

Leaf & Nature Print Quilt Blocks

Supply list (2 pages)

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In this class you will make leaf prints applied to form decorative patterns on pieced blocks using textile paints. The prints can be made on raw fabric to be cut and assembled into a project, or you can pre-piece quilt blocks and apply the prints to them. Both options are detailed in the supply list. The finished block can be made into a pillow if you choose, or you can experiment with making leaf prints on exotic art papers if Mixed Media fiber Art appeals to you. Follow the directions below for finding and preparing appropriate materials.



Please be courteous to others by arriving for class with the correct supplies. Contact me at 503-888-9784 or helene.m.knott@gmail.com if you have any questions.

A Note to Students: Many students do not realize that once the teacher is paid, the shop offering a class makes little if any income on the class itself. The shop is relying on product sales to continue offering quality classes to you. Therefore, I urge you to patronize this shop when buying your supplies for this class as much as possible and remind you that big chain stores do not offer the variety of classes that the smaller shops do. Keep quilt classes alive by supporting this shop.
Thank you, Helene

TOOLS/MATERIALS:

- **Pieced Blocks:** Follow the directions in the accompanying document to piece the blocks you will decorate with the leaf prints. I would recommend making at least two in case you mess one up. You can also make any block you wish to print on. Keep fabric prints plain to show your leaf at their best.
- **Scratch paper:** To make test prints on and to cover the leaf and fabric for pressing; you will need a lot of sheets – some for test prints and others to place over the paint covered leaves while you burnish them onto your fabric.
NOTE: if you enjoy other fiber arts such as working with paper for mixed media fiber art, scrap booking, or greeting cards, you can bring novelty art paper such as parchment or rice paper and make some leaf prints on paper as well as fabric.
- **Muslin:** Bring a good sized piece of muslin to do test printing on, you will be testing the prints on paper too but the prints may differ when applied to fabric
- **Leaves and plant material:** Leaves that have clearly defined veins on the backside give the most pleasing results although any leaf with an interesting outline has promise as well. Make sure the leaf will fit comfortably on the fabric you are bringing (not that you couldn't print an oversized leaf and just use a portion of it in your art quilt). Be adventurous and really look for variety (no poison oak please). Wait until the morning of or the day before the class to collect your specimens; they need to be fairly fresh and flexible to print well. If the plant material is excessively ruffled, you may want to flatten it some by pressing it sandwiched between paper towels under heavy books. Do this for several hours or overnight but no longer than that; the idea is to make it lie flat not dry it and make it crispy. Don't restrict yourself to just leaves; there are flowers and sprigs of weedy twigs that can make interesting prints as well. Keep the size of the fabric pieces for your block in mind when choosing leaf sizes.
- **Foam or bristle brush or brayer (a brayer is like a small paint roller made of rubber available at art & craft stores):** You will need some way of applying the paint to the leaves for printing; any of the above tools will work. For best results, a brush should be about 1" – 1 ½" wide.
- **Textile Paints:** Use of instructors textile paints is included in the class fee.
- **Small to medium brown paper (lunch) bag:** to serve as a personal trash bag for the paint covered leaves; we do not want to get paint on the shop's trash cans.
- **A flat foam or plastic plate or tray (opt):** This will be used to spread/mix the paint on so don't use something you intend to reuse for food. To be ideal, it should be very flat and smooth and large enough to roll a brayer (if you should get one) in. If you don't have something like that, you can use a clean recycled foam meat tray or a lid from a large tub of yogurt.

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- Latex gloves (opt): you will get paint on your fingers, that does wash off, but you may want to use gloves.

I will bring acrylic textile paints for everyone to share. Wear old clothes in case you get paint on a sleeve, acrylic cleans up with water while wet but is permanent once it dries, you will not be likely to get any paint you might get on your clothes out.

Piecing your Blocks

There are two approaches to making these blocks featuring leaf prints. You can Print various fabrics with a variety of leaf prints first, and assemble the blocks from those prints afterwards, or, you can assemble the pieced block first and then add the leaf prints to the finished block. Each method has advantages and disadvantages.

The leaf print process is not predictable, you will get some faint, smudged, or irregular prints. If you print the fabrics first, you can pick the best prints to piece your block, but you will have to pick the sizes and shapes of your leaves carefully to ensure they will fit well when the fabric pieces are trimmed to piece your block.

Printing the leaves onto a finished block gives you the advantage of using a wider variety of leaf sizes and shapes as you can print the leaves to bridge over construction seams. However, you cannot undo a print and if the leaf print smudges or the resulting print is unsatisfactory, you will have to accept the results and may feel you wasted a good block on a poor print. The choice is yours and you may want to try some each way.

The pieced block is fairly simple and easy to make so I recommend making a few to print on. Test your leaf printing on paper towels (or scrap fabric) first to determine how heavy a coating of paint will be needed for a good, clear print before applying it to your pieced block.

Pieced Block Cutting Legend: Each set makes a 16" finished block.

- A – 2 ½" x 2 ½" square (cut 1)
- B – 1 ½" x 2 ½" rectangles (cut 4)
- C – 1 ½" x 1 ½" squares (cut 4)
- D – 2 ½" x 4 ½" rectangles (cut 4)
- E – 2 ½" x 2 ½" squares (cut 4)
- F – 4 ½" x 8 ½" rectangles (cut 4)
- G – 4 ½" x 4 ½" squares (cut 4)

Piece the block in units as shown at right. Pressing seams to one side so they 'nest' will help facilitate quilting in the ditch. However, if you piece first and print leaves onto the completed block, pressing seams open will help provide a flatter plane for the printed leaves if they cross a seam line.

