
Botanical Leaf Embroidery with Lauren from Lark Rising Embroidery

Chapter 1 - Botanical Leaf Embroidery

Overview

(gentle music) - Hi, my name is Lauren of Lark Rising Embroidery. I am an embroidery artist based in Seattle. I specialize in teaching DIY embroidery patterns, and I'm gonna teach you a botanical embroidery design. We will be mastering a herring bone style leaf stitch, learning how to fill different leaf shapes with that, and we'll also be using satin stitch to fill other leaf shapes. I have used three different colors of embroidery thread, and you'll need two skeins of one thread and then two other colors. You can feel free to follow along with the colors I've chosen or choose a color palette that sparks joy for you.

Materials

- Embroidery is a really easy, low maintenance craft to get into because you need very few materials to get started. For this project, we'll use a piece of fabric. This is just a basic cotton fabric and I have an eight inch swatch. We'll also be using four skeins of basic cotton embroidery thread. I've used two skeins of one color and then two other colors. You can choose any color palette you like. I have a warm color palette here, a cooler color palette here. You can choose whatever feels good to you. I'll be using two embroidery needles. I'm gonna use a size five embroidery needle for most of the project and then at the very end, I'll be using this size 22 tapestry needle. You'll also want a nice, sharp pair of fabric shears and a nice small pair of sharp scissors. You can get away with using a larger pair of scissors as you work on this project, but if you have some smaller scissors I highly recommend using those because it's much easier to get nice and close to the fabric as you trim threads on the back without risking poking the rest of your work that you've already done. You'll also need a copy of the embroidery template design. So this is something that you can just trace right onto your fabric and you can trace it onto your fabric with this friction erasable pen. It's by Pilot, it's just a ballpoint pen, black. Some people use these on paper in their offices to write because it's erasable, but you can actually write on fabric with it and then erase it using either a heat gun or a regular at home blow dryer. And I like to use a light pad or a tracing table to put my paper and then my fabric over and trace the design onto that, but if you don't have one of those you don't have to invest in one. You can actually just tape your paper and your fabric to a window and trace using the light from a window. You can find this traceable template and a color guide in the pdf that comes with this class.

Transferring the pattern

- As we get started, the first thing we'll do is take our design template and place it on your light source. Whether that's a light table, like I'm using, or the window. And you'll place that on, and then you will take your swatch of fabric, and place it directly on top of the paper. And you're gonna wanna make sure that that design is centered underneath your swatch of fabric. And once you feel like it's ready, feel free to turn on your light table. If you're using window light, be sure to tape both the paper and the fabric in place, so that they don't shift around while you're tracing. You'll want to make sure that the design is centered in the fabric, and also look at the direction of the weave lines in the fabric. So they're going vertically here, and horizontally. And I like that to be the vertical lines in that weave going towards the top of my hoop, and the top of my design. This is the orientation of

this design that I like, but since the hoop is a circle, you can actually turn it anyway that you like, and that's completely fine. For now, I'm gonna keep mine like this so that that sort of Palm frond is at the top of my design, and my weave lines are going vertically here, and horizontally here. And if you like the orientation, and it's centered, then you're gonna start tracing. So you're gonna take your FriXion pen, and begin tracing. Make sure that you use one hand to hold that fabric really nice and stable as you go. And take things slowly, so you have nice clean lines in your design. If you make a mistake in your tracing, don't worry about it. You'll be able to erase any stray lines at the end using that heat gun or blow-dryer, so they won't show up on your final piece of work. It's more than okay to rotate your paper and your fabric as you work to make it a better angle for you to draw. Just make sure that you do it slowly and carefully so that you don't shift the fabric away from the paper. And when you're finished, you can turn off your light table, or pull your design off the window, and then you have a set design on your fabric. Now that you've traced your design onto your fabric, you're ready to set that fabric in your embroidery hoop. We're using a five inch embroidery hoop for this design. And when you go to purchase your embroidery hoop, you want to check a few key things. The first thing you want to check is that there are no gaps in between the inside and the outer ring of the hoop. So you'll be tightening that mechanism at the top all the way tight. If there are gaps, the hoop won't be able to hold the tension in your fabric as you stitch, and it will make your design either really hard to work with or it will end up looking kind of wonky and not straight how we want it to be. You also want to make sure that your hoop is sturdy. So if you push on the sides of your hoop, it's okay to have a tiny bit of give there. But you don't want a hoop that's gonna really bend under just the weight of your hands, because you're gonna need to put that fabric in your hoop, and have the hoop hold it really tightly without giving. So once you have a hoop that works and your fabric, you are going to loosen your embroidery hoop and separate the two pieces. You have an inside ring that doesn't have the tightening mechanism, and the outside ring with the tightening mechanism. You're gonna take your inside ring and place it underneath your fabric. And line up your design so that it sits right at the edges of the inside hoop. Now this design shows at least one leaf going off the edge of the hoop, so it's like hidden and you can't see that top portion of the leaf. And that's okay. It's also okay if you've used a fabric that's slightly stretchier, or your hoop is a slightly different size than mine. And if portions of that design are fading off the edges of the hoop, that's okay. As we stitch, we will learn how to work with parts of the design that are shown as going off the edge of the hoop. So once you feel like your design is centered over that inside ring, you'll take the outside hoop, loosen it a bit, and place it very carefully with the tightening mechanism at the top, over the inner ring, and the fabric, like that. And, this is a great time if you feel like your design is now not centered in a way that you like, you are welcome to take that back off and fix it. I'm gonna leave it how mine is right now. I like the positioning. So I'm gonna pick it up, and tighten that tightening mechanism. Not horribly tightly. Just enough that it's holding it fairly snugly. And I am now gonna make my fabric drum-tight. So I am going to gently tug around the edges of the fabric to make sure that it is not puckering anywhere. And to make sure that the design is meeting the edges of the inside hoop in a way that I think looks good. So I'm pulling that, and making that fabric tighter in the hoop, and I'm gonna work all the way around. Keeping in mind those weave lines that we talked about at the start, and making sure that the weave lines stay nicely horizontal and nicely vertical. That way, I make sure that the design isn't actually being warped in anyway, and it's staying just nicely how we traced it. So I'm gonna continue working all the way around the edges of my hoop, making sure that's nice and tight. And then I'm gonna tighten this tightening mechanism a little further. Gonna continue tightening it until I can't really tighten it

