

# Hearts for Hospice Brazilian Style

Designed by Jean G Hubsch  
For Mid-Eastern Region EGA



# ***INTRODUCTION***

Welcome! This project was designed so that those with little or no knowledge of Brazilian embroidery would be able to do it as well as more advanced stitchers. You will learn the basic stitches of Brazilian embroidery. Then, if you wish, you may advance to more complex flowers which build upon these basics. Practice the stitches before attempting the flowers. Some flowers contain several stitches.

## ***BACKGROUND***

The Brazilian Dimensional Embroidery Guild, Inc. definition is: "Brazilian embroidery is hand stitching done predominantly with dimensional stitches using the Z-twisted rayon threads; with the original Fine Growth/Field Flowers encouraged."

Brazilian embroidery is not an ethnic embroidery. In Brazil in the 1960s, Madame Elisa Maia developed a method of dyeing cellulose so each thread could contain several colors. She used these threads in her embroidery, making use of traditional but neglected embroidery stitches, such as the bullion, to create dimensional flowers. She began teaching and the threads were sold under the name VariCor. VariCor thread is no longer manufactured. The current manufacturer is the Edmar Co. (Ed and Maria Freitas from Brazil) of California; which is available in solid, shaded and variegated colors. DMC also has a rayon thread in a floss weight only.

## ***GENERAL INFORMATION***

It is important to use Milliners needles for dimensional stitches as there is no "bulge" at the eye, and thus the needle can slide through the wraps used to make the stitches. This project does not use the traditional rayon threads of Brazilian embroidery but pearl cotton or threads of your choosing.

## ***STITCHING***

**Practice the stitches on your doodle cloth before beginning the project.** Use a hoop if you like but do not leave it on the fabric when not working on it. I prefer to stitch "in hand". Use the method which is most comfortable for you.

OPTIONAL: Use an air or water erasable pen to trace an outline of the flower or stitch placement.

## ***MATERIALS***

**Fabric:** Any medium or heavy weight fabric can be used. It can even be upcycled clothing: cotton, denim, velveteen, poplin. You will need two 6-7" pieces. The pattern is at the end.

**Threads:** Rather than rayon, cotton is used for this project. It can be #5 or #8 pearl cotton or 4 strands of embroidery floss. Pick colors suitable for flowers. When doing the bullions, you will wrap COUNTERCLOCK-WISE, because you are using cotton threads.

**Trim:** again use what you have, braid, lace, cording. There is information on the internet on making a twisted cord.

**Other:** MILLINERS NEEDLES # 3 or 5; usual stitching supplies.

# GETTING STARTED

## FABRIC

Many fabrics are suitable for Brazilian embroidery. You may also embroider directly on a finished garment. Trigger poplin is frequently used. It is available from general fabric shops. The fabric should be medium- to heavy-weight in order to support the dimensional stitches. If a light-weight fabric is used, it should be backed first with iron-on interfacing. If a finished piece will be laundered frequently the embroidered area may be backed with iron-on interfacing upon completion. This will help protect the stitches and the knots from coming undone. Use something you have, even re-cycle clothing.

## BEGINNING AND ENDING THREADS

As you work with Brazilian embroidery, you will notice that there is very little thread on the back of the fabric--so little, in fact, that there is really no place to weave in the tails; you will need to begin and end your threads with **knots**.

Thread the needle. To make a starting knot, lay the tail of the thread along the needle, with the tail facing the eye. Wrap the thread around the needle clockwise (to the right, as you look at the tip of the needle) several times; then draw the needle through the wraps, pulling the thread through the wraps after it, all the way to the end of the thread. A very short tail (1/8") should remain. Many may be familiar with this as a quilter's knot.

Finish your stitching by slipping the thread under a stitch on the back; end with the same knot that you did for the beginning knot. Cut off the remaining thread near the knot (1/8").

## STITCHES

Follow the pattern at the end. Do the **petals** first in cast-on stitch, using a flower color. You will do two one inside of the other. Do 30 cast-ons for floss and #8 and 20 for #5. The second set of cast-ons is 20 and 15 stitches. These are approximations.

For the **calyx** at the bottom of the petals, use the same green as the stem & leaves. They are two bullions stitches of 12/15 and 8/10 wraps.

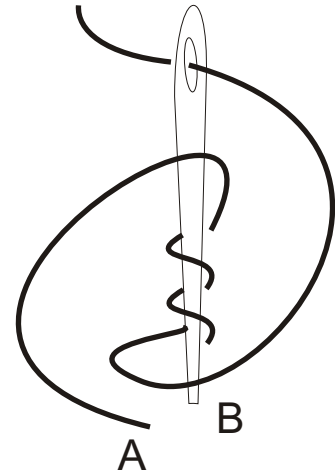
**Stem** is done in stem/outline stitch. The **leaves** can be straight stitches or lazy daisy stitch.

