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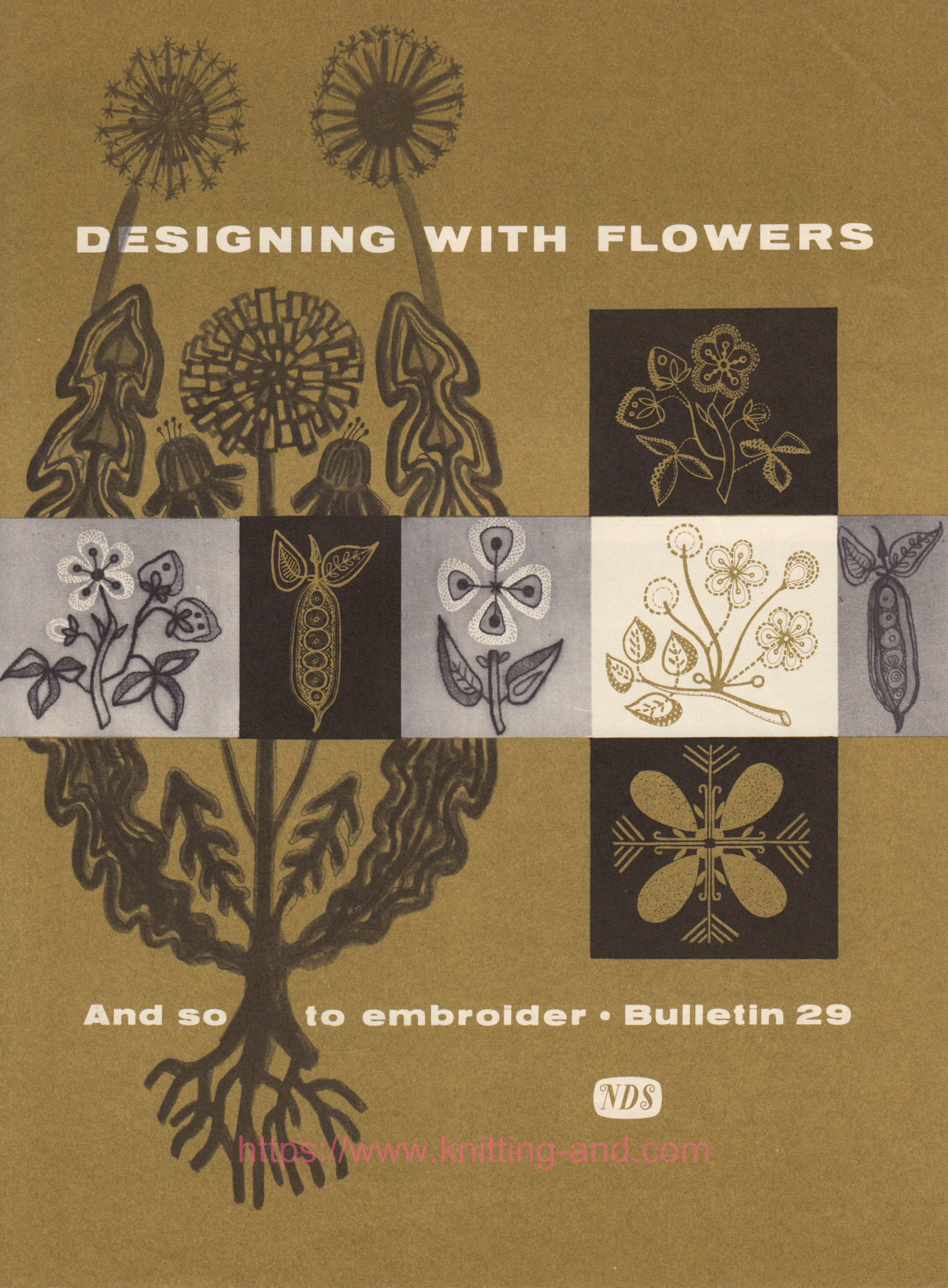
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DESIGNING WITH FLOWERS



And so to embroider • Bulletin 29

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DESIGNING WITH FLOWERS



Growing plants and flowers have always been a source of inspiration to the embroideress, and we can find many examples in our museums to show how these have been used in the past. The student should particularly notice how the style and method of working is characteristic of each period in history.

Today we, as a nation, still keep this love and genuine feeling for flowers, and it is interesting to see, for instance, how the contemporary textile and wallpaper designers turn to natural forms for inspiration while interpreting them from a new point of view. The embroideress, too, is always seeking new ideas, and we include in this bulletin some examples of flowers worked on a variety of fabrics planned to suggest new ways in which floral shapes can be designed and embroidered in the idiom of today.