anymore. And then go around one more time, making sure that that fabric is really nice and secure. And at the end, flick it with your fingernail and you get that nice drum sound, and you know that it's nice and drum-tight. Now that you have this, and you have these corners on here, I like to trim the corners off of my design. If you have future plans for your embroidery design, like making it into a zipper pouch or a pillow, you may not want to trim the edges off. But I'm gonna frame mine in the embroidery hoop. So I'm gonna go ahead and trim these edges off using my fabric shears. Leaving about an inch to an inch and a half of fabric around the edge of my hoop. And the reason I'm doing this is so as I stitch, this excess fabric is not in my way. Sometimes if you leave a lot of excess fabric around your hoop, and you're not paying 100% attention as you stitch, you can actually stitch these corners into the back of your hoop, and then you have to go and undo the stitches that caught it. And it can be kind of a pain. So I'm gonna trim a nice even circle around the edge. It doesn't have to be perfect, because you will gather that at the back of your hoop at the end, if you choose to frame your design in the hoop. So, I've trimmed this. I like how that looks. It's still drum-tight, and we're ready to stitch.

Working the leaf stitch

- So now that we're ready to stitch, you're gonna make sure that you have your embroidery supplies with you. You have your prepped hoop, your small scissors, your size five embroidery needle, and four skeins of cotton thread. I've provided you with a color guide in the PDF that came with this class, and it has a set of warm kind of pink-red tones and a set of cooler blue-green tones. I'm gonna use the blue-green palette for this class. I have a light aqua-colored thread, a skein of a light yellow-green thread, and two skeins of this darker, more turquoise thread. As we begin stitching, we're gonna begin with this light yellow-green thread. And we will start stitching with these leaves down here in section A on your diagram. As you work with DMC thread, you will be pulling your thread off of the skein from this long end that has the color number on it instead of this one that says DMC. And if you pull from this end nice and gently, you won't get a tangle in your thread as you pull it out. So you're gonna pull out a length of thread about this long. For me, it's a little bit longer than the length of my forearm and fingers. If you pull a length of thread that's much shorter than that, you're gonna need to swap out what thread you're using over and over, which gets a little bit tedious. And if you have a really, really long piece of thread, you're more prone to getting tangles. This is a great length of thread to work with. So I'm gonna go ahead and take my small scissors and trim that length of thread off. Put it aside. And this piece of thread is actually composed of six tiny strands. So we're gonna separate this into two sections of three by gently pulling it apart. And you're gonna wanna do this really slowly. If it starts to tangle, then stop and untwist your thread like this before you keep going. And then you can set the extra aside because you can go ahead and use that later as you continue stitching. And then you will want to thread your needle. I always stick my thread in my mouth and just use good old spit to wet it and smooth it down. Sometimes you get these little fibers sticking off the end which can make it hard to thread your needle, so I'm gonna go ahead and trim these off and make sure I have nice even ends on my thread. Get them wet. You can also use thread gloss for that if you prefer. And then I just, between my fingers, make it nice and flat like the tip of a paintbrush. And then I'm gonna go ahead and thread these strands into my needle. Now, I have a rule for this, and I call it the 2/3 1/3 rule of where you're gonna place your needle on your thread. And you're gonna put about 2/3 of the thread on one side of the needle and 1/3 of the thread on the other side of the needle. The longer side is your working thread. That's the part that's gonna be making the stitches. And as you stitch, it will use up

