

# Holly

design by Tanja Berlin

## MATERIALS

Silk dupioni 11" x 11"  
 Soie d'Alger stranded silk  
   Holly Leaves  
     Dark Green 2116  
     Light Green 2115  
   Holly Berries  
     Dark Red 946  
     Medium Red 945  
     Light Red 936  
 Kreinik #4 Braid Gold 002

## SUPPLIES

Stretcher bars or embroidery  
 frame 9" x 9"  
 Thumb tacks  
 No. 9 or 10 crewel embroidery  
 needle  
 Sharp embroidery scissors  
 Mechanical HB pencil with  
 .5 mm lead or sharp  
 HB pencil  
 Light box

*Holly* is a two-sided embroidery worked on one piece of fabric. This unusual technique was traditionally used to adorn flags. Each stitch on the embroidery is worked in a particular method so that the back is as well executed as the front.

Working the two-sided satin stitch on the leaves and berries is much like wrapping a skein of embroidery thread around a thread template. Imagine taking great care to wrap the template so that the thread lies straight and neither overlaps the previous wrap nor leaves a gap between it and the previous wrapped thread. The same applies to working the satin stitch on a two-sided piece. The leaf shape acts as the thread template. Wrap its shape by coming up on one side of the leaf and going down on the other side, wrapping around the front and the back of the fabric, working along the shape like you would work along a thread template, leaving no gaps and aligning the threads side by side without overlapping them.

## PREPARING THE FABRIC

The Holly Outline on page 17 shows the location of the colors used to create the holly. It is the actual size of the holly design. Center the design on your fabric. Using a mechanical HB pencil with .5 mm lead or very sharp HB pencil and a light box, trace the Holly Outline onto the fabric taking care not to shift the design. Draw the pencil lines in one continuous line rather than in small sketchy lines so that the outline is even.

Tack the fabric onto the stretcher bar frame so that the fabric is drum tight.

The Stitch Direction Guide on page 17 shows the direction to work the stitches on the holly leaves.

All areas of the embroidery are worked in a single strand of embroidery thread approximately twenty to thirty inches in length using a no. 9 or 10 embroidery needle.

