

Quilted Garden Tote



a tutorial from



and



Since quilting is my focus in sewing, I'm always looking for new ways to incorporate it into other sewing. This simple tote was a great way to quilt and use up some of those batting scraps!

I recommend using a home decorator weight fabric for both the outer shell and the lining as it gives the bag more structure. Quilting cottons are fine for the patchwork & pockets.



Cut List

Outer shell:

- Main fabric: Two 3.5" x 17.5" pieces
Two 9" x 17.5" pieces
- Patchwork fabric: Ten 4" x 4" pieces of a variety of fabrics
- Batting: Two 17" x 19.5" pieces (not pictured)



Pockets:

- Four 4.5" x 5" pieces for small pockets
- Two 11" x 5" pieces for large pocket
- Two 4.5 x 5" pieces of batting
- One 11" x 5" piece of batting



Handles:

- Two 15" x 2.5" pieces outer shell fabric
- Two 15 x 2.5" pieces of lining fabric
- Two 15 x 2.5" pieces of batting



Lining:

- Two 15" x 17.5" pieces of lining fabric (not pictured)

Unless otherwise indicated, sew the whole tote with a 1/4" seam allowance.

First, sew together five of the 4" x 4" pieces of the patchwork fabric. Repeat this step so that you have two strips of patchwork. Press your seams.



Next, sew the 3.5" x 17.5" outer fabric to the top of your patchwork strip and the 9" x 17.5" piece of outer fabric to the bottom of your patchwork strip. Repeat so that you have two sides for the outer shell of your tote.



Carefully center and lay the outer shell on your batting. Pin thoroughly.

I don't bother adding a back to this "quilt sandwich" because the tote will be lined. The quilting is decorative only.



Quilt both sides of the outer shell of your tote as desired.

This is a small scale project, so it's perfect for trying out some new quilting that you've never done before!



Trim the outer edges of your quilted pieces down to 15" x 17.5" square. This should be right along the edge of the fabric.



Now, let's make and attach the pockets.

Stack the two pieces of fabric, right sides together, and the batting below them, as pictured in the photo.



Sew all around the edges of the pocket, leaving a small 2" opening along the bottom.



Trim all corners.



Using the small opening, turn right side out and press. Be certain to fold in the seam allowance on the opening when you press.



Repeat until you have finished making all three pockets.



Pin pockets in place. Center the large pocket on one of you completed pieces of the outer shell.

Be sure that the pocket is placed so that the opening used to turn it right side out is on the bottom.

When pinning the two smaller pockets to the shell, be sure to set them about 4" from the side edges.



Sew the pockets in place, sewing closed the opening along the bottom as you go.

Back stitch a few times, at the start and finish to secure the pocket well.



You have now finished your two pieces of the outer shell of the tote!



Next pin them, with right sides together.

Using a strong needle in your machine (to easily sew through all of the layers), sew all the way around the sides and bottom of the shell.



Next we are going to box the bottom of the shell.

Measure three inches in from the corner, both up the side and along the bottom, and make a mark.



Bring the two marks together, until the side and bottom of meet, making a triangle.

Pin together and using a ruler draw a straight line along the visible 3" mark.



Sew along the drawn line and trim away the corner leaving a small 1/2" seam allowance.

Repeat for second corner.

Turn right side out and press so that the "boxiness" of your shell takes shape.



Ok – let's set aside the shell and move onto the lining!

With right sides together, sew along the sides and bottom edges of your lining fabric, leaving a 6" opening in the bottom.