the thread from this side, and you'll slowly slide your needle closer to this end as you work, trying to maintain about $\frac{2}{3}$ of what's left on this side and $\frac{1}{3}$ on this side. When you've used so much that your needle starts to get very close to this end and your working thread is short, that's a good sign to stop, tie a knot at the back, and get a new piece. And I'll show you how to do that when we come to it. For this $\frac{2}{3}$ end, the longer side of your thread, you're just gonna go ahead and tie a knot. And I like to do two over top of each other, just to make it slightly bigger so it doesn't pull through the fabric. And then you want to trim this tail so it's nice and short and won't get caught and pulled through to the front side of your fabric. So now I have a knot with a short tail, $\frac{2}{3}$ of my length of thread on one end and $\frac{1}{3}$ on the other end. And with this, I'm ready to do my first stitch. I'm gonna begin stitching with this leaf right here in the center. It's nice and straight and even on both sides, very uncomplicated leaf to stitch. And the first type of stitch we'll be using is a herringbone-style leaf stitch. You're gonna take your needle and bring it around the back side of your fabric. And you can kinda drag it along until you find the tip of this leaf. And you're gonna bring your needle up right through the tip of this leaf on the line that you've traced. You're gonna bring your needle back down through this very top of this kind of line that's going up the center of the leaf, kind of like the vein of the leaf. You're gonna bring your needle back through there, not pulled so tightly that it's pulling your fabric down or making a big hole in the fabric, and not loosely so that it's sitting up like this, just nice and snug with the top of the fabric. That's your first stitch. And for your second stitch, you'll go back around the back side of your fabric and go to one side of your first stitch. It can be either side. It doesn't matter. But right along that line, you're gonna bring your needle back up, just to the side of your first stitch like this. Make sure your first stitch is still sitting tightly. And you're gonna bring your needle right back down directly underneath where your first stitch ended. This could be almost in the same little hole in the fabric that you used the first time or just barely underneath. And pull your needle nice and gently through. And if these stitches are sitting a little bit on top of each other, you can kind of use your needle to guide that second stitch over a little bit. It's okay if they overlap. That's your second stitch. For your third stitch, you're gonna go to the other side of your first stitch. So I did my second stitch over here on this side. I'm gonna do my third one over here really snugly, close to that first stitch on the line of the edge of the leaf. Pull it up through and, again, right back down on that center line, slightly underneath where my last stitch ended. And I'm kinda separating 'em, making sure they're not overlapping too much, using the side of my finger to make sure they look nice and smooth. And then I'm gonna continue going to this side, this side, this side, this side as I move down my leaf. So this motion of going back and forth, back and forth and always ending on the center line here is going to create a nice V shape that moves down the leaf, and it will also create a seam or a little indent where all these stitches are going down along the center line that mimics a vein of a leaf. It gives a really, really nice effect and looks just like a leaf without having to do anything special to the middle. And again, if these stitches overlap too much when I place them, I can kind of just shift them over, tell them to scooch. And I'm gonna continue going down, using the line where I traced as a guide. And every time I'm ending just slightly below, bringing my needle back down through that line, going up the center of my leaf, back and forth and back and forth. My thread is starting to get a little bit short, so after this stitch, I think I'll switch to a new piece of thread. And to do that, I'm going to need to tie a knot in this thread at the back of my hoop. So I'm gonna turn the hoop over. The way I like to end a piece of thread is by tucking this needle under some stitches that I've already done and then putting my needle through that little loop that I've created and pulling it. And kind of push the knot down with your fingernails there so it's sitting nice and snugly there. Do it a second time. That... Push that down. And now I've anchored

my knot to the back instead of having a knot that's kind of floating around and letting my stitches be loose. So I have this tail. I'm gonna go ahead and trim it off because I don't want that. There we go. And I'll thread a new piece of thread and continue doing the same motion I was doing before. So as I stitch, the angle of the V shape that this is making is gonna get slightly wider, and that's what we want. That's helps fill in all the space down at the fatter part of the leaf. If you find that your V shape is getting too wide and is almost looking flattened out, try putting your initial stitch where you bring your needle up slightly closer to the previous stitch and bringing your needle down just slightly farther along this line, not enough to leave a gap, but enough so that it will change your angle of your stitches gradually slightly more into a tighter V. And if you do that for a few stitches, it will adjust the angle of that V. So as you stitch and fill in the leaf, you can kind of evaluate the stitches that you've done so far. And I'm noticing that this stitch right here is kind of sticking up a little bit more than I would like. I'm gonna turn my hoop over and kind of gently hook my needle onto those stitches in that place and tug them so that they sit a little bit more snugly on the front. And I'm gonna take the side of my needle and smooth it out. I don't think I quite caught the one I wanted. It might be this one with the knot. So I'm gonna gently pull, and that helps all my stitches sit a little bit more flat and evenly on the top of my leaf. So I'm gonna continue on. And you can see this line, the seam that I'm making by always putting my needle back in in the same spot, is starting to form, which is exactly what you want. So I'm noticing that when I made my last stitch, a little bit of the tail of my thread from one of my previous knots is sticking up here. So I'm gonna go ahead and turn my hoop over and pull that out. That happens sometimes. It's not a big deal. You can pull that out so it's not going through the front. And keep going. Ooh, didn't get it all. There we go. As I'm nearing the bottom of my leaf, I'm getting really close to the edge of this inside hoop. Depending on how you traced your design and placed it in the hoop and how stretchy your fabric was initially, you may have this whole leaf sitting inside the inside of the hoop, or it could be overlapping with the outside or going off the edge. I'm going to stitch just to the inside of this inner hoop, so just to this edge. And I'm gonna stop all of my stitches there when I start running into that inside edge. And you'll feel that with your needle as you go. And that doesn't mean I'm gonna not complete this leaf. That just means I'm gonna move my stitches so that they are no longer hitting that center line. So I think I'll be there on my next stitch. I'll show you what that means. This next stitch is just gonna go slightly over to the side. So I'm still filling in this side area of the leaf. I'm just not reaching all the way to that center seam. I'm going as far toward it as I can without running into the inside edge of the hoop. So my next stitch over here is also slightly scooped over. And again with this stitch, I'm bringing it just to the edge of the hoop so it's as far toward that center line as I can go, but wherever I'm meeting the inside edge of my hoop. So I'm still filling in that side of the leaf, bringing my needle up right through the very outside edge like that. And when your leaf is all the way filled in, then that leaf is complete. And we will go ahead and leave the stems of all of our leaves until the very end of the project. We're gonna focus on filling our leaves in first. So that's my last stitch on this leaf. I see I have a couple of these spots where the thread is sticking up, so I'm gonna smooth it out with the side of my needle, again turning my hoop over. I'm gonna gently tug on this, on these stitches from the back, and make sure every thread and every stitch is pulled snugly, not yanking, not trying to make a big hole, just pulling it so any excess thread is at the back so the front of my leaf looks nice and smooth. So now that I'm done with this leaf, I'm gonna go ahead and tie this thread that I'm using off and shift over to my next leaf. And the reason that you don't always want to just stretch your fabric or your thread across the back of your fabric is because sometimes depending on how sheer your fabric is, how light it is, or how dark your thread

