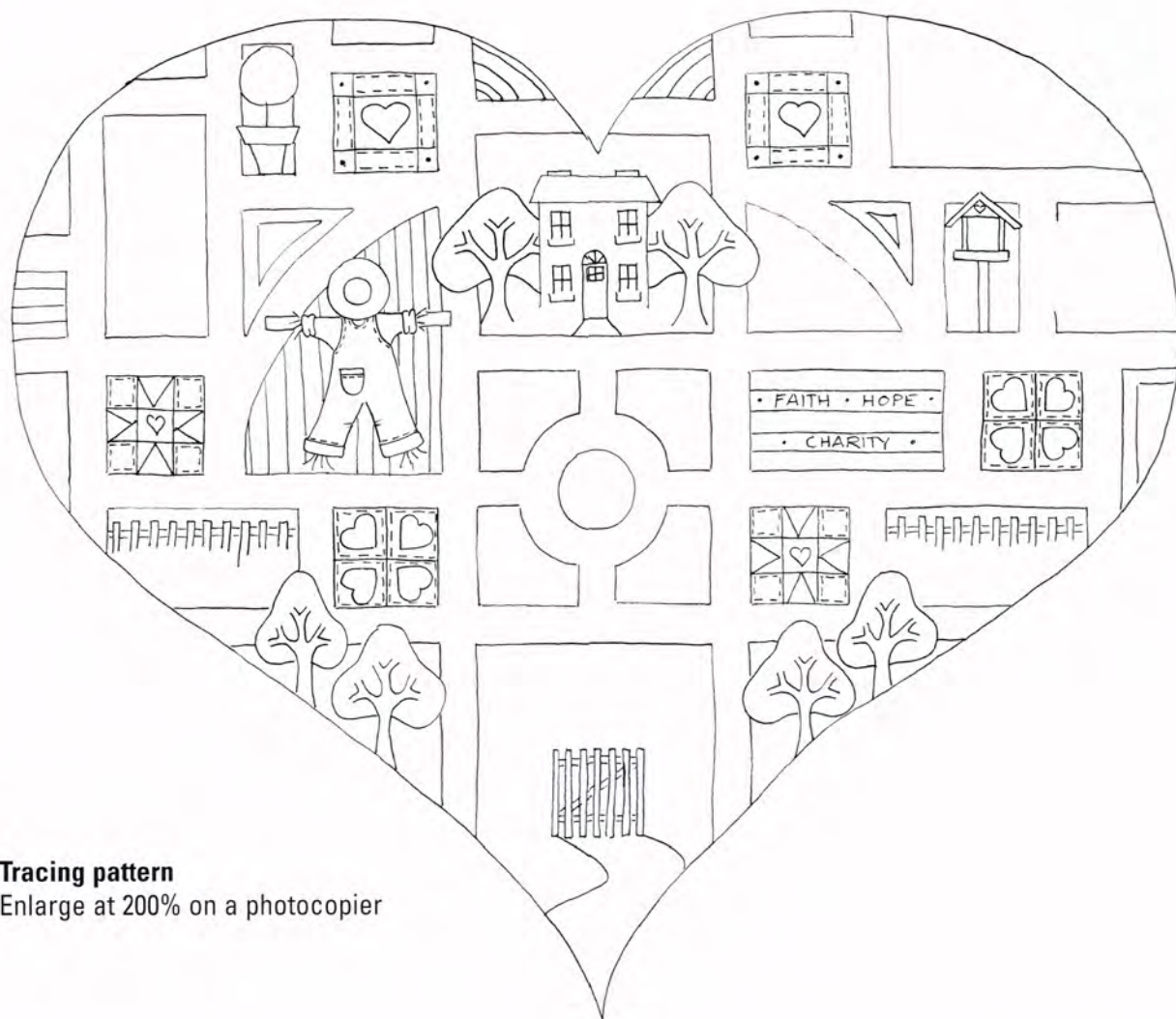
Combination of sage green and terracotta In very diluted paint, using the size 6 brush, with soft strokes paint the background to give the effect of a soft wash; work one colour and then the other, do not mix them first.

Parterre garden

Sage Green Using the size 4 brush paint the garden sections in dabs of both full strength and medium diluted paint.

Scarecrow

Blue In very diluted paint, using the size 4 brush, apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the



Tracing pattern

Enlarge at 200% on a photocopier

overalls, then in the areas there would naturally be shading apply some medium diluted paint.

Coffee Bean Using the size 4 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the hat and the pole holding up the scarecrow, apply some medium diluted paint where there should be shadows.

Pink Using the size 4 brush, apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the shirt; again, you can apply some medium diluted paint to the areas that should be shaded—under the arms and where the shirt sleeves are rolled up.

Sage Green Using the size 2 brush apply dabs of paint around the crown of the sunhat to appear like a cirlet of flowers. Then using the size 6 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the background of this area.

Garden arch

Terracotta Using the size 6 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the garden path, then in medium diluted paint using the size 4 brush add some shaded areas down the side of the path and under the gate. Using the size 2 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the upright pickets of the garden gate and to the

support pieces behind. Then using medium diluted paint apply small soft strokes to the support pieces to add shading.

