Lisa Shaw
Bubbles' Menagerie

www.Sew-Bubbles.com

Project: Piecing in the Hoop

Techniques and shortcuts for each level are discussed

Supplies:

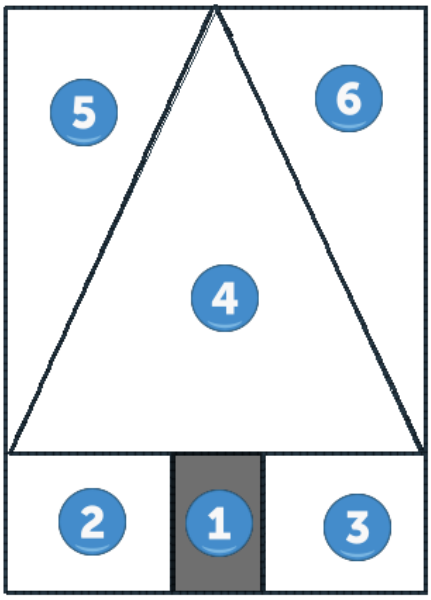
Embrilliance StitchArtist software installed and authorized, SCHMETZ Chrome Embroidery 75/11 needle, tear away stabilizer, scraps of cotton fabrics, temporary spray adhesive, small iron or pressing stick, chopstick for holding fabrics away from needle, neutral thread for construction stitching, metallic thread for decorative accents.

Overview:

This project is similar to a piecing technique that is called foundation piecing or paper piecing and involves a series of "stitch and flip" steps. For a primer on the traditional "how to" for this type of project, check out this article:

https://www.wikihow.com/Foundation-Piece-a-Quilt-Block

Normally you would work from a specific pattern, but in this project we are going to be "free styling" and starting from a basic traditional tree shape block. We will use library shapes to create our "simple base layout". This will allow us to focus on the techniques used to create placement stitches and construction stitches.



Foundation pieced designs are normally stitched on muslin or paper. We will mimic this by starting with a hooped piece of stabilizer and stitching placement lines for shapes on the stabilizer followed by construction/utility seams.

The original BASE design that I started out with was a very simple tree as shown here on the right. If you are new to paper piecing OR are working in a smaller hoop like 4x4, this may be a better project to start with.

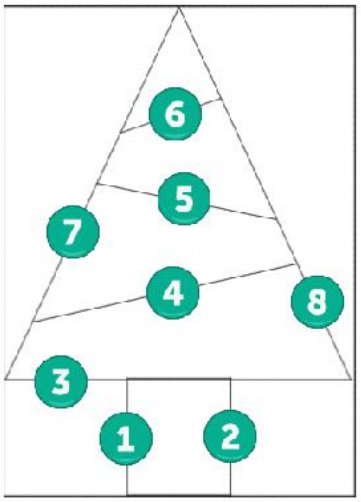
Instructions:

At the computer:

1. **Prepare the design page** - I usually recommend following along with the same settings I have set to become familiar with the project and the steps. Once you have done the project once using my format, hoop and other settings, you can repeat the project using your own settings - the second time you do the project, it will take half as much time even with your custom settings.

- Open the Preferences and select Hoops under Environment.
- Choose PES from the format pulldown.
- Select **Normal** from the Hoop Style. Choose the 130 x 180mm hoop from the list. Click **Apply** then **OK**. **NOTE**: if your hoop is not displaying on your design page - go to the **View menu** to see what is not selected. Draw Hoop (the "h" key on your keyboard) is the menu entry for showing the selected hoop.

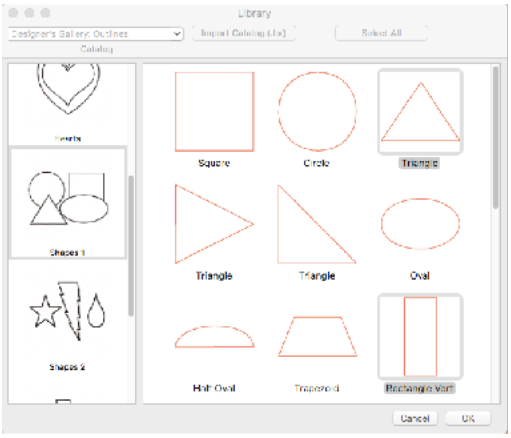
2. Go to Create mode and click on Image to open the tree template.jpg file and size it to fit the hoop.



3. **Merge shapes** from the outlines library. From Shapes 1, we bring in the triangle and the vertical rectangle by selecting both using the Command/ Control key and clicking on OK.