is, the thread that you stretch across the back of your fabric can be seen through from the front side, and you don't wanna have unsightly lines going across in between leaves. So I'm gonna tie that off, trim my thread, and start on a fresh leaf. You finished your first leaf using the herringbone-style leaf stitch. At this point, we're gonna switch to another leaf that's a little bit more curvy. And you have to do something slightly differently for this type of leaf, and I'm gonna show you what that is using this diagram. You can also draw on your traceable template if you wanna draw this out before you stitch it. So if we think about a curved leaf, we have this side here and this side. And the side that's on the outside edge of the curve is actually a little bit longer than this side that's more straight or on the inside of the curve. And so there's more area to fill with your stitches on this outside of the curve. So what we're gonna do as we stitch is we're gonna do that initial stitch from the tip to the center. Even if that is not going straight up and down like it did on our previous leaf, we're gonna still start from the top down to the center. But as we stitch, we're gonna do two things. The first thing is as we're going back and forth from this side to this side, there might be a time where we need to add in an extra stitch on this side so that we can fill the leaf at the same rate on this side versus this side. So as I'm moving down, especially through this top section where the curve is more dramatic, I'm gonna do a stitch over here, and then I'm gonna do two stitches over here. And there's a special trick called stitch tucking that you can use to make sure that this side, the thread doesn't get too bulky. And I'll go ahead and show you that now. As I just described, you're gonna come right through that tip of the leaf to the top of your center line. Whoop, and I have a little knot, which is great because it gives me the opportunity to show you how to fix it. So when you encounter a knot like this that has a little loop, you're gonna actually want to go in and pull it loosely and unwind that thread instead of yanking it through, which will only make the knot tighter. So I fixed that, and now I have my initial stitch. And since I know that I'm gonna end up needing to put more stitches on this side, I'm gonna go ahead and start here to this right side of the leaf, the outside edge of the curve. And begin as normal. I'm gonna go ahead and do my first five or six stitches just normally in the same way that I did the other leaf like this. Going back to this other side. And now that I'm approaching the really curved portion of this leaf, I'm gonna do that stitch tucking trick that I talked about before. So I'm gonna go ahead and do a stitch that comes up through the outside edge of the fabric. And instead of reaching the end of my stitch all the way to the center line, I'm gonna actually tuck it slightly underneath these last stitches, about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way down toward the center line, and insert my needle there. And since we know we need extra stitches along this edge, I'm gonna go ahead and do a second stitch on this side, reinserting my needle again on the center line. So I've tucked that first stitch that I did in there, so I'm filling up this area that needs more filling than on this side, but I'm not reaching every single stitch to the center because I would end up with a really bulky section of thread here on this leaf. So I've done a tucked stitch and a full stitch on this side, and I'll return to the left side of the leaf and do a single full stitch. And then I'm gonna do another tuck stitch on this curved side over here. So again, I'm going about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way to the center and putting my needle underneath the last couple stitches, inserting it, pulling my stitch through. And then I'm gonna do a second stitch here that reaches all the way to the center. And I'm gonna continue with this stitch tucking technique until I get through the main portion of this curve. When I get to about here, I'm gonna continue stitching just one to each side as normal because this leaf evens out as far as space on this side and this side, so I'll no longer need to do stitch tucking at that point. And depending on how curved your leaf is, some patterns you'll encounter have really curved leaves. At that point, you need to do it a lot. You'll need a lot of stitch tucking in order to get through the more curved side of your leaf. Oopsies. Fix that. So I'm almost at

a point where I can continue with one to each side. I might do a single stitch on this side this time and then do one more tucked stitch next time I get back to that side, and then I'll be fairly evened out. Even though there's a longer length to go here on that side, it keeps the angle of my V even on both sides so I don't have a side where one part of the V is going very far up and the other is going out. It's nice and even. So I'm gonna stop tucking my stitches at this point and continue stitching all the way to the bottom of the leaf in a regular herringbone-style leaf stitch. So you'll continue stitching with the herringbone leaf stitch until you finish all the leaves in section A, and it will look like this. One thing to point out, you have another leaf here that's more curved, so you'll need to use stitch tucking techniques on this one. This one's pretty straightforward, and so is this one. You'll notice that as you get to the bottom of each leaf, if you can get all the way to the bottom without running into your inside hoop, you'll have stitches that get pretty small, and you just wanna continue maintaining your V all the way down to the bottom. Your stitches will get pretty tiny until you get to the top of the stem, at which point you'll stop. And once you've filled in all of your leaves, we'll stop and move on to the next section, leaving the stems for the end of the piece.

Stitch-tucking the leaves

- So now that we finished all the leaves in Section A we're gonna move on to the next group of leaves in Group B. I'm using this light aqua-colored thread for this section and again I'm sticking with three strands of thread that I already have threaded onto my needle. We're gonna continue using a herringbone-style leaf stitch, but since these leaves are a little bit different shape, we're gonna do some of those stitch tucking techniques and things a little bit differently this time. Let's get started. These leaves are a little bit wider, almost have a rounded quality to them. They're wide, and they have a short little vein line in the middle. So what we're gonna do with this leaf is we're gonna begin stitching in the same way that we did before but we are gonna employ those stitch tucking techniques on both sides going down part of the way so that we can get a good, nice, wide V angle going down and so that we don't finish stitching all the way to the bottom of this seam line before we've filled in all the sides of our leaf. So I'll show you how to do that now. Once again you're gonna bring your needle up through the very end of the leaf and reinsert it at the top of that line in the center making sure that all three strands of thread lay neatly down like that. And you're just going to begin that back and forth alternating sides, the motion that you were doing before in Group A. As you're stitching, if you ever find that your fabric is starting to get a little bit of slack in it, that can happen especially when you're working close to an edge, make sure that you stop and pull your fabric nice and taut, tightening the hoop at the top if necessary. If you don't do that you can actually have the fabric bunch underneath your stitches, and it makes a little puckered area, and it can be really distracting on a final piece. So always make sure that you keep that nice drum-tight tension in the fabric of your hoop. So, I've done about four stitches, I'm gonna do one more on this side, so that we're even. And then I'm going to begin doing stitch tucking on both sides so that I have more room to widen out the angle of my V. Since I've started this seam line so low I just need a little bit of extra space to get that nice herringbone sort of angle in my stitches. So I'm gonna do again a short stitch, and then follow it up immediately on the same side with a longer one. There. And then I'm gonna go the other side and do the same thing. So if I did a tucked stitch on one side I'm gonna match it on the other side since this is such an evenly shaped leaf. So I tucked that one, and I'm gonna keep doing it until I get a little bit wider V, I'll probably do four or five tucked stitches on each side. And one way to help you get that widened angle, remember is to keep your stitches very very close together on this center line, sometimes I'm almost using the same exact hole in the