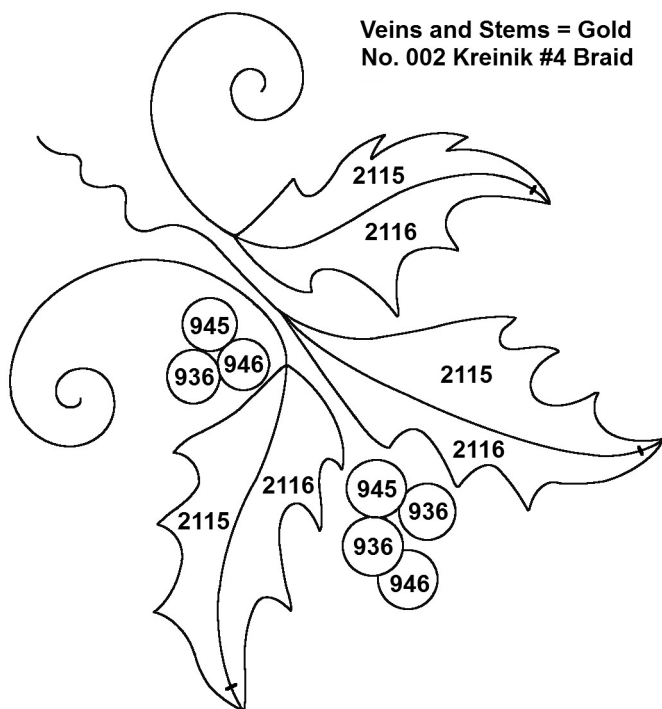


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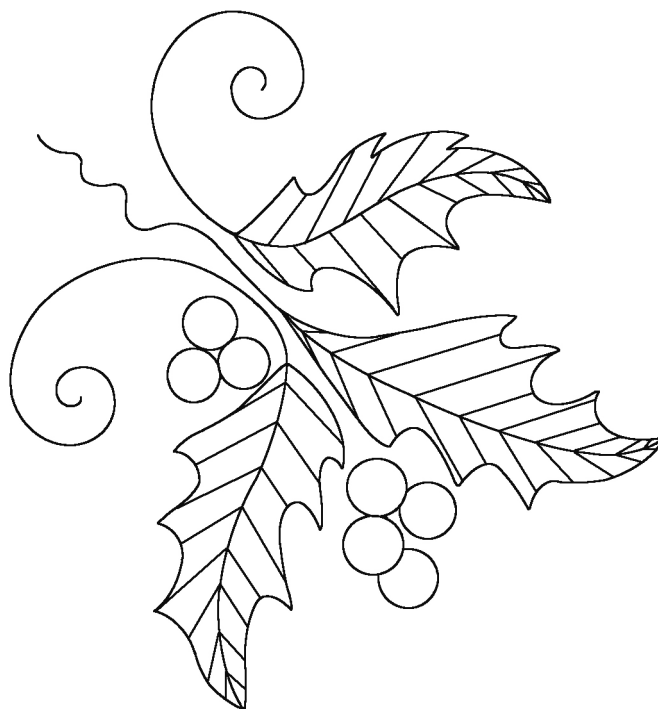


Back of Holly

## HOLLY OUTLINE



## STITCH DIRECTION GUIDE



## LEAVES

All the leaves are worked in a diagonal satin stitch using a single strand of Soie d'Alger silk thread. Refer to the diagrams above for each leaf. Simply rotate the diagrams above or the embroidery for the leaf that you are working on.

With the mechanical or sharp HB pencil, you can draw on the fabric the direction in which the satin stitch will be worked inside the leaf shape. Refer to the Stitch Direction Guide above. Draw the lines only within the leaves and do not overlap the edge of the leaf design.

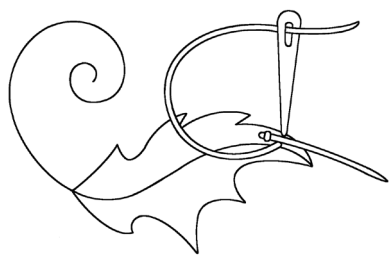


Diagram 1. Working anchoring stitches

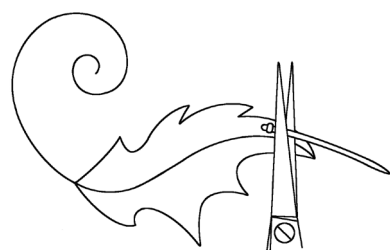


Diagram 2. Clipping thread



Diagram 3. First satin stitch on leaf



Diagram 4. Second satin stitch on leaf

Begin all leaves at the tip, and work satin stitch to the base of the leaf where it attaches to the stem. Work as follows. Position the needle on the upper side of the leaf vein, approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch from the tip of the leaf. Take it down through the right side of the fabric and leave a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch tail on top of the fabric. Anchor the tail by working two tiny couching stitches over the thread tail about  $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch apart. See Diagram 1.

Cut the end of the thread close to the second couching stitch so that the end of the thread is not sticking up. See Diagram 2.

The starting position for the satin stitch is marked on each leaf in the Holly Outline by a small straight line approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch from the tip of the leaf on the center vein line. See page 17 for each beginning point.

To make the first satin stitch, bring the needle up on the center vein line of the leaf approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch from the tip of the leaf as indicated by the small straight line drawn on the leaf on the Holly Outline on page 17, and take the needle down just over the tip of the leaf. Cover the design line with stitches as the leaves are not outlined with another thread. Embroider over the anchoring stitches. Take the needle down just over the tip of the leaf. See Diagram 3.

To work the second stitch, bring the needle up on the center vein line just below the first stitch, and take the needle down on the outside edge of the leaf. See Diagram 4.

Work the stitches at a 45-degree or more acute angle. Space the stitches evenly along the outside edge of the leaf, and control the angle of the stitches by leaving a slight space before beginning a new stitch on the center vein line. If the beginning of the stitch is too close to the beginning of the previous stitch, the stitches will not have the desired angle. Leaving a bit of space will maintain the proper angle and avoid the stitches becoming perpendicular to the vein line. The leaf will look smoother if the angle is more acute.

