

Topic: FUNDAMENTALS OF TEXTILES AND CLOTHING

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EMBROIDERY

Embroidery is one of the oldest of all crafts. From earliest times, when all cloth was hand-woven-often from undyed yarn-people have found various ways of embellishing it. The word “embroidery” conjures up a wealth of styles.

Materials Required

Fabrics

Embroidery can be worked on any pliable material from chiffon to leather. The enormous range of both synthetic and natural fabrics can, in fact be rather daunting to the beginner. Many synthetic fabrics have the advantage of being cheaper and more durable than natural fabrics, but in general they are more difficult to handle and are best avoided until you have gained some experience with natural fabrics.

Threads

Embroidery can be worked in many different kinds of thread silk, cotton, linen, wool, synthetics and metal in various weights and thicknesses. The distinctive qualities of each-from the lustre of silk to the soft, hairy texture of wool create strikingly different effects. A piece of embroidery may be worked entirely in one type of thread, or it may combine several different types to create pleasing and exciting contrasts. The basic principle is that the thread and fabric should be in sympathy with and complement one another. Some of the most common embroidery threads are:

- a) Crewel and tapestry wool
- b) Cotton broader

- c) Pearl cotton
- d) Stranded cotton (embroidery floss)
- e) Soft embroidery cotton
- f) Silk floss
- g) Twisted button hole silk



Fig. 1: Embroidery

Ordinary sewing or tacking (basting) thread may be used in transferring a design.

Needles

The needle is such a simple tool, yet without it embroidery would be impossible. The fine steel needles are used. There are a range of types, sizes and gauges now available which have been developed for specific uses.

Sharp: Small round eye to take a single thread, pointed tip. Used mainly for dress making.

Crewel: Long eye, slender, pointed tip.

Chenille: Long eye, shorter than crewel, larger range of sizes, pointed tip.

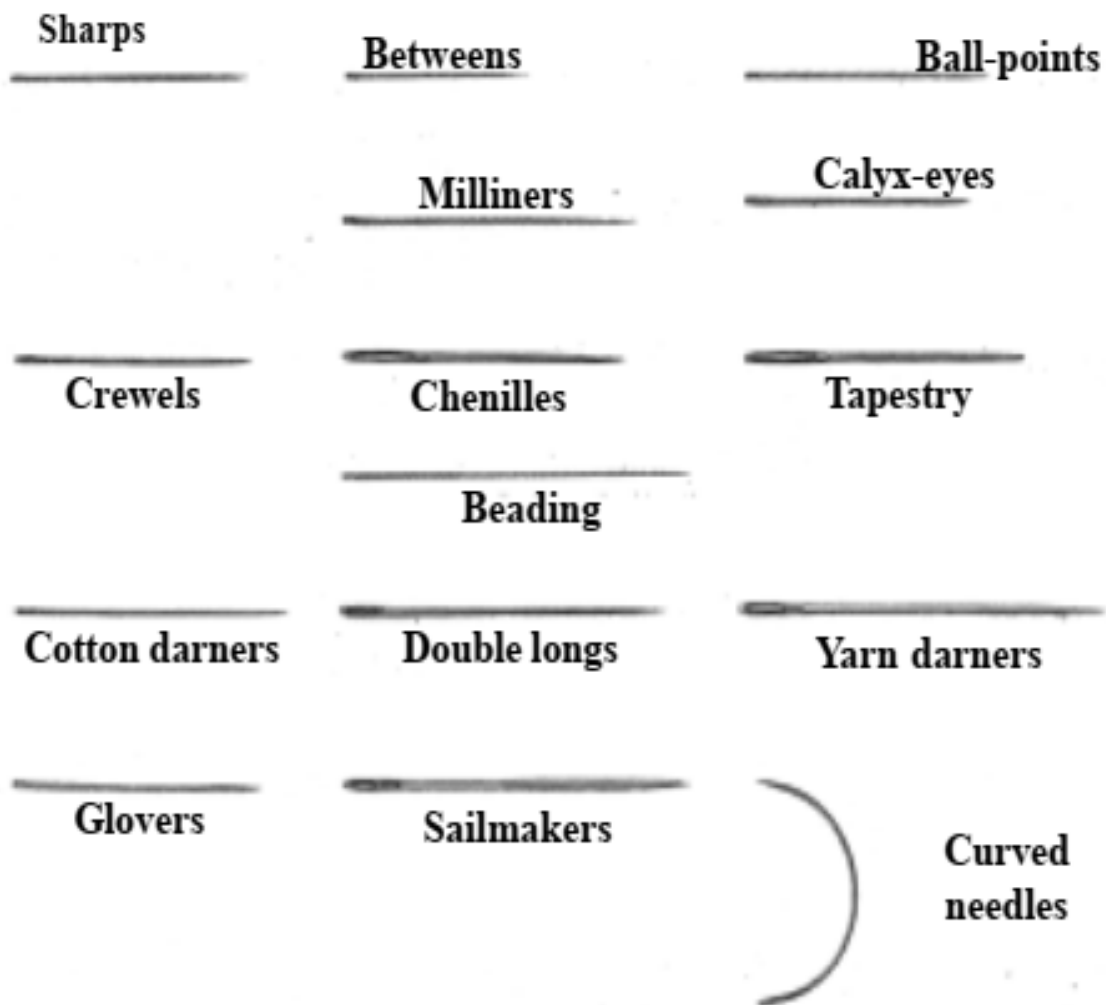


Fig. 2: Needles

Tapestry: Long eyes, blunt tip.

Beading: Very long, fine and flexible.

Darning: Similar to crewel.

Curved: Large and small-eyed, half circle curve. Used mainly for upholstery.

When choosing a needle consider how it will be used. The thread or threads should pass easily through the eye. The needle should make a hole in the fabric large enough for the double thickness of thread, so that no effort is required when pulling it through.

Tools

A pair of embroidery scissors with sharp, pointed little blades is essential. These will cut thread neatly, making it easy to insert in the needle. For drawing and transferring designs onto the fabric you will need a ruler and tape-measure, pencils and marking pen, French chalk, graph paper, tracing paper and dress makers carbon.

Frames

The type of frame you choose will depend largely on the size and type of embroidery, the fabric used, and whether or not you want the work to be portable. Round frames are the simplest type of frame to use, consisting only of two hoops placed one inside the other, trapping the material between them. The outer hoop can be tightened by means of a screw at the side. They are made of wood, comes in various sizes and some models can be attached to a floor or table stand or clamp.

Finishing Technique

Soak the embroidered work in cold water, then lay it right side up, while still wet, on a board covered with a clean cloth, such as an old sheet. Nail it to the board, using drawing pins and beginning with the corners. Continue nailing on all the

four sides, alternately starting in the middle and pulling the fabric taut. Allow the work to dry thoroughly.

Care of Embroidery

1. Never hand embroidery in direct sunlight.
2. Frequent washing and ironing should be avoided.
3. Embroidered house-hold linen and furnishings can be washed gently by hand in a mild liquid detergent and Luke warm water if dyes are fast. If dyes are not colour-fast then the embroidery must be dry cleaned.
4. If embroidery must be stored for any length of time it should always be cleaned first and packed in white acid-free tissue.
5. Keep it in a dark, dry place and check it frequently for moths.