fabric, I'm barely moving down. And always take the opportunity to smooth out any bumpy stitches as you go, like that. Making sure that all three strands of thread are pulled evenly and have the same amount of tension in them and not have one little part of the thread that's sticking up, oops, almost forgot to tuck that one. So now I have a pretty good V angle going, so I'm gonna do a few regular stitches as I work toward the bottom of this leaf. I don't need to do any more tucked stitches but if you find yourself getting really close to the bottom of this little seam line, you're running out of room and you have a lot of leaf area left to fill, always feel free to go back and tuck a couple of stitches to make sure that you're filling up this area while also not filling up this too quickly. My thread is getting pretty short so I'm gonna go ahead and switch to a new piece. And remember, I'm anchoring my knot to my existing stitches, so I'll tuck it under here and then head my needle through the loop. And do it again, one more. Through the loop. Pull it tightly. So I have a new piece of thread, and I'm gonna finish off this leaf with that. And on this type of leaf, because of the shape, and it being a little bit different, your stitches are gonna stay fairly long all the way to the bottom of the leaf, you're not gonna end up with really short stitches like you did over here in Section A, and that is okay, you'll stop stitching when all of the area of the leaf is filled in. So I'm almost at the bottom here, I have about one to two more stitches on this side, maybe one extra on the other side, which is fine, it doesn't have to match exactly. I'm gonna fit one more on both sides and then my leaf will be totally filled in and I will be finished with this leaf. So I went ahead and tied off my thread for this leaf because I finished filling in the whole thing, and you're gonna follow this same technique for most of these other leaves. Some of them are a little bit curvier than others, like this one and this one, so you'll want to use more of those stitch tucking techniques along the wider part of the curve here, and here. So instead of tucking the stitches evenly on both sides like we did here, you'll need to do it more on this side and this side as opposed to on the opposite side. Keep stitching your leaves in this same way, and eventually it's gonna look like this. And I went ahead and filled in this leaf here on the edge that has the end of it obscured, it's going off the edge of the pattern. And I am gonna show you how to do that technique over here. So you see, it just works right up to the edge of the hoop here, and you're gonna do the same thing over here, working up to the edge of this leaf, and I'm gonna go ahead and show you how to do that now. It's just slightly different than before, but you're gonna use the same technique. Instead of going to the very end of the leaf, since you can't see the end of the leaf, you're gonna imagine where the center end of the leaf would be behind here, and you're gonna pull your needle up through just the middle of the end that you can see, and again bring it back down through that center line. Then, instead of going to the edge of the leaf, again your just working to the edge of what you can see, bringing your needle up, and I'm bringing it up through the same exact hole in the fabric that the stitches in this yellow-green leaf are coming out of, so I'm using the same exact hole, I'm not leaving any space in between the edge of this leaf and this one. So I don't want to leave any fabric visible between the two, I'm using the same hole in the fabric, and just alternating out as if this was the true edge of that leaf. I'm gonna use the same technique that I used before, alternating, and since I don't have quite as far to go up to the top, I'm gonna do a little bit of stitch tucking, but not quite as much as I did for the full sized leaf. So I'm gonna go ahead and tuck this stitch. And I'll probably go ahead and tuck one on the other side as well. And I don't think I need to do much more tucking than that because I think I have plenty of space down along this line to complete all of my stitches while still filling in both sides of the leaf. And as you can see, this side of the leaf has less space than this one. That's totally okay, that's gonna happen on some of these leaves. And you will just stop stitching on the side that you fill in first and finish stitching the other side until it's filled in, and that's totally okay. It doesn't have to be

