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Opening Extract from...

What Delilah Did Presents

Secret Garden Embroidery

Written by Sophie Simpson

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What Delilah Did
presents

Secret Garden



Embroidery

15 PROJECTS
FOR YOUR
STITCHING
PLEASURE



What Delilah Did
presents

Secret Garden



Embroidery

PAVILION



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Welcome to my secret hideaway

Throughout my life I have been lucky enough to spend time in a fair few magnificent gardens, but I can safely say that none of them holds a candle to the one at Thistledown Farmhouse. Magic abounds in the earth and in the air, permeating the senses and bewitching the soul.

Since far too few of us have access to beautiful outdoor spaces on a regular basis, I have attempted to inject as much of that horticultural enchantment as I possibly can into this fresh new collection of utterly modern embroidery projects. If you hanker for innovative designs bursting with colour and a large dollop of whimsicality, then this is definitely the book for you.

With project chapters split into sections for beginner, improver and advanced stitching levels, you should have no trouble re-creating a little piece of natural magic for yourself.

As always, the charts and projects within these pages are chiefly intended as a launch pad, designed to be mixed and matched in order for you to create something truly unique. For example, just because I have stitched the Arbour Alphabet onto flags, it doesn't mean that you have to do the same.

To get you started, you will find ideas for alternative projects in the tips that come with each design.

So are you sitting comfortably? Then turn the page and let's begin!

Delilah x



{bud}

Wild Thistle Book Band 36

Daisy Chain Bracelet 42

Little Bug Magnets 48

Darling Buds Purse 54

Lucky Clover Locket 60





Little Bug Magnets

{SUPPLIES}

FOR THE TRIO

Three pieces of 28-count cream linen, 15 x 15cm (6 x 6in) each

Stranded cotton embroidery threads – see chart key for details

Tapestry needle, size 24

Sewing thread, any colour, 3m (10ft)

Three metal self-cover buttons, 38mm (1½in) diameter

Three circular magnets, maximum 25mm (1in) diameter

Tissue paper, cream or white

Small, sharp scissors

Pencil or water-erasable pen

Tracing paper and paper scissors

Craft glue

10cm (4in) embroidery hoop (optional)

1.

Take one of your pieces of linen and refer to Starting to Stitch, page 19, to prepare your fabric and mark its centre point. Prepare a length of embroidery thread (see page 11) – you will need to stitch the cross stitch body using three strands. Fix the prepared fabric into the hoop if you are using one (see page 14).

2.

Using an away waste knot start (see page 20) and working from the centre point outwards, follow the chart for your chosen bug (see pages 50–51) to complete the full and three-quarter cross stitches for the body first (see page 24 for guidance on working fractional cross stitches).

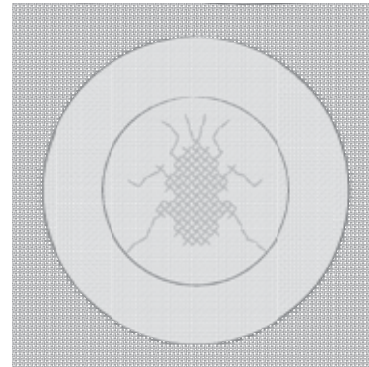
3.

Once the cross stitch is complete, work the straight stitches with two strands of black thread, securing the thread ends behind the existing cross stitches on the reverse of the fabric.

4.

Remove the fabric from the hoop. Trace the circle template on page 136 onto tracing paper, including the inner circle and centre-point alignment

markings. Align the template over your bug so that the stitched design is centred in the inner circle, and then mark around the outer circle using a pencil or water-erasable pen. Cut out the marked circle from your fabric.



STEP 4

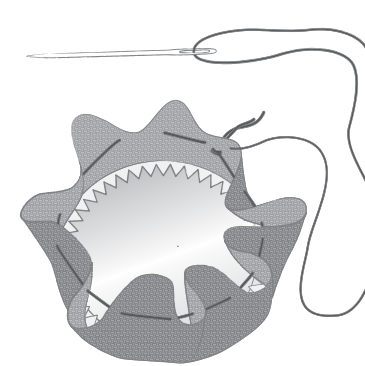
5.

Cut a circle from tissue paper that is roughly the size of the inner circle on the template. Use a *very* small amount of glue to stick the tissue paper circle to the front section of the metal button – this will stop the shiny metal from glaring through the open weave of the linen without adding extra bulk. (Note that the metal shank on the button front is not required and should be removed by squeezing.)



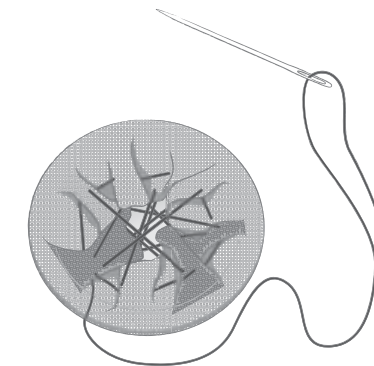
6.

Sew a loose running stitch around the outside of the linen fabric circle using a double thickness of spare sewing thread. Stitch about 5mm (¼in) in from the edge and leave the needle



STEP 6

threaded when you get to the end. Place the linen circle face down on your work surface and position the button front (also face down) on top of it.