The **stamen** is a pistil stitch or you can do a straight stitch with a knot at the end. Do 2 or 3 of these.

# STITCHES

## French Knot

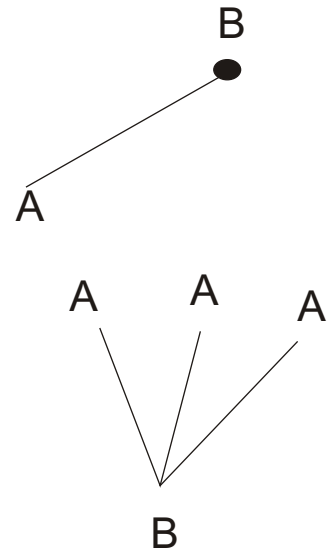
A hoop is recommended for making French knots. Never leave a hoop in place when not in use as it may leave an impression. Come up from the back of the fabric at A. Wrap the thread clockwise, (to the right - picture looking down at the tip of the needle and the thread going around it as the hands of a clock move) around the needle and hold firmly. Insert the tip of the needle into the fabric at point B which is almost the same as A. Holding the needle perpendicular to the fabric, slide the wraps down the needle to the fabric, keeping them snug. Hold the tail of the thread firmly, having your thumb above the fabric and your index finger below the fabric. Push the needle through the wraps to the back.



This stitch is much easier to work with a Milliners needle but others may be used. Many books state that only one wrap is used for French knots. Try various numbers of wraps and see what is most pleasing to you. French knots on fine growth are called **field flowers**.

## Pistil Stitch

This is also called a long-legged French knot. It is worked as above but there is a greater distance between A and B. B is the point where the knot is and A-B is the length of the leg. It is essential to keep the wraps snug and under control at all times.



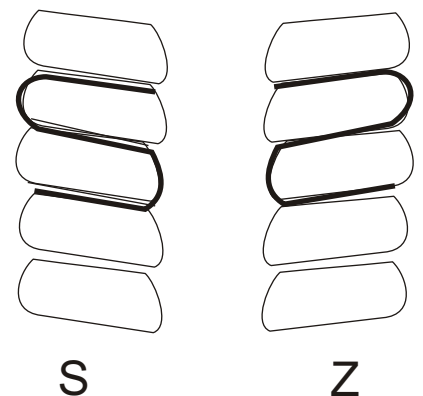
## Straight Stitch

These are just individual stitches: up at A, down at B. It may be used randomly, to make branches, or grouped in a pattern, such as an arc or a circle.

## Bullion

Bullion stitch is one of the hallmarks of Brazilian embroidery. When working this stitch it is very important to use a Milliners needle because it does not "bulge out" at the eye. All wraps should be snug so they will not look sloppy, but not so tight that the needle and thread cannot slip easily through them.

When using Z-twist thread (rayon) it is important to wrap clockwise (to the right), so as to work with the twist of the thread. Most other threads are S-twist, i.e., yarn, or stranded cotton (floss) which should be wrapped counterclockwise (to the left).

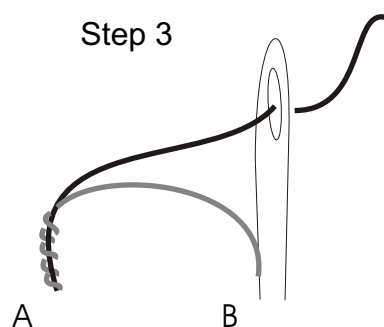
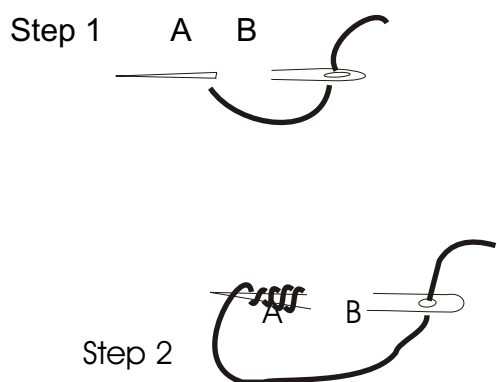


## Bullion con't

The manner in which the bullion lies on the fabric is determined by the "fabric bite" taken by the needle. If the bite is large it will require more wraps to complete. If more wraps are used than the length of the bite, the stitch will form a curve. The more excess wraps, the greater the curve. A very small bite with many wraps forms almost a circle.