matching between sides the whole time. Nature is not always in perfect symmetry. And once you fill in the whole top portion of the leaf that's visible, you'll just start going down the side. Like that. And then that leaf is all filled in, and I can go ahead and tie off. And sometimes when you pull your needle up through where other stitches have already been, they can make these existing stitches a little bit bunched up, so before I tie off I'm gonna probably just go and gently tug the stitches of this leaf that I was stitching against to make sure that none of that thread got pulled too far to the front. So, that looks good. And then I'll go ahead and show you how to stitch this next leaf with a new piece of thread. So this last leaf I'm gonna demonstrate is a kind of a cross between these ones where you can see the whole thing, and this one where the top is obscured because you can see part of the top on one side and not on the other side. So again, you're just gonna use your imagination and imagine what the whole leaf looks like, and then angle your stitches according to what you think they would look like as if you were stitching this section as well. And since you can see the top of this leaf and not over here, all of my stitches at the start are gonna be on this side only. So I'm gonna start by bringing my needle up right against this other leaf in section A. And then I'm gonna bring it down right about here. So I am not working all the way to the tip of this leaf because I don't want my thread to be angled this way, I'm still gonna want to angle it in and get that V shape on this side of the leaf that we can see. So I'll take my next stitch over slightly and I'm gonna actually just bring it down pretty much in that same hole as I brought my first stitch down through and start fanning these stitches out. Not really moving very far down yet. Maybe move this stitch down just slightly. And I'm gonna continue working on this side until I get to a point where I feel like I am at a point where it's visible also on this side, and when I get to that point I'll start alternating stitches between sides again. So I think right about now I'm gonna do this stitch and then I'm gonna start adding stitches on this side. But I'm not gonna go all the way out to the edge yet, I'm actually gonna do my first few stitches slightly smaller just a little way up the edge of this leaf in Section A. So I'm gonna do a stitch just like that, and then gently and slowly work my way up. So just filling in what's visible of this side until I get to the outside edge. As you can see, on the side that we started on, this stitch would go all the way down to here if we continued it, but it's interrupted by this end of this leaf from Section A, so we're gonna go ahead and fill in this little gap here as if it was just a continuation of this stitch. Like that. And there's one more little gap so I'm just gonna go ahead and fill that in with a small stitch trying to maintain the same angle as these stitches above. As if it was the same stitch that was just extended behind this. Now as you can see I have a little knot here so I'm gonna go ahead and pull that out and it's just a little knot so I'm gonna pull this string, there, and loosen it. And now it's fixed. So that's filled in. I'm gonna add another stitch on the outside edge of this leaf. So now I'm gonna check and see whether I have the space to do a full stitch yet. I'm gonna just lay my thread across, and I'm not quite able to get a full stitch in without overlapping the end of this yellow-green leaf from Section A, so I'm gonna do one more that's that way. Just like a half stitch, and then a shorter stitch to follow it up that reaches all the way to the center. I'll do a full one on the opposite side. Since now I can access both sides we can try to make that V shape nice and even, and I can get a full stitch in on this side now. So at this point it's just like a regular leaf and you can continue stitching alternating between sides until you reach the bottom of the leaf. So at this point you've finished all the leaves in Section B and all the leaves in Section A. We're gonna continue to leave the stems until the end of the project, and move on to the next section of leaves.

Satin stitch leaves

- So now we're ready to move on to the last section of leaves in section C, this is a Palm front, or you can look at it like a Fern, it doesn't really matter, but it has several individual leaves that we'll be stitching. And we're gonna start with one side and then the other, and I'm gonna use this paper on our diagram again to show you how to stitch these and at what angle. So I'm gonna take my page with my section labels, I'm gonna go ahead and turn it upside down so I can see this leaf, and we're gonna use satin stitch to fill each of these leaves individually, and we're gonna work down one side first and then move on to the other side. And I'm gonna show you really quickly how we're gonna angle these stitches. So we wanna have about a 45 degree angle across each leaf like this. So instead of moving your pen straight across your stitches won't be going directly across, they're gonna be angled, and we're gonna start each leaf in the center and make stitches that go diagonally across each one until we fill it in. And we're gonna do the same angle across each leaf on this side, moving down, and also for our center leaf, which is this one we're also gonna keep that same angle on this one, like this. And it looks different because it's facing a different way, but we're still angling our stitches from the bottom out toward the tip. When we moved to this side, we're gonna do the opposite angle so that it's a mirror image, and angle our stitches this way toward the outside point of the leaf. So it's gonna end up looking like this each stitch going across at a 45 degree angle. Now let's figure out how to do that with thread. It can also be really helpful if you don't wanna draw on the paper to actually just draw that angle of your stitches on your fabric. This is gonna all be covered by thread, so it doesn't matter if you have extra drawing on here, it can be really helpful to draw the angle that you wanna achieve with your stitches on the leaf itself, to make sure you're maintaining that angle throughout every stitch, all the way across your leaf like that. I'm gonna stitch this section of leaves with this dark kind of blue green thread again, using three strands. I've threaded my needle with three strands of thread, and I'm gonna actually turn my hoop upside down and work on it this way. It's easier to visualize the stitch angles when you view the leaf from this direction. So I'm gonna place my first stitch. Remember we're using satin stitch now, so this is a little bit different. Instead of going from the tip of the leaf down this way, we're gonna fill it in with stitches that go across, and we'll do it like this. I'm gonna go to about the center of the leaf and pull my needle up through one edge of the leaf and reinsert my needle on the other side, mimicking that angle that I drew already with my pen. So I have one stitch going across. Now, I'm gonna reinsert my needle back at the top here on either side, you can work to this end first or this, I'm gonna go toward the tip. So I'm gonna bring my needle out and then reinsert it again directly next to where I reinserted my first stitch. So these stitches are parallel, and it's at the exact same angle as my first stitch. And I'm gonna continue doing that. And it's always important to start each stitch on the same side and finish on the same side. So I'm always starting from up here and finishing each stitch down here. And if I turn my hoop over, it's gonna look exactly the same on the back as it does on the front minus the knots that are on the back. So, it's okay if your stitches don't match the angle that you drew exactly with your pen if you chose to do that, but you do wanna maintain as close to the same angle with all of your stitches as you can so they're reaching diagonally across the leaf. And this is called satin stitch, because if you do a nice job and are able to keep your thread looking smooth and keep the same amount of tension in how tightly you pull them, and make sure your thread isn't twisting at all as you do it, it gives a very smooth satiny look to the area that you stitch with this type of stitch. So again, I'm just inserting my needle along this top edge of the leaf and putting it back down through the bottom edge, not leaving any space between my stitches. And I've used a nice fabric that has, this is just basic quilting cotton, kind of a heavier weight quilting cotton, but it has a very tight weave. You don't see big holes in between the fabric between the warp and the

