



Blackwork Journey Blog

October 2023

Explore Autumn!





October - looking forward

...Autumn winds shaking colour from the trees...

~Terri Guillemets

*Soon the leaves will all be turning,
From their many shades of green,
Into colours bright and gorgeous...
Reds and yellows, browns and orange,
Underneath the smiling sun,
Each leaf vying with the other
In the change they've now begun.
Giving up their Summer wardrobes,
Gladly; joyfully, with glee,
Putting on their Autumn trousseau,
As they leave their mother tree...*

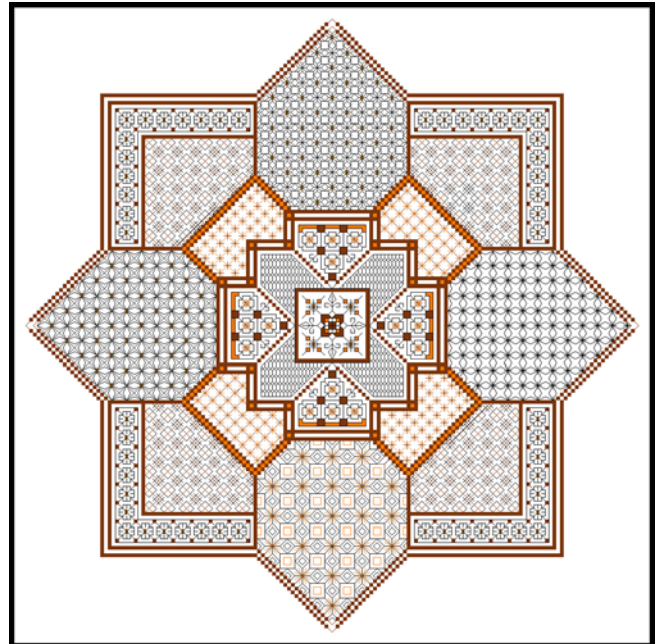
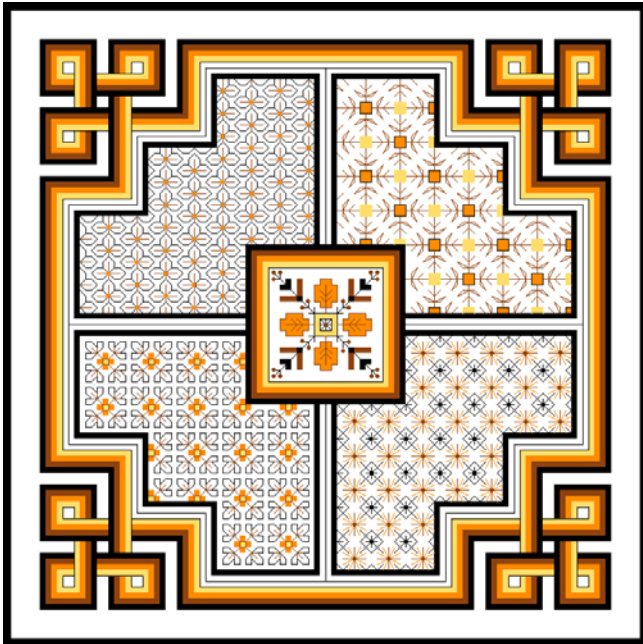
~Gertrude Tooley Buckingham, "The Wedding of the Leaves," 1940s



The months of September and October mark the onset of autumn. The heat of the summer has gone and the trees with their vibrant hues of orange and golden brown leaves are falling onto the drive in great heaps just waiting to be cleared away. Each leaf is a different shade of brown and golds.

