

Spring Bloomers[©]

by Debby Kratovil

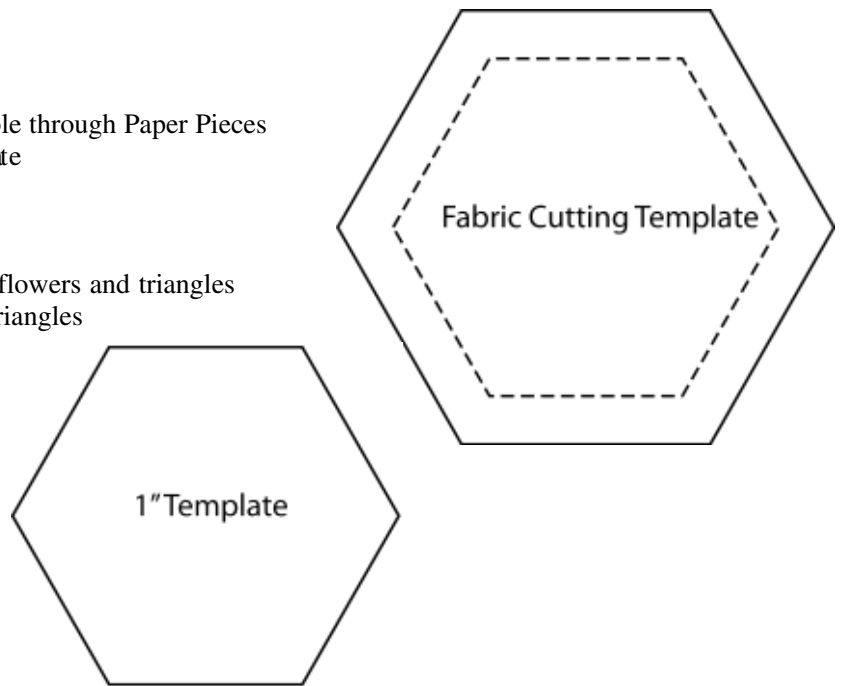


Block Size: 10"
Quilt Size: 42" x 56"

Have you ever wanted to learn English paper piecing? You know — hand stitching fabric over top hexagon papers? Never heard of it? It is a perfect take-along project for those times you have to wait: doctor's office, soccer games, airport travel. These little flowers were stitched over a period of years and then finally begged to be put into a quilt that stands watch, waiting for spring to come so they can go outside and BLOOM!

Fabric Requirements:

- *1 package pre-cut hexagon papers, 1" size, available through Paper Pieces (www.paperpieces.com) or use our template
- *1 yard light background
- *1/8 yard green for stems
- *4-1/2" x 10" piece fusible web
- *Fat 1/8ths or fat 1/4s of several different prints for flowers and triangles
- *1/2 yard striped fabric for side and corner setting triangles
- *1/2 yard (red) for inner border and binding
- *1-1/3 yard for outer border (if you don't want to piece it; otherwise, 1 yard will do)
- *2-1/2 yards backing
- *46" x 60" piece of batting
- *Invisible nylon mono filament thread for stitching the hexagons to background squares
- *Hand sewing needle
- *Basic sewing supplies (rotary cutter, ruler, mat, scissors)



English Paper Piecing

The technique that is known as English paper piecing has given the quilting world some beautiful patchwork creations for centuries. It produces precise workmanship and, though it requires some extra work, the results are well worth it.