weave. And the reason I like this type of fabric for this pattern is because it allows you to get your satin stitches very close together. They're not overlapping, but they're very close together leaving only maybe one little tiny thread of fabric in between each stitch, and that gives you a nice clean edge to your satin stitches, and helps make sure that there aren't any gaps between stitches. So I'll continue stitching at this same angle until I get to the edge, the tip of the leaf, and it's all filled in, and then I'll go back and fill in the bottom part of the leaf. So I've a new length of thread, I've stitched all the way to the end of this leaf, now I'm gonna go back and fill in the front half of this leaf toward the stem. Again, starting in the middle, next to my very first stitch that I made. Starting your stitching in the middle as opposed to one end, helps you maintain the same consistent angle across the whole leaf. So one thing to keep in mind as you're doing satin stitch, so you want all of your stitches to be really nice and even as far as how tightly they're pulled to the fabric, the angle, the edge here. So if you're finding some of your stitches are maybe sticking out more like right here, you can always turn your hoop over just like we've done on previous sections, kinda hook your needle in under those stitches, and pull them so that any excess thread is at the back instead of on the front. Another way to troubleshoot your satin stitches, if you end up doing a stitch that is a little bit too far away from its neighbor, you can always go back and stick an extra stitch in a place where there's a gap. So if I had a little bit of fabric visible over here, and I didn't like that, I could put my needle back in over there, add a stitch in and then keep going. And that's totally okay. Again, I'm maintaining a nice even angle, the same angle of stitches that I started with. If you find the angle of your stitches is getting too steep or too shallow, you can adjust the angle that you're stitching at. So if the angle is getting too steep, like this, try putting, when you bring your needle up, scooch it slightly farther away and when you reinsert it, reinsert it slightly closer to your previous stitch, and if you do that for a few stitches, you can adjust it back to the angle that you like, and you do the opposite if the angle of your stitches was getting too shallow. So if it was starting to lean more this way or become straight, you would bring your needle up a little bit closer to your previous stitch and reinsert it farther away. So I'm gonna continue stitching all the way until I meet the stem line at the center. And since I'm working at an angle, I'm gonna get there first with the top part of my stitch. So I might have a couple of stitches here that are not all the way to the top of the leaf, they're just filling the space that's leftover. So now I've finished this leaf, I'm gonna take a look at it and see if I like it, if there's anything that needs fixing. I notice I have a little bit of a gap right here where one stitch didn't quite reach the edge of the leaf, so I'm gonna actually go back in and fill that gap. So I'm gonna reinsert my needle here at the edge of the leaf where that gap is, and kinda wiggle this stitch down in between these two stitches. There, and you can use your finger or the size of the needle to smooth it over, it looks great. So as you can see, I've stitched down all this side and I'm on my last leaf on this side. I've been maintaining the same angle across each leaf, but this one here has the inside hoop underneath part of it. So I'm gonna show you a couple of tips for how to work up against this inside hoop. You're gonna want to bring your needle up again through the top part of the leaf, bringing it down across the bottom. And the reason it's really important not to start right on this side, where the inside hoop is, is because your knot can get wedged up underneath here and make a little bump in between your fabric and the inside of your hoop. So I'm gonna use my needle and feel for the edge of that hoop. And I found it right here, I like the angle of this stitch that I've made so I'm gonna pull it this way. And if you start to get a tangle make sure you stop and fix it. I've made a single stitch up against the inside hoop, and it's really important when you make your next one continue to make it right next to each other. You don't wanna do it too far in, you wanna really feel for that inside hoop and push kind of forward so that you're making sure you get right up

against that inside hoop, and you don't have an edge that's gonna be jaggedy. So really feel for that inside hoop each time as you work toward the outside. Again, maintaining that really nice angle consistent across the whole leaf. And as I work toward the end here, my leaf is gonna come away from the edge of the hoop on the inside. So I will continue to follow my line that I made at that point instead of following the hoop edge. And it's very close, and depending on the way that you traced the design, how stretchy your fabric was, or the size of your hoop, the thickness of the hoop on the inside and the outside, you may not have this issue. You may not actually need to work up against the edge of the hoop, or you may need to do it on both sides, it just depends. So it's great to know how to do that when you encounter that situation. Continue your satin stitches to fill in the last bit of this leaf on both sides and then we're gonna switch and go back up to the top and talk about how to angle your satin stitches to fill in the other side. So referring back to our diagram where we talked about the stitch angles, I'm gonna demonstrate how to stitch these leaves on the other side, where the angle is mirrored compared to the side that we've already done. This leaf is coming out of the center, so technically you could choose to angle your stitches on this leaf either direction and that would be fine. I mimicked the angle that I did for the first side of leafs, but right now I'm gonna show you how to stitch this leaf over here. Just like on the other side, you're gonna bring your needle up through this top line of the leaf, and reinsert it back down here. And our angle is gonna be going this way this time. So it's about a 45 degree angle across the leaf, like that. This time I'm gonna stitch toward the center first. And remember, if you pull up a stitch next to your knot and it pulls up some of this little tail, you can just pull it right out like that. You always have to stitch a little bit more slowly when you have a fresh piece of thread, because it's longer and more prone to getting knots or catching on your tightening mechanism or on excess fabric. So it's best to slow down a little bit when you have a longer piece of thread, because slowing down will save you time in the end. Sometimes as you stitch your needle or your thread can get a little bit twisted, or one strand of thread can become a little bit loose. So if you notice that happening, you always wanna take your thread and make sure that you tug on all three and straighten it out. If you have a really twisty piece of thread as you do satin stitches, the stitches can end up looking really ropery and like very much like individual stitches instead of like that smooth satiny finish that we're looking for. So it's important to always take the time and stop and fix a problem like that before you keep going. My stitches are getting pretty small down here but I'm gonna keep stitching with those small stitches all the way until I meet the leaf on the other side. So now I'm gonna go back and finish the end of this leaf. But before I do, I'm noticing a little bit of slack in my fabric. So I wanna make sure that I pull it all the way tight, maintain the tension in that fabric. I'm gonna tighten this tightening mechanism at the top, and that feels much better, drum tight. And I'll go back to the top here and fill in the rest of this leaf. Continue using satin stitch to fill in the remainder of the leaves on this side maintaining that same consistent angle and making sure your satin stitches are nice and smooth and satiny. Once you've finished stitching all the leaves on this side, you can go back to that center leaf and choose whichever stitch angle works best for you.