Continually turn over the frame to check that you are not piercing the previous stitch with the point of the needle on the back of the work.

Continue working the satin stitch by coming up on the center vein line and going down on the outside edge of the leaf. See Diagrams 5 and 6.

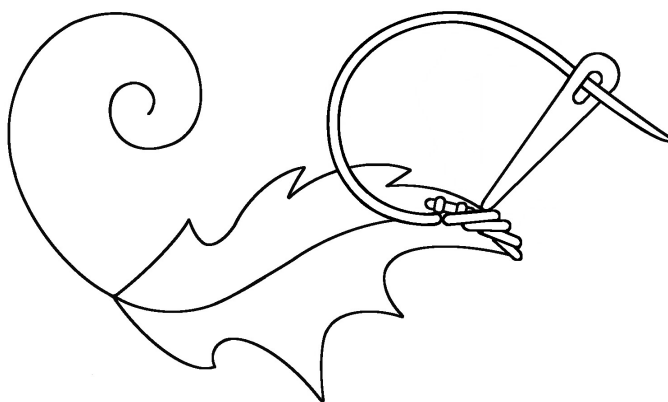
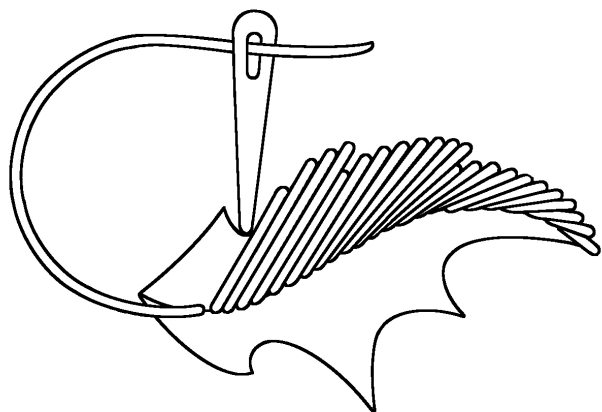


Diagram 5. Covering the tail



*Diagram 6. Continuing the satin stitch*

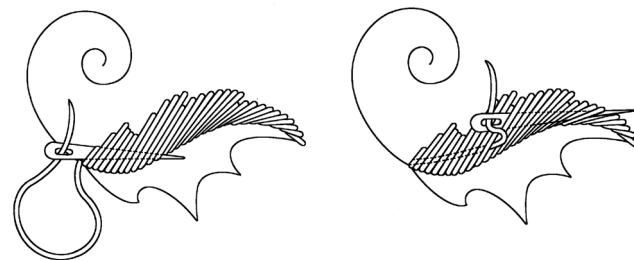
To end threads, weave the needle and thread underneath the stitches so the thread is hidden. To secure more firmly, take the needle under the stitches in two movements. Do not stitch through or on top of the satin stitches, as this will pull and distort them. See Diagram 7.

Clip the end of the thread close to the satin stitches. See Diagram 8.

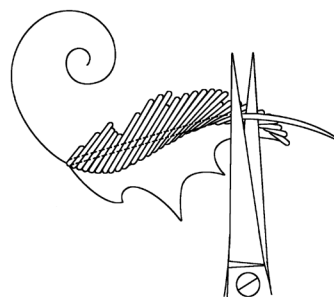
If you run out of thread in the middle of a leaf, end the old thread behind the satin stitches on the **front** of the work.

Begin a new thread by weaving the needle and thread behind the satin stitches at the **back** of the work, and then bring the needle up at the front of the work in the same hole where the last stitch was finished, and continue the satin stitch.

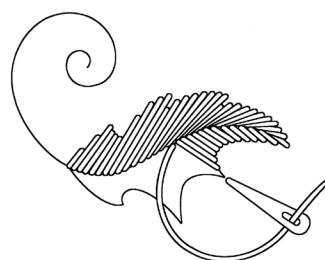
The other side of the leaf is worked in the same method. Work the stitches from the center vein line, coming up in the same holes as the stitches on the upper side of the leaf and taking the stitches down on the outside edge of the leaf. You do not have to match the stitches at the center vein line, and don't worry if the angle is slightly different. See Diagram 9.



