

The lively needle

Decorate a yarn Christmas tree

By MARY KAY DAVIS
Christmas trees are "in" this month, both in real life and needlepoint. Here's a simple tree design which can be made into a pillow for your couch, or an ornament for your front door. Decorate it with beads, bangles, candles or whatever appeals to you.

Here's how to make one from No. 10 interlock canvas and two shades of green yarn.

The tree is built of identical leaf stitches. (See Diagram 1.) Each row has one more leaf than the row above it and the tree grows as you progress. Diagram 2 shows how the rows fit together. Notice that the top stitch of each leaf shares holes with stitches 6 or 9 on Diagram 1.

The first row has one leaf and the second two. I stopped at row 17 with 17 leaves. But keep on stitching until your tree reaches the size you want. When the tree is finished, smooth the bottom edge with partial leaves as shown at the bottom of Diagram 1.

DECORATE the tree next. Add beads (leftover jewelry is super), red bows, sequins, candles or whatever you wish. Regular strings, knotted, makes wonderful popcorn swags.

To make a pillow, place right sides of needlepoint and backing together. Trim away excess canvas so that half an inch of raw canvas extends beyond the stitching. Sew backing by machine around all three corners, leaving most of the base of the tree open.

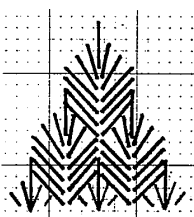
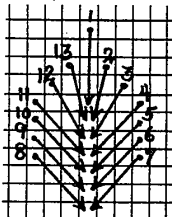
Carefully turn tree inside out. Stuff with polyester fiber fill. Whip bottom edge together by hand.

FOR THE HANGING decoration, cut 1/2-inch mat board into a tree shape that is 3/4-inch smaller than your finished needlepoint's height and width. Trim away excess canvas, leaving one inch of raw canvas around tree.

Slightly pad the cardboard with a thin sheet of quilt batting or polyester fiber fill. If this is slippery, tack it down with rubber cement. Place decorated needlepoint over tree form. Lace the canvas around the poster board, using heavy thread. Be careful to position the needlepoint so that no white canvas shows from the front. Lace side to side, and then top to bottom.

Cover the back with felt or calico. Whip stitch by hand to the edges of the needlepoint. Attach a loop of yarn to the backing for hanging.

And Merry Christmas.



As a pillow or a door hanging, this embroidered Christmas tree fits the season. The stitching diagrams are at the left.



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It's tough to keep lost weight lost

Only one obese patient in five is ever able to maintain a permanent weight loss beyond the hospital environment, said Dr. George Bray, guest lecturer at Michigan State University.

In a controlled hospital environment, he said we can make anyone lose weight, but most patients eventually return to or surpass the weight they had at the start of hospitalization.

A researcher and clinician, Dr. Bray is a professor of medicine at the University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine. He is the author of a book, "The Obese Patient."

"Obesity is difficult to treat successfully," he said, "because excess body weight is not a single disorder, but a variety of disorders requiring different treatments. Many factors contribute to obesity and our understanding of them is incomplete."

Race plays a role, at least in America, where white males are more prone to obesity than black males and black females are more prone to obesity than white females.

Hereditry is also important. If both parents are obese, a child has an 80 per cent chance of having the same problem. If neither parent is obese, a

child has only a nine per cent chance of becoming obese.

Age has something to do with the problem. People becoming obese before their 20th birthday usually have more fat cells than people becoming obese after age 20.

Social class is a factor. In the lower social-economic classes, 30 per cent of the population is obese while the problem afflicts only 10 per cent of the people in the upper social-economic strata.

The human body also seems to fight against losing weight, Dr. Bray pointed out.

"At a given body weight, we require a certain amount of food just to maintain that weight," he explained. "If we cut back our food intake, we will lose weight. But the body will adapt, and slow down its metabolism so that proportionately less food is needed to maintain the now-lower body weight."

"To keep losing weight at a fixed rate," he added, "we have to eat less and less."

While diet can be controlled in a hospital situation, Dr. Bray said, patients on their own have real problems controlling their food intake.

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