

Wool Felt Pincushion

by Susan Brubaker Knapp

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Host Susan Brubaker Knapp

Materials

- 8" x 10" 100% wool felt, white or neutral color
- Boiling water
- Vinegar
- Rit® All-Purpose Dye in 3 colors
- Latex or rubber gloves
- Gallon plastic container (I use an old food storage container marked "For Dye Only" so it won't ever be used for food again)
- Old clean towel
- Thread (I used 30wt cotton thread that matches the wool for machine and hand stitching.)
- Embroidery needle
- Hand-dyed perle cotton #5
- Ground walnut shells (This can be purchased in pet stores; it is sold to use in tanks for desert-dwelling reptiles like lizards.)

Optional

- Stirrer, retired kitchen spoon or spatula

CAUTION:

All supplies used for dyeing must be dedicated to non-food use.

100% wool felt dyes beautifully, is wonderful to hand stitch, and makes for a great pincushion. The ground walnut shell filling will keep your pins sharp and provides a nice weight. If walnut shells are an allergen for you, substitute wool batting or polyester fiberfill to stuff your pincushion.

Dye the Wool

1. Cut a few pieces of wool: 5" x 10" for the main color plus 3" square and 2" square for contrasting colors. You will cut these into circles at a later step.
2. Fill a kettle with water and bring to a boil. Place the plastic container in a deep sink.
3. Read the directions on the dye container. It is important to understand the basic process that is recommended, including the amount of water and vinegar appropriate for the amount of wool you are dyeing.

4. Pour boiling water in the container. (The amount depends on how much wool you are dyeing; consult the dye container for instructions.)
5. Add vinegar (again, see the container for the recommended amount).
6. Add the liquid dye.
7. Put on latex or rubber gloves and drop the wool felt into the dye bath. If needed, use your gloved hands or an old spatula to agitate the wool and evenly dye it. If you don't want it to dye evenly, just make sure all the wool is submerged, and leave it alone. Allow it to sit for an hour or more.
8. With the gloves on, pull out the wool and gently squeeze. Rinse under cold water to remove any excess dye.
9. Squeeze to remove as much water as you can or roll in an old clean towel. Spread out, reshape, and allow to dry.
10. Repeat this process with different colors of dye, if desired. For my project, I used 3 colors.

- When the wool is dry (or mostly dry), press with steam. If you iron when the wool is still slightly damp, you can block it (stretch it gently back into shape) as you iron.

Construct the pincushion

- Cut 2 large (4½" diameter) circles for the front and back of the pincushion from the 5" x 10" strip. From different colors, cut 1 medium (2¾" diameter) circle and 1 small (1½" diameter) circle from the 3" and 2" squares, respectively.
- Center and pin the medium circle to 1 of the large circles. Using #5 perle cotton, embroider using the closed fly stitch (figure 1) to sew the circles together. Add French knots, if desired, to enhance the stitching.
- Center and pin the small circle to the medium circle and embroider it in the same way.
- Place the second large circle on top of the embroidered circle, right sides together, and sew around the edge of the circle on a sewing machine with a ¼" seam allowance. Backstitch at both ends, leaving a small opening for turning.
- Turn right side out, and fill with crushed walnut shells or filling of your choice. Turn edges under and stitch the opening closed with thread that matches the wool.

Resources

- Wool felt: JoAnn Fabrics
- Hand-dyed perle cotton
 - Laura Wasilowski (<http://artfabrik.com/artfabrik-store/hand-dyed-pearl-cotton-threads/>)
 - Weeks Dye Works (<https://www.weeksdyeworks.com/pearl-cottons.php>)
- Ground walnut shells: Amazon (https://www.amazon.com/Zilla-Reptile-Terrarium-Bedding-Substrate/dp/B001OVGPH6/ref=pd_lpo_sbs_194_img_1?_encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=QYQHS9VP7T0KQP7CGSRC)

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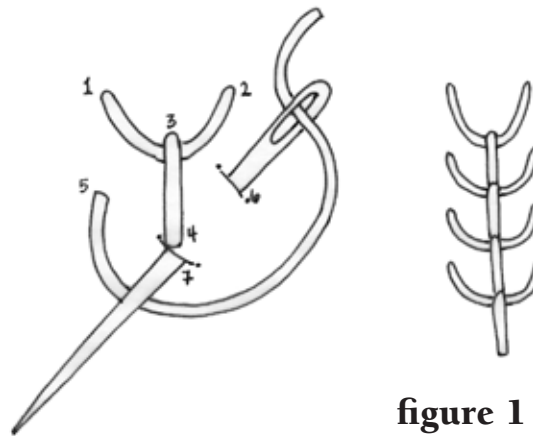


figure 1