

MIRKWOOD DESIGNS presents...

The Gathered Leaf and the Ruched Flower

Ruching is defined as “decorative gathered fabric,” and it is seen in clothing as well as three-dimensional flowers in quilts.

There are several ruching methods, but I’ll provide instructions for the easiest method I have found.

Note that you can use this technique on wider or narrower strips of fabric, on bias tape, or even ribbon. Also, the longer your strip of fabric, the larger your flower. Variegated ribbon makes particularly beautiful ruched flowers. Experiment to discover what suits your project best!

The Gathered Leaf

Supplies for each leaf:

- A 4-inch circle of fabric
- Thread to match the fabric
- Sewing needle

Instructions for the Gathered Leaf:

1. Fold the circle into quarters, as shown at right.



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Instructions for the Gathered Leaf, continued:

2. Using a running stitch, stitch along the folded curved edge.



3. Pull the thread to gather the bottom of the leaf and knot.
4. Sew the leaf in place on the quilt block.



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The Ruched Flower

Supplies for each flower:

- For a small ruched flower, cut a strip of fabric 1½ x 20 inches.
- For a large ruched flower, cut a strip of fabric 1½ x 36 inches.
- Thread to match the fabric
- Sewing needle

Instructions for the Ruched Flower:

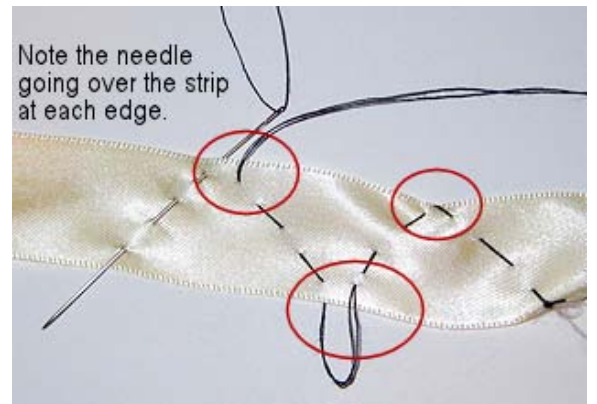
1. Fold the edges of the fabric strip in so that they meet in the center. Press with a hot iron.

Note: If you are using ribbon, skip this step.



2. Thread the needle with a long piece of thread (if the thread is fine, double it). Secure the thread in one corner of the folded strip and, using a running stitch, sew 45-degrees diagonally to the other side of the strip. When you reach the other side, **bring your needle and thread over the strip**, and begin the running stitch again. You are making a zigzag all the way to the end of the long strip, as shown in the photo at right.

Note: The image at right shows white ribbon with black thread so you can clearly see the stitching method.



3. Every few inches stop to gather the fabric strip. How tight you want your gathers is up to you.



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Instructions for the Ruched Flower, continued:

4. When your fabric strip is completely gathered, knot the thread. Place it on the quilt block and begin coiling it in a spiral, fluffing out the “petals.”

Note: You can make the ruched flower as tight or as loose as you want, but make sure no background fabric shows in between the gathers.

5. Using matching thread, sew the ruched flower to the quilt block using tacking stitches, making sure to hide any raw edges.

Note: Make sure that the entire coil of fabric is secured to the block.

