

HANDWEAVING NEWS

Figure No.1

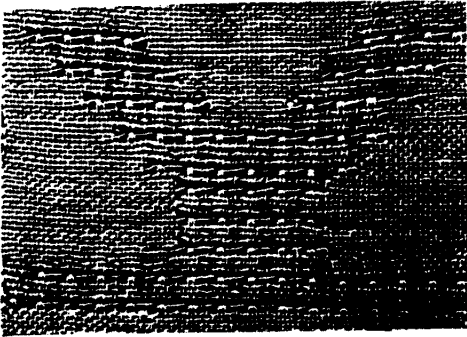
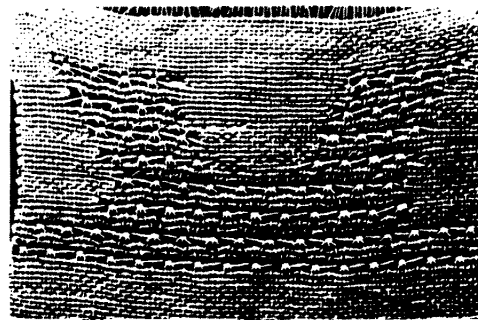


Figure No.2



Backstitching on the loom

Lace weaves are interesting and unusual. They should be used more than they are by modern weavers. At the recent Michigan Craft Show were two attractive place mats which several people have asked me how to do. So this month we will give you two different ways of doing the so-called Brook's bouquet or it is really doing a backstitch with the shuttle on the open shed of the loom. This may be woven on any loom allowing the plain weave shed.

One of the mats shown was of plain weave blue linen with a simple border in this stitch at each end of the mat, just at the top of the hem, and just one row across the width. The other mat was of bleached white linen with the design worked out in a simple border pattern.

At Figure No.1 above is the stitch which shows two rows across the width of the loom. Then above these three rows combine the stitch with Spanish weave to form a square figure. And just above that 5 rows more also combining the stitch with Spanish weave, but using a diagonal instead of the square figure. Carefully look at Figure No.1 which we hope is clear enough to show what we mean.

Equipment, - A flat netting shuttle wound with the weft is the best kind of shuttle to use for this technique. It carries the weft along and also is used to pick up the backstitches. These shuttles are available for \$1.00 each, if anyone wishes to have one. They may also be used for many other pickup weaves as well as this one.

Materials, - This is a free technique and may be used on any plain weave setup of the loom. Almost any weft materials can be used. The place mats at the show were we believe of 20/2 linen set about twenty threads to the inch, with the same for weft. The design was a simple one which we did not attempt to copy as it is easy to plan ones own out on cross section paper after working one row of pattern across the width of the loom to find out how many squares are needed for this width. When you plan a design, it is better to plan solid areas rather than just single stitches all alone. Also keep the design as simple as possible. Although it is easy to use squares or diagonals as in the above sample of the weave.

Method of Working this technique. First do several shots of plain weave for a heading. Then open the shed. Start at the right edge of the weaving. Pass the shuttle into this shed under 6 of the top warp threads. Bring it out of the shed on top of the warp. Then take it back over 3 of the raised warp threads, then down into the shed again under the same 3 raised threads and ahead toward the left under 3 more of the warps. Pull the stitch tight. Bring the shuttle out of the shed, back to the right over 3, down under the same three, and ahead 3 more and so on. This has made two backstitches over 2 groups of three threads, and over the warp threads that are raised. Repeat this for width of the warp.

Now weave , one row, three or five plain weave . You will find it necessary to put in an odd number of plain weave to make the stitches come out right. Always start at the right side of the warp with the backstitches.

To plan a design where you do not wish the backstitch all the way across, count number of stitches in the width of the warp. Then make Spanish stitch up to the point where the next row of backstitches is to begin.

To weave the center Square on Figure No.1
After weaving three rows of plain weave, count the backstitched groups on each side of the center. Take the shuttle into the shed up to the point where the first back stitch will begin. Change shed, carry the shuttle back to right edge. Change shed and put shuttle into shed up to the same point as before. This makes three rows of plain weave, or Spanish weave. Now make the backstitch as at first. Do 5 groups of these backstitches with the shed open if you wish to follow the pattern on the piece at Figure No.1. Then do the plain weave on the left side of the center the same as in the beginning of this row. Now do three rows of the plain weave all across the width. Areas of the plain Spanish weave can be placed between the rows of backstitch as desired. And these may be of any desired size.

Do 3 rows with the Spanish weave on each edge and 5 groups of the backstitch with 3 rows of the plain weave between each of the backstitch rows, if you wish to follow the design of Figure No.1

The next row on Figure No.1, which is the 6 th row from the beginning, has 7 groups of the backstitches, and the Spanish weave plain weave on the right and left side of these is decreased on the right side and on the left side of the center by one group of the backstitch. In the same way the row above this has 9 groups of the backstitch with the Spanish weave on each edge still further decreased.

On the next row above this, the Spanish is decreased by one backstitch on the right edge. Then it is made over 4 groups, with 3 groups left out in the center; and Spanish Weave made over these. Continuing make four backstitches, then do the Spanish on the left side as in the beginning of this row. All of these rows have three rows of plain weave between them.

This sampler was made of coarse materials as they show up better. Carpet warp was used, and the piece was woven on the 2 harness heddle loom. Weft was of Enterprise cotton, or the so-called "Sugar and Cream".

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At Figure No.2 is shown a variation of this same stitch which is most attractive. We will call this diagonal backstitch. Start at the right edge. Make a Spanish stitch by going under just 3 warp threads, and back to edge after changing the shed. Then going into the shed again from the right carry the shuttle ahead under 3 of the threads that are up. Go back over these, and ahead over three more and so on for the rest of the row. Now put in a shot of plain weave all across the width of the loom from left to right. And then from right to left, which leaves shuttle on left side of width.

Now backstitch from left to right with the shed open, over 3 warps as before. But as you start this, make sure on this second row that the center warp of the first groups is the warp not used on the first row of backstitches. Putting the backstitch in this position divides the previous row and makes a very attractive effect in the weaving.

When this second row of backstitches is done, you are on the right side again, now put in a row of plain weave from right to left, and then another from left to right.

On the right edgemake the Spanish stitch to the point where you wish the first backstitch of this third row to begin.

It is important when you go back to the right edge on this Spanish weave stitch, to be sure when you change the shed, that you take in as the last warp of this group, the center warp thread of the previous row of backstitches. This is a bit tricky, so watch it. You want your first backstitch of this row to have as its center thread the warp that was down on the previous row.

This explanation may sound a bit complicated but the stitch is simple and easy to do. We hope this is clear enough so as not to present any difficulty. You can vary this in any way that suits your fancy. If you do only one row of plain weave between each row of the backstitches, you will always start on the right side of the width.

Both sides of this material are very attractive. We have been doing this for the end of a runner with No.20/2 linen set at 20 threads to the inch for warp and weft. In this material we used a backstitch using 5 of the warp threads instead of three as above described. And only one row of the plain weave between each row of the backstitches. This was very handsome. When you use a large groups for the backstitches be careful and not pull your thread that you are using for the backstitch too tight. If you get it too tight, the edges of the weaving will be pulled in too much.

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