*Diagram 7. Ending threads*



*Diagram 8. Clipping the end of the thread*



*Diagram 9. Continuation on opposite side of leaf*



*Detail front of holly leaf*



*Detail back of holly leaf*



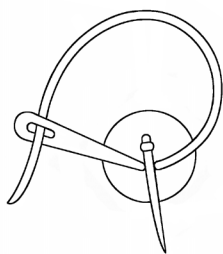


Diagram 10. Beginning a berry

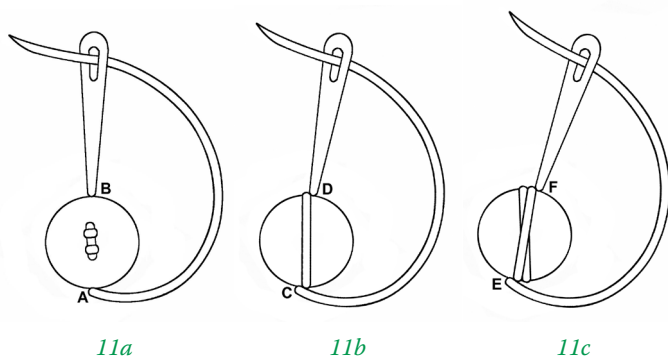


Diagram 11. Beginning Rhodes stitch

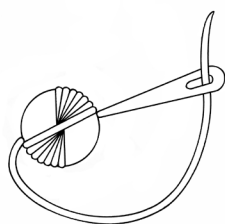


Diagram 12. Spacing stitches in berry



Diagram 13. Completed Rhodes stitch

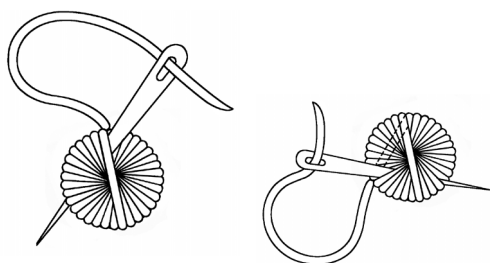


Diagram 14. Securing the tail of Rhodes stitch

## BERRIES

The berries are worked in Rhodes stitch (overlapping satin stitch) using a single strand of Soie d'Alger silk thread. Refer to Holly Outline on page 17 for the colors used on the berries.

Begin the thread off center of the berry, leaving a tail as you did for the leaves, taking two couching stitches, and clipping the tail close. See Diagram 10. Begin each berry at a slightly different position on the edge, so that the last stitch lays in a different direction from the other berries. Diversifying the lay of stitches creates an interesting play of light on the berries.

To work a Rhodes stitch, bring the needle up at any position on the edge of berry, e.g., at A (see Diagram 11a). Work a straight stitch across the center of the berry and take the needle down on the opposite side of the berry on the design line at B (see Diagram 11a). Bring the needle up next to the first stitch at C in a clockwise position, take the needle across the center of the berry, crossing over the first stitch, and take the needle down at D in a clockwise position (see Diagram 11b). Bring the next stitch up at E, take the needle across the center of the berry crossing over the last two stitches, and take the needle down at F (see Diagram 11c). As you stitch, make sure that the design line is covered with the stitches as the berry is not outlined with another stitch. Keep the stitches really close together to create a dimensional berry.

Continue this process around the entire berry. Try to keep the stitches evenly spaced so that one side of the berry does not fill in quicker than the other. About halfway around the berry, check that the space remaining on each side of the berry is about the same, (see Diagram 12). Also check the back of the embroidery to make sure you are not piercing previous satin stitches with the point of the needle.

Work around the berry until you are next to the first stitch. The last stitch will be a straight stitch across the ridge formed by all the satin stitches (see Diagram 13). The berry will be raised and dimensional. If there is a space left on one side of the berry, fill in the space with satin stitch, taking the stitches down under the satin stitches at the center of the berry.

