

The lively needle

Stitch balloons for spring

By MARY KAY DAVIS

Spring is coming with kites and baseballs and balloons soaring through the air. Stitch this needlepoint coaster or pin cushion in preparation for the happy days ahead.

You'll need a five-inch square of 14-gauge needlepoint canvas, a tapestry needle, stranded needlepoint yarns in three different balloon-colors (I used pink, blue and soft green), light-colored background wool, a five-inch square of felt for finishing and polyester fiber fill if you want to make a pin cushion.

Begin by working the outside stitches of balloon A. This forms the balloon's outline. Fill it completely with brick stitch as diagrammed. Notice that the outside stitches may cover two, three, four or five canvas threads, but all inner stitches cover four threads.

Stitch balloon B in the same way,

outlining first and then filling in the circle. This stitch could be called the diagonal brick stitch and may distort canvases if pulled too tightly. Work with relaxed tension.

Balloon C is stitched in the same manner as balloon A.

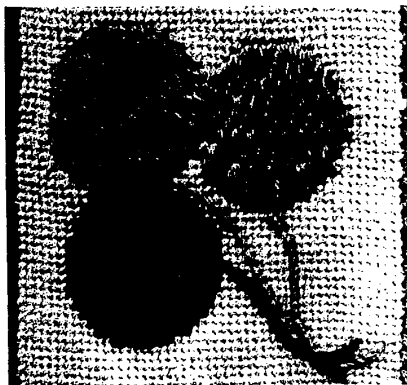
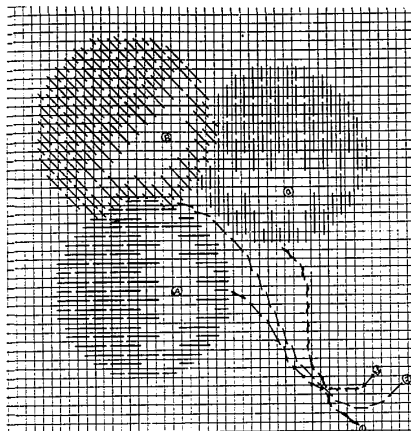
Each balloon's string is stitched in that balloon's color. Work string number one in back stitch, as diagrammed, using one strand of wool. Whip back stitches if you wish. String number two begins at balloon B and passes over number one before it ends. String number three passes over both number one and number two, giving the effect of a raised knot holding the balloon strings together.

Fill in the background with basket-weave in a pale color. Work one row of long-armed cross or upright gobelin stitch in a balloon color around the outside of the needlepoint square.

Cut away excess canvas so that five unworked threads are left on each

side. Miter corners and fold back raw canvas. The long-armed cross or gobelin border will cover the edge. Stitch felt to the back of the coaster with needle and thread. Sew in the "ditch" between outside border and the needle-

point background. If you wish to make a pin cushion, insert stuffing after backing is attached on three sides, and then complete sewing. Trim away any excess felt and you're finished. Happy spring!



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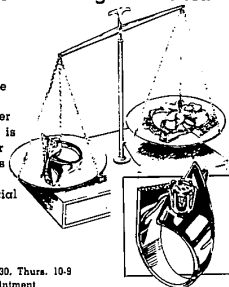
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