Always remember when planning flower motifs that your aim is not to imitate nature, but to create an embroidered flower which is suitable for the type of stitchery you wish to use.

Bulletin 10B shows how to plan simple geometric flowers using a compass, and how to build these up into motifs with the addition of stems and leaves. Another way of obtaining a good clear silhouette is by working with cut paper. To produce symmetrical designs like those shown in this bulletin on the chair back and sunglasses case, fold a piece of paper in two and sketch in half the design only. Cut it out through both thicknesses of paper, using your scissors freely. Part of the interest is obtained by the almost accidental effects—produced by the cutting—effects which can be interpreted in stitchery, so adding character to the design.

Try out several motifs in this way and choose the one

which has the most variety of interest in its shape, to work in embroidery. The cut-out can be pinned directly on to the fabric and the outline marked in tiny running stitches. Alternatively it can be pasted to another piece of paper to keep it firm and a tracing made of the outline. This tracing can be transferred to the fabric by pricking and pouncing or with duplicating waxed carbon paper (see Bulletin 24B).

Drawings of plants and flowers made from nature or from good reproductions can be simplified for embroidery. Aim at a flat characteristic shape and do not attempt any detailed shading or perspective. Coloured inks and a selection of different sized pen nibs will be helpful for this type of work. Look at the decorative drawing of a dandelion in this bulletin and compare it with the finished embroidery worked out as a finger plate. See how it has been adapted to fit the narrow shape, while still retaining the feeling of the sketch.



Case for Sunglasses (7 in. × 3¼ in.)

Your sunglasses can be quickly slipped inside this gay case for safe keeping. It is made from bright turquoise felt and lined with white fabric with a small printed pattern.

The embroidery is worked entirely in Couching using a white mercerised crochet cotton No. 3 held down with sewing cotton. In order to obtain a bolder line in some places, the mercerised thread is used double. All ends are taken through to the back and fastened off carefully with sewing cotton.

One of the new stiffening synthetic fabrics or thick tailor's canvas can be used to stiffen the case with the

addition of a piece of thin card on the underside. Stab stitching in matching turquoise cotton is used to join the sections together.

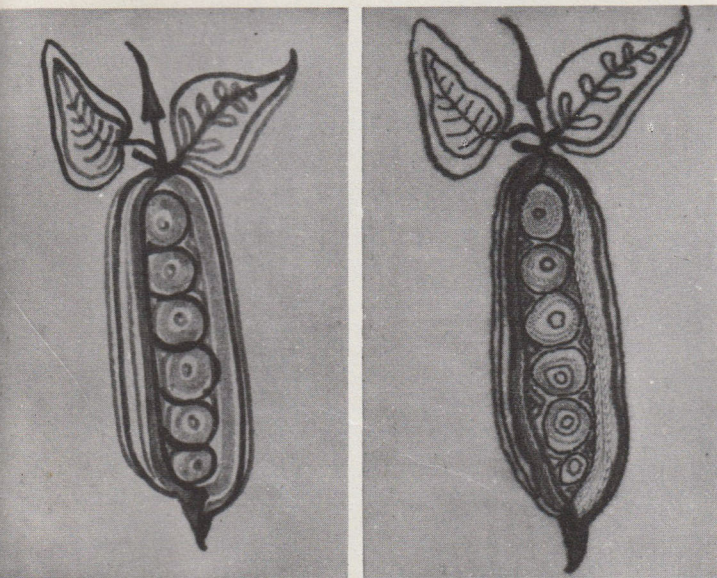
Sunflower Chair Back (18 in. × 27 in.)

Dark blue linen was chosen for this chair back. The motifs, based on a sunflower design in cut paper, are embroidered in shades of dull pink, white and red using Chain Stitch, Stem Stitch and Back Stitch, and Satin Stitch for the centre of the flower. In order to obtain contrasting textures, the embroidery is worked both in stranded cotton and wool. Notice the way in which the free paper cutting of the petals has been interpreted in stitchery contrasting with the formal treatment of the leaves and stem.

The one inch hem at both ends is worked in Ladder Hemstitch and a narrow hem is turned back on the two long sides.

Dressing Table Set

Crisp white organdie, embroidered with flower sprays in Shadow Work, is used to make this attractive set for your dressing table. The large mat is 15 in. × 9¾ in. and the two



Sketch of a pea pod with embroidered interpretation.



Geometric flower design using cut paper and couched string.



17th Century Canvas Embroidery

This panel of formalised flowers is typical of the canvas embroidery of the late 17th century. It is worked on a coarse linen scrim, using silk threads. The motifs are arranged as closely together as possible and the occasional introduction of an insect shape adds variety.