4. **Sizing the shapes.** Select the rectangle and copy and paste it so that you now have 2 rectangles.

- Size one to fill the hoop.
- Select the triangle and size it to 2/3 the size of the rectangle. Be sure that each corner touches the sides and the top leaving a space at the bottom.
- Select the second rectangle and size it to divide the lower area into thirds.
- Use draw with points to create each line segment of tree - two left clicks then right click to end. Do this for lines under 4, 5, & 6. I edit my lines after drawing them so that they start and end on the edges of the triangle.



The order of these "line objects" is not really important because we are using them to create a guide. I have a tendency to create as I think it should stitch, so the outer rectangle will be first, then the trunk, the triangle and then the dividing lines on the tree itself.

5. **Create a "placement" stitch (one color) for all these shapes**
   - Select all line objects and set to single run - this will show all of the placement regions on your stabilizer.
6. Go to **Create > Auto Entry Exit** to optimize jumps and stitching. If you have Level 2, choose **Auto Sequence** which will first put the shapes in a mathematical order before it assigns the entry/exit.

Now that you have a "template" showing the finished size for all of the shapes, go to **File > Print**. Use this as a sizing guide for finding fabric in your scrap bag that will fit each shape PLUS 1/4" margin.

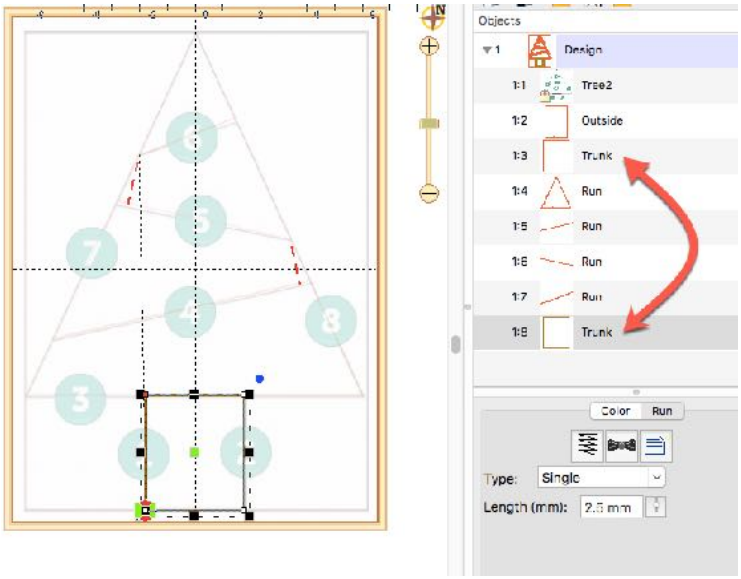
7. **Print an actual size template** and use this as a guide to cut fabric pieces to fit each "region" with 1/4" seam allowance. Following traditional paper piecing, this is a great "scrap busting project."

Creating the construction stitches to assemble the block:

7. **Select the "trunk" in the object list**. Copy and Paste it. It is now at the bottom of our object tree in the same location as the original placement.

   TIP: you can name your objects if that helps you "see" what their job is when looking at them in the object pane.

8. **Set to single run. Change color** so that the machine will stop.
9. Click on the bowtie to add ties to the start and stop of this stitched object

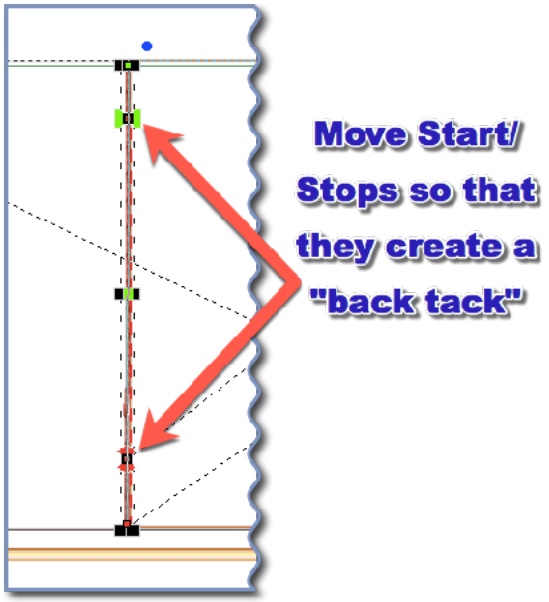


This is the tackdown the trunk fabric.

