

# In a Flower Garden

WELCOME SPRING WITH THIS FREE-SPIRITED PROJECT

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GWEN DIXON



*Flower Garden Mat. Designed and hooked by Gwen Dixon, Riverview, New Brunswick, 2022.*

I love flower garden plans—those simple line drawings that indicate the direction of the flowers' growth, the size and proliferation of leaves and petals, and the careful consideration of the placement of flowers and plants, according to height, color, and the companionship. These garden plans themselves are works of art, and they inspired me to hook a mat. This mat was not made with a pattern and is not a direct representation of one flower garden plan. Instead, it is an example of spontaneous hooking and a compilation of ideas from a few garden plans.



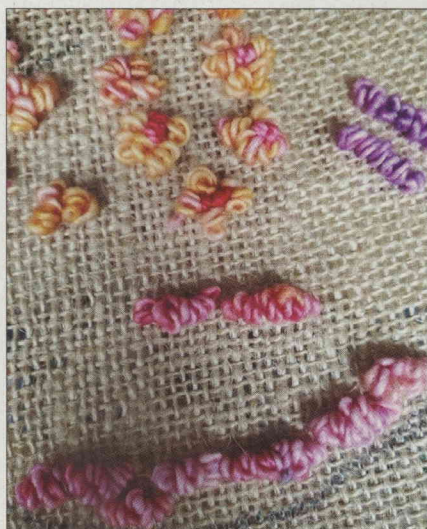
*Here are three flower garden plans from Better Homes and Gardens that I really like. Used with permission from Better Homes and Gardens®, Meredith Operations Corporation. All rights reserved.*

This flower garden idea does not come with a pattern. You will make your own design as you hook your garden. I have provided my best tips and process photos to help you on your way!

## HOW TO MAKE A SPONTANEOUS FLOWER GARDEN MAT

### Prepare to Hook

Draw a general organic shape on a piece of backing (burlap or linen). Sew around the edge of the piece of backing you are going to use. Sew around the drawn outline of the shape you have drawn. Then sew around this outline again, about 1 inch away from the original outline.



### Hook Your Garden

Start hooking general flower shapes wherever you imagine the plants to be in your garden. Hook the flowers in the direction that they grow. The photos here show how I was imagining pink ground cover such as phlox (hooked horizontally), yellow flowers with a red center such as a dahlia (hooked in a circle), and a bushy flowering plant like a lilac (hooked vertically and diagonally).

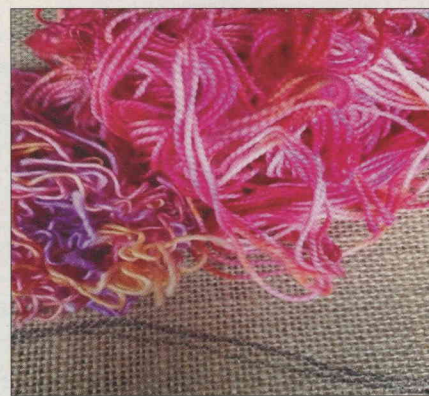


#### TIP

Try multicolor hand-dyed wool to make your garden. Here is a photo of one of the yarns I used. Hooking with this type of yarn requires that you cut the yarn and sometimes use short sections.



In this photo, you can see the uncut piece of multicolored wool. This piece was cut to use the yellow section for the yellow flowers and the pink section for the ground cover. I also used this yarn for the lilac bush.



Here is a photo of another multicolor yarn. I used this on the upper right section of my mat, which could be a rose or hydrangea bush. I often used this fine yarn doubled over, hooking with two or four strands at once.

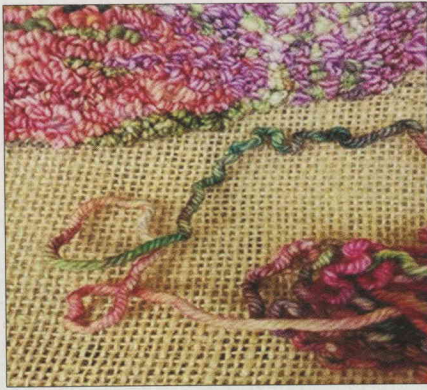


#### TIP

Start adding green at any time, hooking it in between and around the flower shapes.

All greens can work together, so add as many as you like to give interest and texture. Here is another multicolor yarn that had green in it. I cut out the green and used it with the other green yarns.

The red color on this multicolor yarn was then hooked into the pink ground cover to add texture and variety.



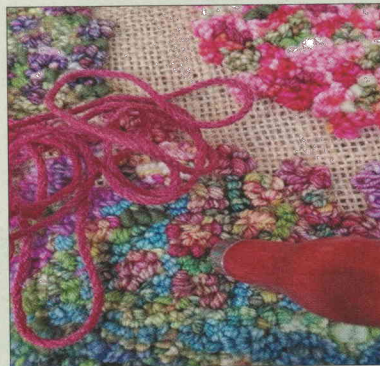
**TIP**

Add a bit of thicker yarn wool, as pictured below, to give texture. I used this for with the green yarns.



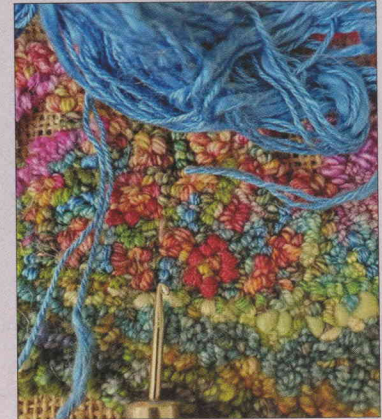
**TIP**

Add white around the flowers and leaves, especially near the top of the piece to suggest space and light.



**TIP**

Move the colors around the mat, working them in, with similar colors, as possible. For example, the photos show the same red yarn used in two different areas, in the upper right (roses or hydrangeas) and in the red flowers at the bottom.



**TIP**

Try not to use one color in one area only. In other words, if you use a color in one area, make sure to use it elsewhere. I had hooked a blue section near the bottom right of the piece, to bring a cooler color to the piece. I then added blue between the flowers throughout the piece.



If you look closely at the flower garden here, you can see the blue throughout the piece, and you can see each color being used in more than one area.



**TIP**

As you are nearing “junctions” where the flowers meet, “blend” the colors by using colors that are a variety of the colors of the flowers in the spaces where the plants meet.



Let the plants grow into one another and mingle a bit, as they do in real flower gardens.



**FINISH YOUR PIECE**

When you have finished hooking your piece, remove it from your frame or hoop and trim the excess burlap or linen, just outside of the second row of machine stitching (the second row away from the piece).

Press the burlap or linen flat against your piece with an iron.

I wanted my flower garden to have a “surround,” a context in which to grow, so I hand stitched a piece of matching green wool onto the back of my piece. I stitched all the way around, then trimmed the overall shape I wanted.

I used a piece of the thick green wool to finish the space in between

the flower garden and the green “surround.”

I stitched a small sawtooth picture hanger to the back of my piece so that it can hang on the wall. We are always learning as fiber artists. I hope you learned something new in this article or were encouraged to hook in a new way! RHM



Gwen Dixon is a fiber artist and adult educator from Riverview, New Brunswick, Canada. You can find her at at Gwen Dixon on Facebook or by email at [happyypups@rogers.com](mailto:happyypups@rogers.com).