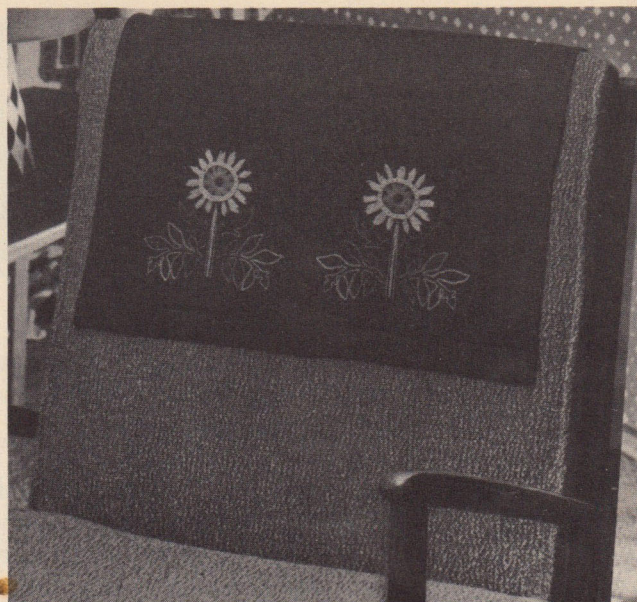
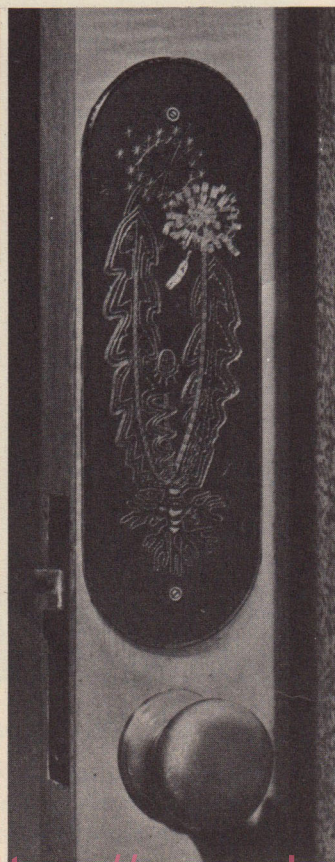
smaller mats are 6 in. square. The Double Back Stitch or Close Herringbone Stitch used for the Shadow Work is embroidered with one strand only of stranded cotton to obtain a light and delicate effect. Back Stitch is used for the fine lines and small Eyelet Holes add further interest to the decoration. The pointed edging inserted on opposite sides of each mat is made by folding small individual squares of organdie and placing them along the hem as described in Bulletin No. 13B.

Finger Plate (11 in. \times 3½ in.)

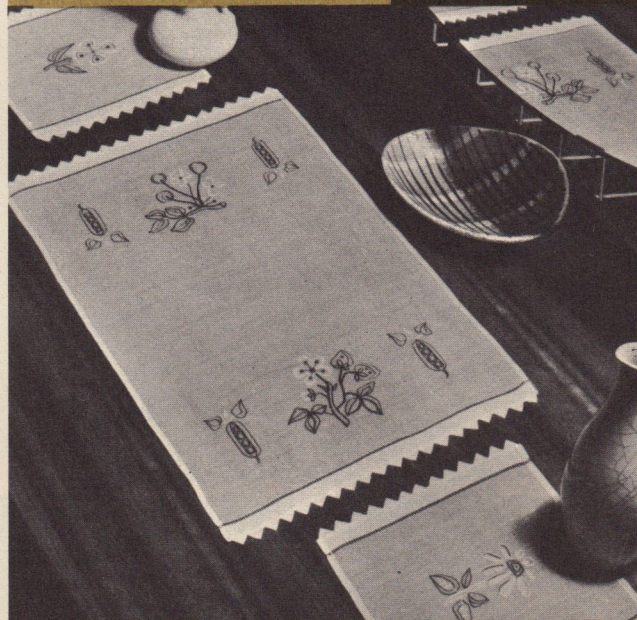
Dandelions embroidered on olive green taffeta make an unusual decoration for this finger plate. The design has been simplified from a pen and ink sketch and adapted to fit this long narrow shape. The embroidery is worked in a variety of threads of different thicknesses using Couching, Back Stitch, Split Stitch, Buttonhole Stitch, Cretan Stitch, Straight Stitch and French Knots.

When the embroidery is completed, it should be mounted over thin card to hold it firm and it can then be attached to the door and covered with a glass or perspex plate. Mark the position of the screw holes on the fabric and carefully pierce these with a stiletto before screwing in place.

Notice how this design of a dandelion plant has been adapted for the embroidered finger plate.



The sunflower design on this chair back was built up by using cut paper shapes.



Organdie dressing table set embroidered in Shadow Work.



The next issue of our bulletin will be entitled "Four Ideas for Decorating Cushions"