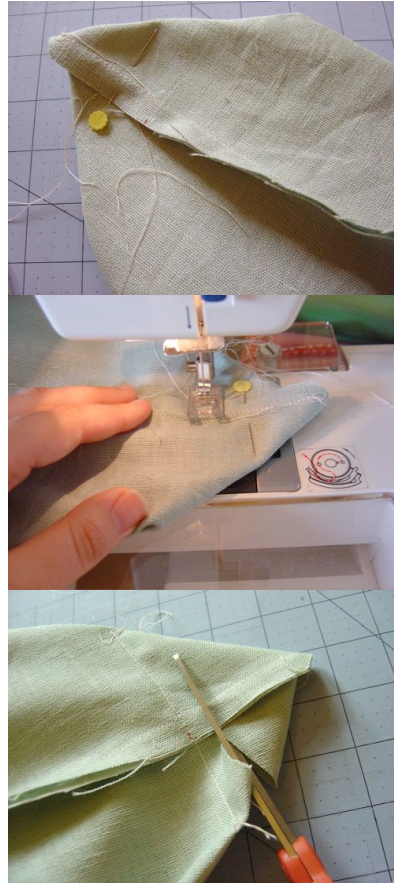


Repeat all of the steps you took when boxing the outer shell to box the bottom of the lining.

Measure in three inches, bring marks together and pin.

Sew along the 3" line,

and trim your corners.



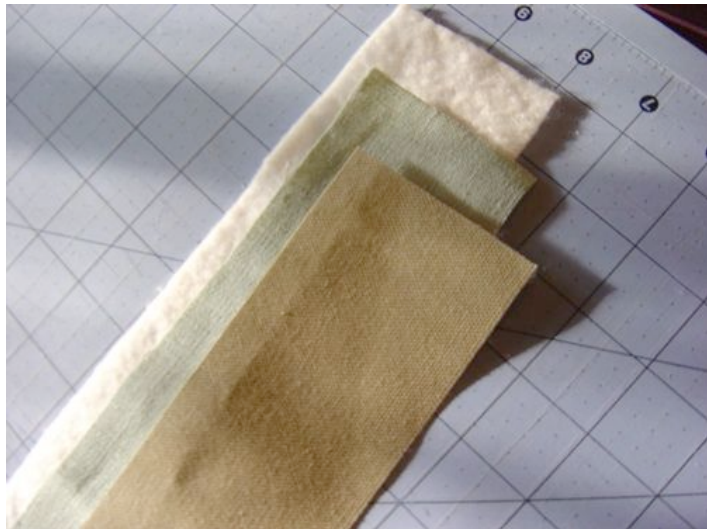
You have finished your shell and lining!

We're getting there – almost done!

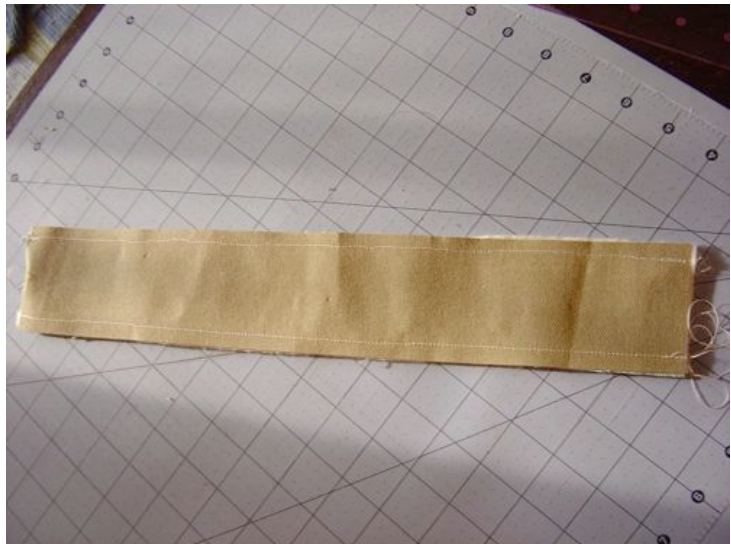


Time to make the handles.

Layer the handle pieces in this order: batting, lining fabric, outer shell fabric, as is shown in the photo.



Sew along the long sides of the handles.