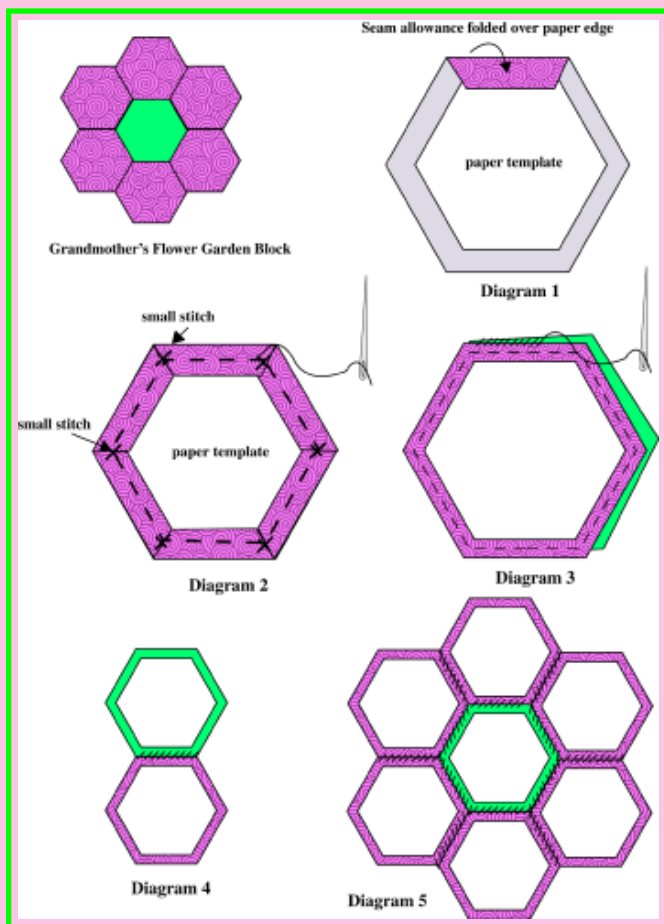
Begin with a lightweight card or paper template which is cut the exact finished size for each of the patches. Index cards, old greeting cards and even business cards are perfect for this template material. You can even purchase precut

paper templates in various sizes. Of course, freezer paper is an option to use also.

The fabric patches are cut with the 1/4" seam allowance, but do not mark the seam allowance. (Templates given here will have the seam allowance included for cutting out the fabric. Templates for cutting out the paper will NOT have the seam allowance.) Cut out enough fabric patches for your project. It is suggested that you make one block/unit as practice before cutting out an entire quilt.

Place a freezer paper template OR precut sturdy paper hexagon template over the center of the wrong side of the fabric patch (See Diagram 1). Fold the seam allowance over the edge of the template, one side at a time. (My preferred method is to stitch just through the fabric and not through the paper. This is because I like to pull out my papers and reuse them several times after I've joined several together.) Take care that the fold of the fabric at each corner is sharp. When you have several patches basted they are ready to be joined. Place two patches right sides together and, using a single strand of cotton thread, sew in an overcast stitch (See Diagram 3). Try not to catch the paper but just a few threads from each patch. Small, short stitches close together is the goal. When two patches are joined together, open them out and finger press the seam flat (See Diagram 4). Now you can add the next patch. Continue until you have a finished Grandmother's Flower Garden block as shown in Diagram 5.

After you are finished joining all your patches, remove the paper templates. Lightly press your work flat. Borders can be added to the pieced hexagon sections by appliquéing the shaped outside edges to the straight pieces of cut border fabric.