Stitching stems and finishing

- Now all that's left to finish this project is adding the stems between the leaves. We'll be using the same color of thread for each group of leaves that we stitched the leaves themselves with. To do the stems, I've switched to a size 22 tapestry needle. This is a shorter, thicker needle with a blunt end and a bigger eye. The reason I have switched to this needle is because I'm actually using all six little strands of thread to stitch the stems to make them a little bit thicker. I'm gonna begin with this

dark kind of aqua color that we were using before. I'm gonna turn my hoop and use this to stitch a single straight stitch between the groups of leaves. Now, because this has a bigger eye, it might be a little bit tougher to pull through your fabric, so just be gentle when you do it. Make sure you don't rip a hole in your fabric. So, I'm just making one straight stitch, like that, and it connects this group plus the center one to this group of leaves. And then I'll come up again here, making a single straight stitch again to this group of leaves. I'm gonna continue doing this all the way down until I reach the bottom of the group. As you're doing this, if your stitches cause any of your existing stitches to bunch up a little, remember, you can always do that trick where you hook your needle behind those stitches that got pulled up and pull any excess to the back. Now, because I'm having to pull a thick needle through this fabric, it's loosening my fabric a little bit. I'm just gonna take the opportunity to fix it before I keep going. Okay. I brought this stitch down in between these two groups because there was a little bit of space here. So, I'm gonna start my next stitch down lower instead of right next to where this stitch ends so I don't accidentally pull out the stitch I just made. Depending on the positioning of these leaves and how close they are to your inside hoop, you may or may not have room for a bottom stem here. I think I have room for a little bit of one, so I'm gonna squeeze one in there like that. So, I'm ready to tie this off, and I'm gonna make sure I tie my knot a little bit away from right here at the bottom so that I don't end up having a knot underneath my inside hoop. So, there are the stems for this group of leaves, and now I'm gonna go ahead and add the stems to this section. I have a needle threaded for this next section, again using six strands of thread and that size 22 tapestry needle. I'll start here at the top with this leaf, and each of these segments is just a single stitch. I'm gonna go right to here where it meets the other stem, and then I'm gonna reach my needle up to here at the bottom of this leaf, and I'm bringing my needle up through where these existing stitches already are, so there's no space in between. I'm gonna bring this stitch just to here. This is a bit of a curved stem, so I don't wanna try to go all the way down here, because it won't give me the angle that I'm looking for. Add this one. Gonna reach my thread down here and come up to meet this stitch. You can do these in any order that you like. It doesn't matter as long as each stem gets a stitch over it. And like we talked about before, you wanna try not to cross your thread from, say, this stem over to this one because you'll have that line that may show up on the back side of your fabric when you look through. Gonna go to here with this one. And since I just finished that stitch right here, I'm gonna reach down and start this stitch on the other side. Tie that off, and then do the last little stitches for the stems on this group. I switched to six strands of my last color of thread to finish the stems in group A, and since a lot of my stems are actually overlapping with this inner hoop, I only need to place a couple. I'll start here with this bottom one and just place a very short stitch here, working right up to that inner hoop. I also have a little bit of room to place a stitch on this leaf. I definitely don't have room for a stem on this leaf, so I'm gonna go ahead and skip that one, and place a short stem on this leaf. And it looks like I don't have room for one on this leaf either, so I'm gonna go ahead and leave it as is, tie off this thread, and that ends all of our stitching for this project. To finish it up, we're gonna wanna do two things. We will want to close up the back of our hoop so that all of this extra fabric isn't visible anymore, and we will also erase the extra lines from our marking pen. Doing these final two things will give your finished project a really clean, polished look. You'll flip your piece over and grab a needle and thread. You can use either needle from your project or any color of thread. I used a light color instead of this darker one just so you won't see it through. You'll do a running stitch all the way along the outside of this that is going to gather the extra fabric up. Bring your needle up through the back side of the fabric. I'm doing this about an inch away from the edge of my hoop. You're

gonna reinsert your needle down and up, and down and up so you're gathering layers of fabric on your needle. I usually do about three little gathers and then pull the needle through like that. I'll turn it and do more. Down and up, down, up, down, up, and pull through. You're gonna continue with this motion all the way around until you reach the point where you started. Now that I've reached back to the point where I started, I'm just gonna tie this thread off by looping my needle under the first stitch that I made and pulling it through, and doing it a second time. Make sure that knot is nice and tight. Trim the excess, and you're all done with that step. So, the very last thing we're gonna do is erase the lines from that erasable pen. I'm gonna use this heat gun. Again, you can use a blow dryer that you already have at home. Just make sure you don't hold the heat gun or blow dryer too long in one spot. Move it around the fabric, come back to a spot that's still dark if you need to, and keep going until all the lines are erased. Now that you have this finished embroidery project, you can hang it on a wall or display it on a shelf, even gift it to a friend or a loved one. If you wanna keep stitching, you can use leaf stitch and satin stitch techniques in all sorts of other embroidery projects. Satin stitch can be used to fill any sort of shape or area while you're stitching, and you can have tons of fun if you wanna stitch this over and do it in another color palette like this one. This is just a really great way to enter the world of embroidery and learn how to fill in shapes of every size. I hope you keep stitching, and have fun.