Paper piecing sewing begins with a single piece onto which the other pieces are stitched and then flipped/pressed. This means that you normally do not "back tack" at the start and end of each line of stitching because the next piece is sewn over the end so that stitches do not unravel. However, the follow steps show how to add a "backtack" on each line of stitching which can be a sense of security because we are working "in the hoop".

The next steps describe the seaming stitches that we will draw to "piece/seam/connect" the different fabrics. Features of each "seam":

- **Straight lines** - use the CTRL key while drawing with points to create line nodes - each line is 2 left clicks. Draw with points - CTRL left click, CTRL left click, right click to end - adjust if necessary.
- Each object will be a **new color** so that the machine will stop
- **Move the Start and Stop** away from the end points. This will simulate a "reverse". Although it is not necessary, its a technique that I like to use when creating construction seams.



Refer to background template tree picture for location of the following “seams” that have the above properties (straight line, new color, moved start and stop):

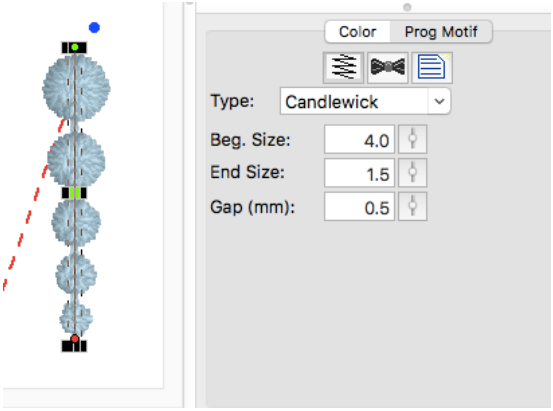
1. Create “Seam” on line 1 to attach left background to trunk.
2. Create “Seam” on line 2 to attach right background to trunk.
3. Create “Seam” on line 3 which will begin the tree by attaching the lowest layer to the base (background, trunk, background)
4. Create “Seam” on line 4 5 and 6 for the different greens that will make up the tree. You can easily copy and paste these already drawn objects from above - just be sure to change colors and move starts and stops.
5. Create “Seam” on lines 7 and 8 to attach the background to either side of the tree

When stitching this at the machine, you will place your fabric RIGHT side down on top of the existing piece with 1/4” beyond the stitching line (on the stabilizer). After each line is stitched, you flip the fabric open so that right sides are up and press along seam.

If the scraps you are using are random sizes, when you flip and press, you can trim the overage using the stitched lines in the stabilizer as a guide.

Decorate your tree!

To create “icicles” in level 2, draw a short line and select the program motif. 



Change sizes of beginning & end to create graduated “icicles”. Copy, Paste and change length to decorate your tree.

In Level 2, use the Sequence Objects  to set the stitching order of your icicles. Remember to select sequence objects again to end sequencing OR right click to end.

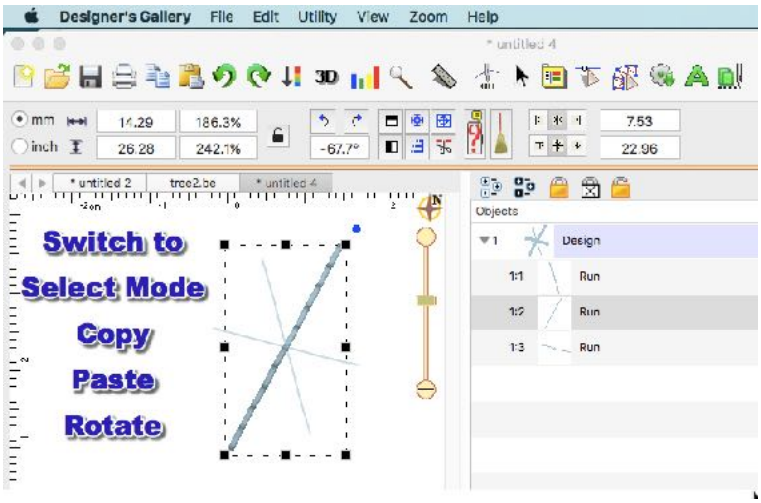
To create simple snowflakes for background:

Draw line - set to **Run > Bean stitch** and move start and stop to center.

Switch to **Select** mode. Copy paste and rotate twice.

Hold down SHIFT key when sizing the lines to keep the center and size in/out.

Select Flake - Edit > Group and copy paste to fill background with flakes.



Find me on FaceBook *www.Facebook.com/SewBubbles*