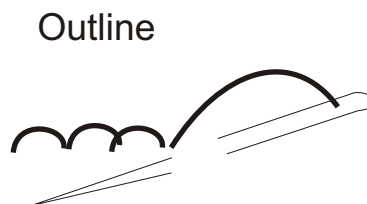
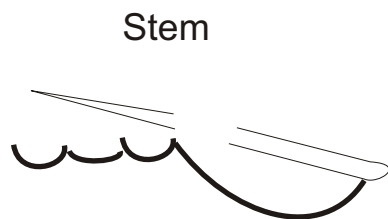
The bite is a back stitch: come up from the back at A, go down at B and up (but not out) near A (Step 1). While the needle remains in the fabric, wrap clockwise the number of times specified (Step 2). The wraps should lie smoothly next to each other. Stroke each wrap into place as you make it

After the last wrap, hold them lightly between your fingers and untwist the last wrap slightly to relax it. However, make sure the end wraps are not looser than the ones in the center. Pull the needle through the wraps, while continuing to hold them, in the direction the stitch will lie. Pull until all the core thread is through. Put the needle back into the fabric near B (Step 3). Most problems pulling the needle and core thread through the wraps come from making the wraps too tight around the needle.



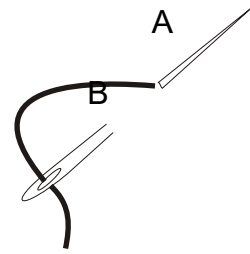
## Stem/Outline

These two are really the same stitch except that the thread arches above the horizontal line in outline stitch and below it in stem stitch. The threads are always held to the outside of the curve. If the line changes from an inside curve to an outside curve and back again, the thread will be held first on one side of the line, then on the other and back again. Note that the needle enters the same hole that ended the previous stitch.

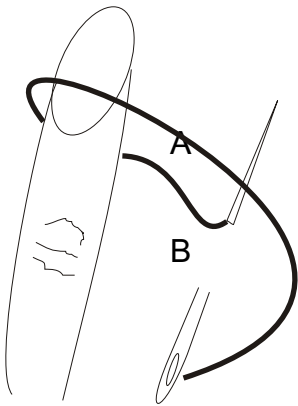


## Cast-on Stitch

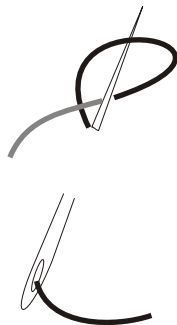
Left-handers must follow the same instructions. Take a fabric bite: come up at A, go down at B and up again **but not out** near A, almost the same hole (Step 1). Loop the thread around your **left** index finger; go from between the index and middle fingers, over the top of the index finger (Step 2) and grasp the loop with your left thumb and left middle finger. Holding the needle in your right hand, go into the loop from the front and slide the loop off your finger and onto the needle, pulling tight. (Step 3). Repeat for the number of cast-ons specified. Make sure the loops lie neatly next to each other. When the specified number of cast-ons have been made, pull the core thread through the loops and put the needle down into the fabric next to B.



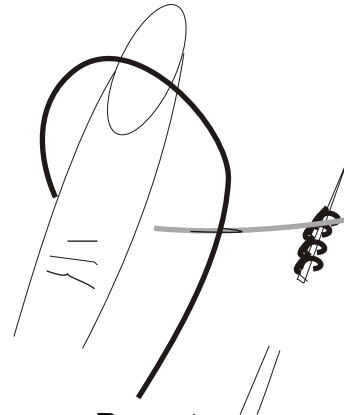
Step 1



Step 2



Step 3

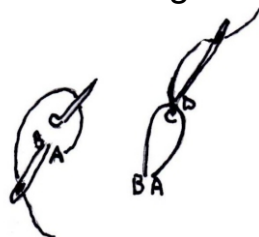


Repeat

This cast-on stitch is the same as casting-on in knitting. The length of the bite and number of cast-ons determines the arc of the stitch. A very small bite and many cast-ons make almost a circle.

## Lazy Daisy

Come up and out at A and back in, but not out at B which is very close to A. Come out at C, leaving the needle in the fabric; loop the thread around the tip of the needle. Go down at D. This makes a tacking stitch to hold the loop.



Step 1

Step 2

## ***FLOWERS***

Refer to the color picture for placement of the flowers. These are not meant to represent any actual flowers, and any similarity is just good luck. The student is encouraged to design her own flowers also.

You may choose your own colors from your stash.

Optional: scatter some seed beads above the flowers. Be sure to go through each bead twice.

## ***FINISHING***

Remove any traces of the marking pen, if used, with COLD water. Instructions for finishing an ornament are in a separate document or available online.