Finish off the thread by weaving the thread behind the satin stitches, taking care not to distort the satin stitches by splitting them (see Diagram 14). Cut the end of the thread close to the stitches.

## LEAF VEINS AND STEMS

The leaf veins and stems are worked in stem stitch using a single strand of 002 gold Kreinik #4 braid.

Begin the thread by weaving it behind the satin stitches of the leaf on the front of the work to about  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch from the tip of the leaf (see Diagram 15).

Leave a thread tail at the entry point to prevent the thread from being pulled through when taking the first stitch. It will be clipped later.

Take the needle down through the top of the center vein line to the back of the work (see Diagram 16).

Bring the needle back up through the fabric to the front of the work about  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch along the vein line and work a stitch  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch above the point where the thread was brought to the front (see Diagram 17).

Bring the second stitch up about  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch below the bottom of the first stitch on the center vein line. On the back of the fabric, do not pull the thread all the way through, but leave a loop of thread hanging to the right. On the front of the work, take the needle down halfway along the first stitch on the right of the stitch as close to the stitch as possible. Coming out on the back of the work, angle the needle to the left of the loop of thread that is hanging at the back of the work, making sure that you do not split any of the previous stem stitches (see Diagram 18). Take the needle through the fabric to the back, and pull the stitch tight at the back of work.

Work all consecutive stem stitches in the same method as the second stitch to the end of the stem line (see Diagram 19). As you work the stem stitch, check that the needle is not piercing any of the stem stitches on the back of the work. You may need to work the stitches slightly shorter around the curves in the stem to keep the shape of the stem. The stem stitch line will be thicker on the back than on the front.

To end the thread, run the needle and thread underneath the stem stitches on the back of the work (see Diagram 20).

## MOUNTING THE EMBROIDERY

The embroidery can be viewed from both sides in one of the following mounting methods:

- mounted in clear perspex box frame or free standing two-sided glass frame, both of which have been available at Michaels craft store
- sandwiched between two window mats, glued between them, or stitched onto another mat that lies between the two.
- worked with metal grommets placed in the top corners of the window mats, then hung by a cord threaded through the grommets ■

**Tanja Berlin** lives in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and teaches internationally. Visit her website at [www.berlinembroidery.com](http://www.berlinembroidery.com).

If you have any questions when you are working the two-sided holly embroidery, please contact Tanja Berlin at [tanja@berlinembroidery.com](mailto:tanja@berlinembroidery.com).

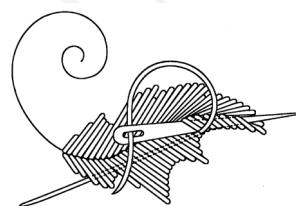


Diagram 15. Running thread under stitches

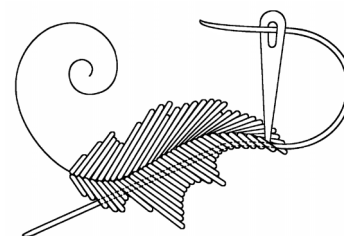


Diagram 16. Beginning stem stitch

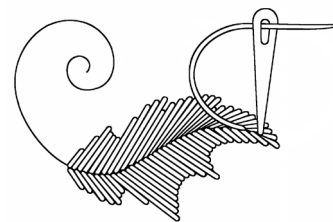


Diagram 17. First stitch of stem stitched vein

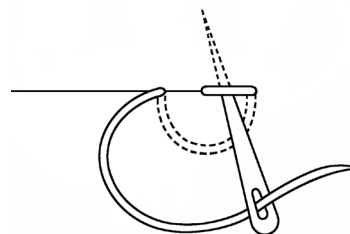


Diagram 18. Second stem stitch

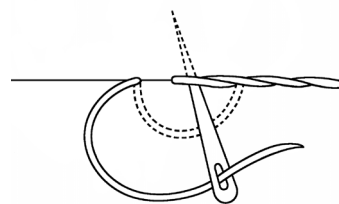


Diagram 19. Stitching the vein



Diagram 20. Ending line of stem stitch