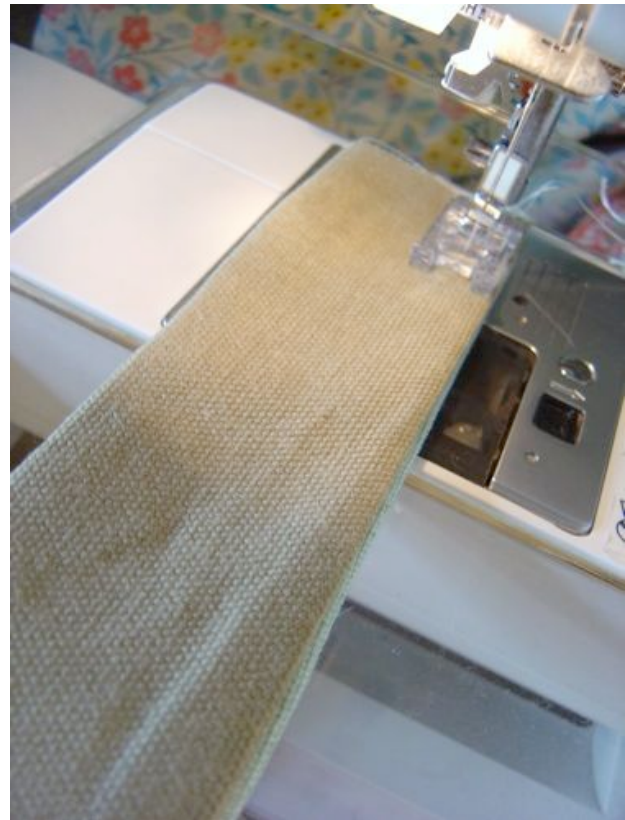


Turn the handles right side out and press them flat.



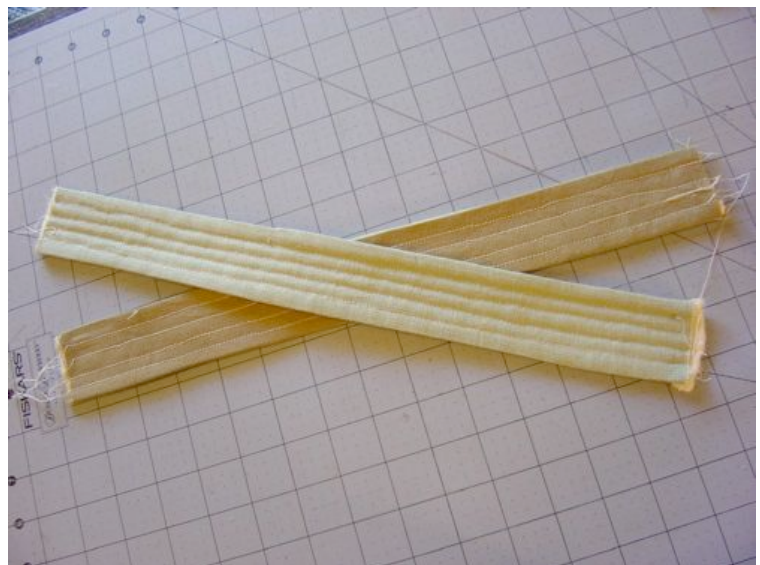
To add some interest to your handles, top stitch along the length of them in straight lines.

I like to start in one direction, flip, and sew the other way. I work my way into the center, alternating sides.



Your handles are all finished.

Time to put the whole thing together!



Place the outer shell inside the lining, right sides together. Make sure your side seams are lined up and pin together.



In between the shell and lining, place and pin the handles about 1.5" from the side seam.

The handle's lining fabric side should be against the lining of the tote, and shell fabric side against the outer shell of the tote. Pin both ends of the handles in place so that they are between the layers, making sure they are not oddly twisted.



Pin thoroughly around the top of the tote.



Using a 1/2" seam allowance sew all the way around the top of your tote.

Backstitch generously over the handles as you go over them so that they are very secure.

You'll be sewing through lots of layers, but with a strong needle in your machine you should have no problems.



Pull the entire shell of the tote through the hole in the bottom of the lining and watch the magic happen!



Press the seam allowance of the hole in the lining, and sew right over it to close up the hole.

Push the lining into your tote and press press press your tote! Then press it some more. I find you can never do too much pressing to get it into its nice boxy shape.



Finally, top stitch around the top edge of the tote to give it one last finishing touch.





And there you have it! A pretty quilted garden tote! Many easy variations are possible – no patchwork, no quilting, using interfacing instead of batting (if you skip the quilting) and so on. I hope that you all enjoy the tutorial and I can't wait to see you're the totes that you make!