STEP 7

7.

Pull on the end of the thread to gather the fabric around the button, checking the position of the motif on the front before pulling tight; secure with zigzag stitches worked from side to side across the back of the fabric to smooth out any bumps around the edge of the button (see diagram). Secure the end of the thread with a couple of backstitches and cut off the excess.



A Bug's Life

I ARRIVED FOR MY first day of work at Thistledown Farmhouse with no idea of what to expect. The front gate looked as though it hadn't been used for fifty years, so entangled was it with ivy. Just as I was thinking I might have to climb over it, Miss Merriweather appeared on the other side, seemingly magicked out of thin air.

'You're late.' She was frowning – this was not a good start. She reached down behind the gate, clicked the latch and, to my amazement, it swung straight open; a clean cut had been made through the twisted ivy, hidden by the mass of leaves in front. 'Follow me. And watch out for the bugs.'

Bugs? I stepped through the gate and saw that a tunnel had been cut through the thicket on one side, invisible until you were beyond the gate. Halfway down one of its walls was a ledge, along which marched a steady stream of invertebrates.

'Is that...?'

'My bug transport network.' She spoke as though this was the most normal thing in the world. 'They keep to their paths, I keep to mine. Everybody's happy.' It appeared to be a miniature motorway. Snails and slugs crawled along the inside lanes, with beetles and spiders scuttling past them on the outside. The middle lanes were populated with ants, ladybirds and other small insects. 'Don't bug them and they won't bug you.' She allowed herself a little chuckle. 'And watch out for the flagpole in the back garden – it's their flight control centre.'

We came to the end of the short tunnel and emerged at a black door. It had a brass knocker in the shape of a bee and was flanked by tall ivy-framed windows on either side. I followed Miss Merriweather inside...



Towering Tulips

MY DAYS WERE infinitely more exciting now that I was working in the garden. Miranda even let me sing to the roses outside the conservatory. They had doubled in size since I had taken over.

Miranda had been so busy lately that she didn't even stop to give me instructions in person – she just left a list stuck to the fridge door. Normally the directions were long and complicated, but today the note simply said: 'Speak to florist – tulips nearly ready.' In a large bucket beside the fridge, she had left five tulips. I knew they were tulips because the note had said so, otherwise I would have thought they were some sort of gigantic flowering bamboo. They were about as tall as me, with poker-straight stems and petals larger than my head, yet when I picked them up they were as light as a feather. I tied them together with twine and set off to the florist's.

As I got closer to the centre of the village, I noticed that a couple of passers-by had changed direction and were now following me, pointing at the tulips and exchanging confused glances. By the time I reached the florist's, no fewer than nine people were trailing along behind me. I ducked inside the shop with the flowers. A bell rang as the door closed.

'Hello?' shouted a woman from the back room.

'Hello,' I shouted back, then waited. Nothing. 'I have some tulips that you might be interested in buying for your shop. I brought a sample for you to look at.'

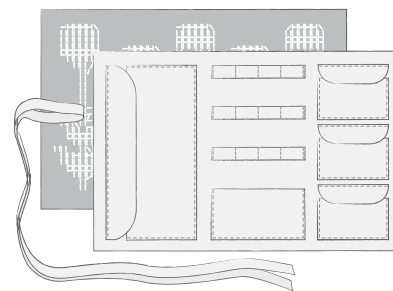
'Too late for tulips,' said the woman impatiently, finally coming through to greet her visitor, 'they'll be all mangy and...' She stopped dead as she glimpsed the blooms in my arms and the villagers' noses pressed up against the shop window. 'Oh my!'





8.

Cut a length of cotton tape or ribbon to approximately 1m (3ft) and fold it in half. With the embroidered front right side facing down, position the folded ribbon ties at the centre of the left-hand edge of the embroidered fabric (see diagram), then place the lining on top, right side facing up. Pin the layers together all the way around the edge.



STEP 8

9.

Using two strands of yellow stranded cotton, the small embroidery needle and a knotless loop start (see page 20), sew the layers together around the outside edge with a small running stitch (see page 29). Make a few extra stitches back and forth over the ties for strength. When the stitching is complete, secure the end of the thread with a couple of backstitches, thread it in between the layers and trim the excess (see page 21). Finish the ends of the ties by turning them under twice to hide the raw edges before stitching into place.



PROJECT VARIATION

For an extra pop of colour, choose patterned ribbon for the ties and contrasting felt for the interior pockets. With a few minor adjustments this would also make an excellent tool roll for your sewing paraphernalia.



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Sophie Simpson has stitched a gorgeous world that manages to be both nostalgic and thoroughly fresh, all at once.

LARA WATSON, EDITOR MOLLIE MAKES

Stitch your very own horticultural haven with *What Delilah Did*.

This whimsical collection of botanical-inspired needlework projects will take you from budding novice to confident stitcher as you explore a variety of counted embroidery techniques.

Bursting with colour and filled with designs to suit a range of abilities, you needn't be green-fingered to recreate a slice of this magical rural retreat in your own home.

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