Sage Green Using the size 2 brush apply fine lines of full-strength paint to form the structure of the foxglove plants. Then using the size 4 brush apply dabs of full-strength paint to form the thick garden on the ground and the arch. Then in very diluted paint apply soft strokes to the area behind the foxgloves to create a wash.

Coffee Bean Using the size 6 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the background of this area.

Foxglove gardens

Sage Green Using the size 2 brush apply fine lines of full-strength paint to form the spikes of each foxglove, then apply strokes to form the leaves. Using the size 4 brush apply dabs of medium diluted paint to the areas between the plants, then in very diluted paint apply soft strokes of paint to the background of both areas.

Delphinium garden

Sage Green Using the size 2 brush apply fine lines of full-strength paint to form the spikes of each delphinium and then apply strokes to form the leaves. Using the size 4 brush apply dabs of medium strength paint to form the daisy bush in the background. Then in very diluted paint apply soft strokes to the background.

Terracotta Using the size 4 brush apply soft strokes to the upper area of the background above the sage green in very diluted paint.

Bird feeder

Terracotta Using the size 2 brush apply soft strokes of medium diluted paint to the post and the roof triangle of the bird feeder.

Sage Green Using the size 2 brush apply soft strokes of medium diluted paint to the rest of the bird feeder. Then using the size 4 brush and very diluted paint, apply soft strokes to the background of this area.

Rose bush

Sage Green Using the size 2 brush apply fine lines of full-strength paint to the stems of the rose bush. Then using the size 4 brush, apply dabs of medium diluted paint to form the foliage of the rose bush. Apply a combination of medium and very diluted paint to the lower area under the rose bush (refer to the photo).

Terracotta Using the size 4 brush apply soft strokes in very diluted paint to the area above the rose bush.

Six friendship quilts

For these you need to refer to the photo for placement of colours.

Sage Green Using the size 2 brush apply soft strokes of medium diluted paint to the green areas of each quilt.

Terracotta Using the size 2 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the terracotta areas of each quilt.

Lavender hedges

Terracotta Using the size 2 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the upright pickets of the fence. Then in medium diluted paint apply dabs of paint to the horizontal part of the fence; this creates shading, and makes it appear as though the horizontal piece is behind the uprights.

Sage Green Using the size 2 brush apply fine lines of full-strength paint to each spike of lavender. Then, using medium diluted paint, apply soft strokes of paint between the spikes of lavender and above and between the fence.

Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity

Sage Green Using the size 2 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the areas where the rosebuds will be stitched.

Pink Using the size 2 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the areas where the virtues are written.

Six trees

Coffee Bean Using the size 2 brush apply soft strokes of both medium and very diluted paint to the tree trunks, making one side darker than the other to create shading. Using the size 4 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the background of these areas.

Sage Green Using the size 4 brush apply dabs of both full-strength and very diluted paint to the foliage areas of the trees, make them darker at the base, getting lighter at the top.

Topiary tree

Terracotta Referring to the photo, use the size 2 brush and apply soft strokes of full-strength paint to the pot in the dark areas, then using a combination of medium and very diluted paint apply soft strokes to the pot.

Sage Green Using the size 2 brush apply fine lines to form the bow, then apply dabs to the foliage of the topiary. Using the size 4 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the background.

Bud garden

Pink Using the size 4 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to two of the bud areas.

Sage green Using the size 4 brush apply soft strokes of very diluted paint to the other two bud areas.

Hedges

Sage green Using the size 4 brush apply dabs of full-strength paint to the hedges, and then apply soft dabs of medium paint to the areas between.

With a final press with a warm iron, the painting is now complete and you are ready to begin embroidering.

Embroidery

Tips

Thread length Never work with a piece of thread longer than from your fingers to your elbow (approximately 18 inches or 45 cm), as it will twist, knot and become unmanageable.

Separating the threads Take the colour you are to use, cut to length as above, and separate the six strands. Then, depending on the number of strands you are to use, place them back together and they are ready to use. This will prevent the thread from twisting.

Embroidery hoop It is a good idea to use an embroidery hoop as it keeps your work taut and you will end up with a neater piece of work.

Needles The #8 straw needle is used for all bullion stitches and French knots. The #8 crewel needle is used for all of the other stitches.

Outer border

Thread the crewel needle with 3 strands of DMC 523 and work a band of very close French knots, 2 wraps each. Make them very close to give a hedge-like appearance.

Home is where the heart is

Window boxes Thread the straw needle with 1 strand of DMC 225 and scatter 2-wrap French knots in the window boxes. Repeat with single strands of DMC 224 and DMC 523.

The garden This is worked in 2 strands of DMC thread a variety of colours—white, 224, 225, 523, 928, 3023, 3042. You can refer to the photo or place the colours where you choose. The flowers are worked in French knots using the straw needle; vary the number of wraps to create texture, as in a real garden, flowers vary in size.