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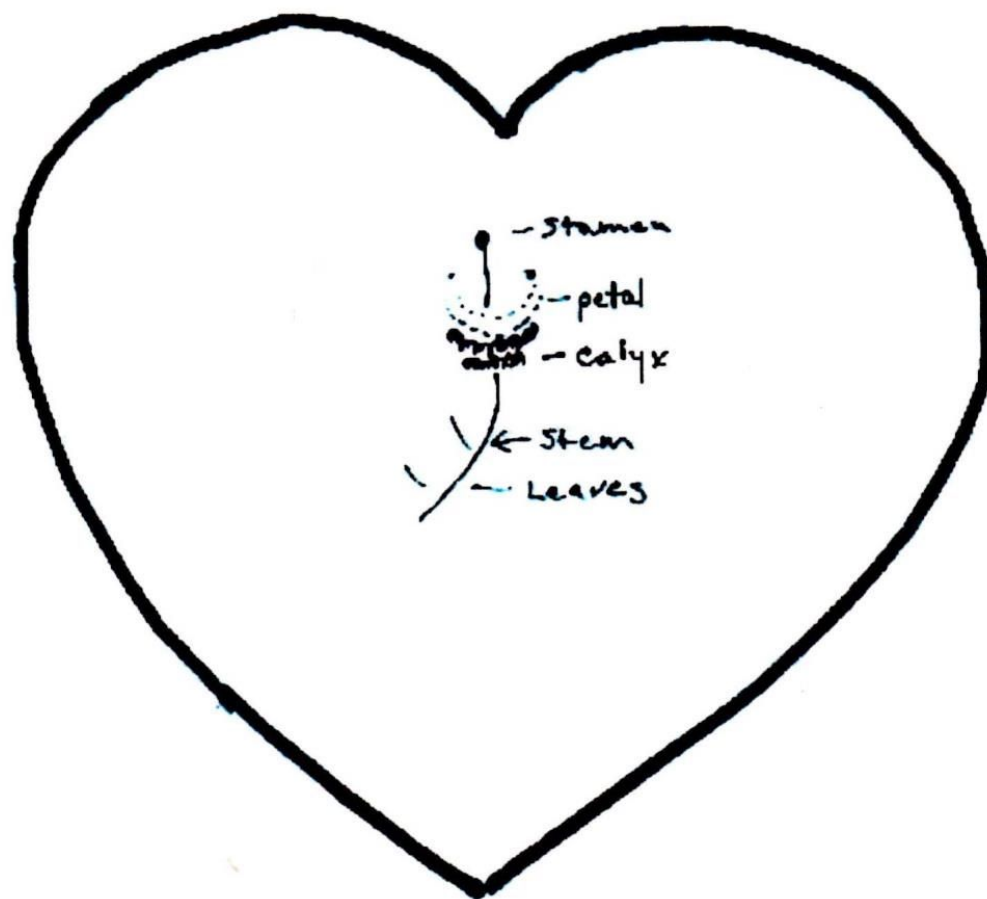
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Brazilian Dimensional Embroidery International Guild: BDEIG.org





## *Finishing an Ornament*



*by Jean G Hubsch*

*For Mid-Eastern Region  
Embroiderers' Guild of America  
jghubsch@hotmail.com*

The instructions here were developed to finish the Brazilian-style Heart for Hospice, an outreach project of Mid-Eastern Region of the Embroiderers' Guild of America. This is to finish an embroidery project that is on fabric rather than canvas, but the instructions should help for canvas also. You will have your embroidered front, a matching or coordinating piece of fabric for the back. The back piece of fabric should be suitable for writing. Two pieces of cardboard; you do not need to have something special – I recycled an old box.

### Steps:

1. Trim the fabric to within about  $\frac{1}{4}$ -  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from the outline of the ornament.
2. Remove any tracing outlines. If you used a blue water erasable pen be sure to use COLD water. It may take more than one attempt. As it dries, stretch it so there are no wrinkles. Ironing flattens dimensional embroidery.
3. For curves, make small cuts every  $\frac{1}{2}$ " or so. This will help the fabric to lie flat. For corners, make cuts at the corners only, so it can be mitered.
4. Cut out two of the same patterns from cardboard. The fabric will go on the non-printed side.
5. Glue a piece of batting or fleece onto the right (plain) side of one piece of cardboard. I only pad the front. Let dry 1-2 hrs. Trim the batting.
6. The fabric can then be glued onto the cardboard. The glue goes onto the back of the cardboard. Some of the fabric will overlap; that is why the cuts were made. You could just use Elmer's but I like Aleene's Tacky Glue, available at craft & fabric stores. Let it dry 1-2 hrs. You

can weigh it down with books or another heavy object. If you put it between plastic film wrap (Saran) you can prevent glue from sticking where you don't want it. Do both the front & back, with the front using the padded cardboard.

7. When the two pieces are dry they can be glued or hand-sewn together. This is the time to attach a hanger of ribbon or cording. It makes a nicer finish if there is lace or cording around the edge. If doing lace – glue it in place to the front before attaching the back. There are many YouTube videos on making your own cording or it can be purchased.



Step 3



Step 5



Step 6