Cutting

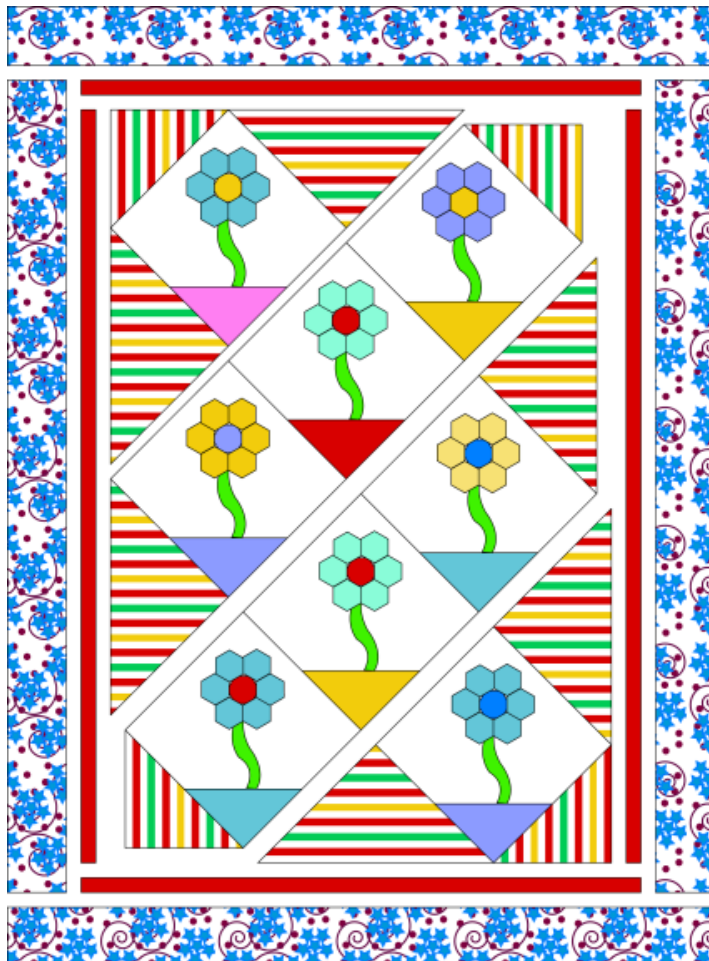
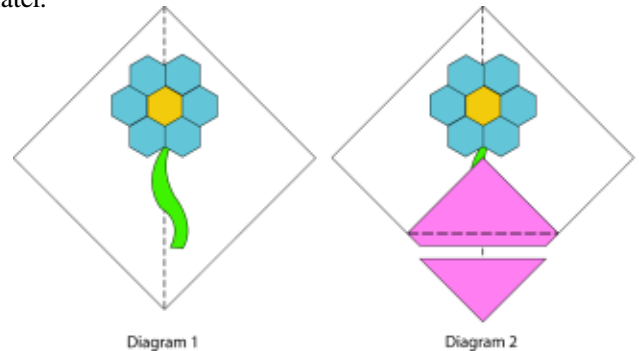
1. Cut 8 squares, 10-1/2", from the light background fabric.
2. For each of the 8 flowers, cut 6 matching hexagons and one center hexagon. Take care to allow a generous seam allowance when cutting.
3. Transfer the fusible web to the wrong side of the green fabric. Allow to cool. On the paper side, freeform draw a gentle curved stem 5/8" wide and 4-1/2" high for each of the 8 blocks. Cut out. Don't remove the paper backing yet.
4. Cut 8 squares 4-1/2" x 4-1/2" of assorted prints for the "flower pots".
5. Cut 2 squares 15-1/2" x 15-1/2" from the striped fabric. Recut each into four triangles each for the side setting triangles. Cut 2 striped squares 8" x 8". Recut each of these ONCE for the corner triangles.
6. Cut 4 strips 1-1/2" x 42/44" of the red for the inner borders. Cut 5 binding strips from the red (2-1/8" wide).
7. Cut 4 border strips 6" x 45". These will be trimmed to size later.

Sewing the Blocks

1. Refer to the English Paper Piecing Lesson and sew 8 Grandmother's Flower Garden blocks. Gently remove the hexagon papers once all the hexagons are whip stitched together. Press with a warm iron.

2. Finger press a vertical line from corner to corner on a background square. This will help you align the patches. Measure down 3" from the upper tip of a background square and align a Hexagon Flower as shown in Diagram 1 (with the indentation of the hexagons at the 3" mark). Pin in place.

3. Peel off the paper from a green stem and tuck one end under the Hexagon Flower as shown. Use the creased vertical line as a guide. Fuse in place with an iron.



Spring Bloomers Assembly Diagram

4. Using the nylon mono filament thread, applique the Hexagon Flower and green stem to the background square. A narrow zigzag stitch is a good choice. Repeat for remaining Hexagon Flowers, stems and background blocks. Make a total of 8.

5. Draw a diagonal line on the wrong side of the 4-1/2" print squares. Align one at the base of a block as shown in Diagram 2 and sew along the diagonal line. Trim away 1/4" from sewn line and press resulting triangle open. Repeat for remaining blocks.

Quilt Assembly

1. The blocks are sewn in diagonal rows. See the Assembly Diagram. You will need only 6 of the 8 side triangles.

2. Trim and sew the 1-1/2" red inner border strips to the top and bottom of the quilt center. Sew the remaining red strips with the excess trimmed strips to make two long strips. Stitch to the quilt sides; trim and press.

3. Measure and trim two of the border strips for the quilt sides (which should measure about 42-1/2"). Sew and press.

4. Measure and trim the remaining two border strips to fit the top and bottom. Sew and press.

Finishing the Quilt

1. Layer the backing, batting, and quilt top; baste.
2. Hand or machine quilt as desired.
3. Using the 2-1/8" red binding strips, make and attach binding.