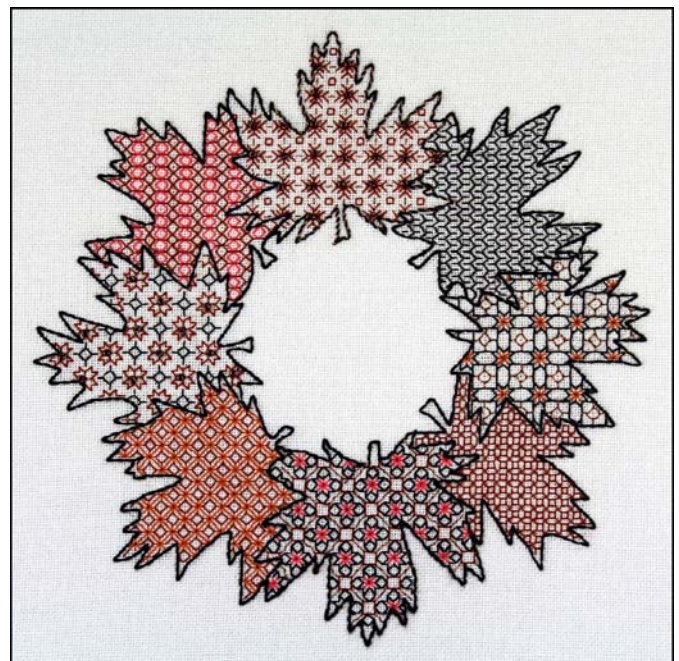
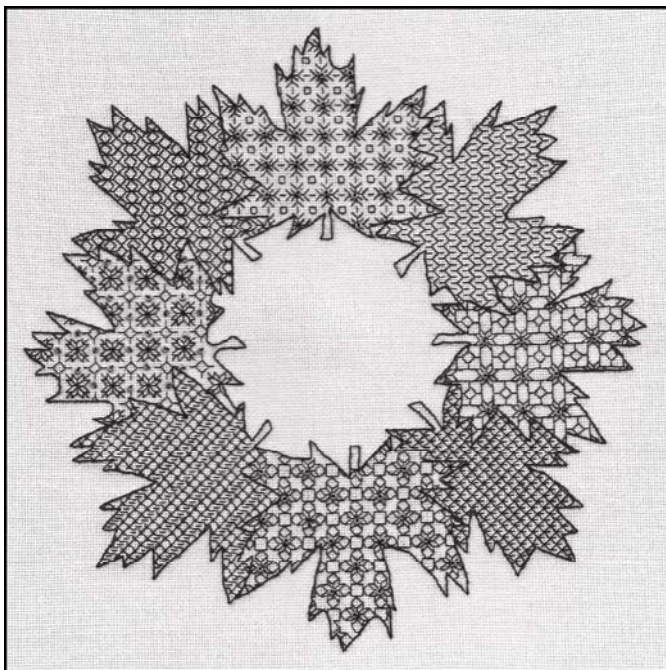
I remember being in Washington and witnessing the fall foliage across the forests of Canada and the USA where even the newspapers follow the progress of the "Fall" in maps and articles. I especially loved the maple leaves and so when I came back to England I

designed a number of leaf designs for Blackwork Journey in several different techniques. The autumn palette is warm, rich, earthy and vibrant, and stretches from leaf greens to old gold. Whether it is a single leaf or a wreath of leaves working with the autumn colours is very satisfying.

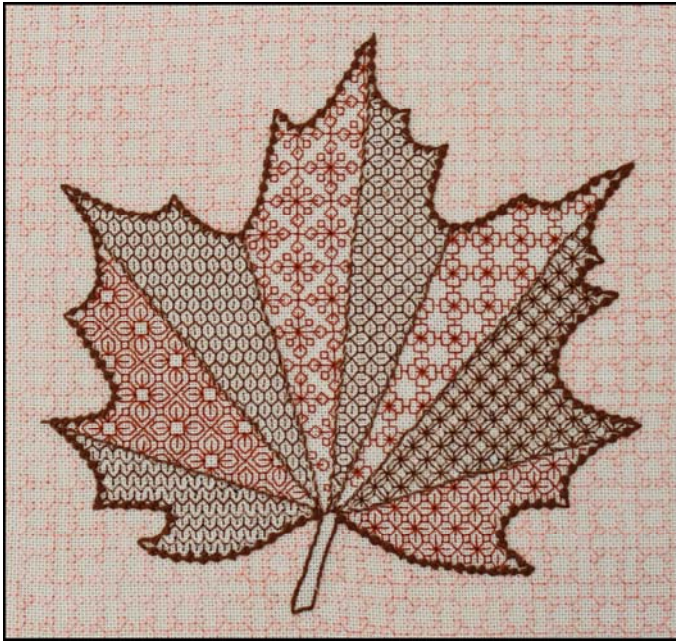


CH0211 Celtic Autumn and CH0263 Seraphina Autumn

Change the colours to match the season – all four seasons are available on the website



CH0308 Maple Leaf Wreath and CH0328 Colour Maple Take the same freestyle design and work it as a blackwork sampler or in autumn shades.



CH0312 Acer Leaf

The Japanese Acer leaf is worked in a variety of threads using eight different blackwork filler patterns. Double knot stitch or whipped back stitch may be used for the outline and the leaf is mounted on an optional delicate brocade background using variegated thread.



CH0405 The Fall



PR0059 Japanese Autumn



Komei-zen Temple, Kyoto, Japan

Just some of the seasonal designs on the Blackwork Journey website.

Choosing colours

Not every reader is confident about choosing threads and there are several websites which I find very useful, for example, <https://stitchpalettes.com>.

Krisztina is a web designer and embroidery enthusiast and through her website and you can filter palettes by colour, scheme, season and theme. You can also search for the exact DMC code for a precise match. She also has a Palette Converter and Photo Converter

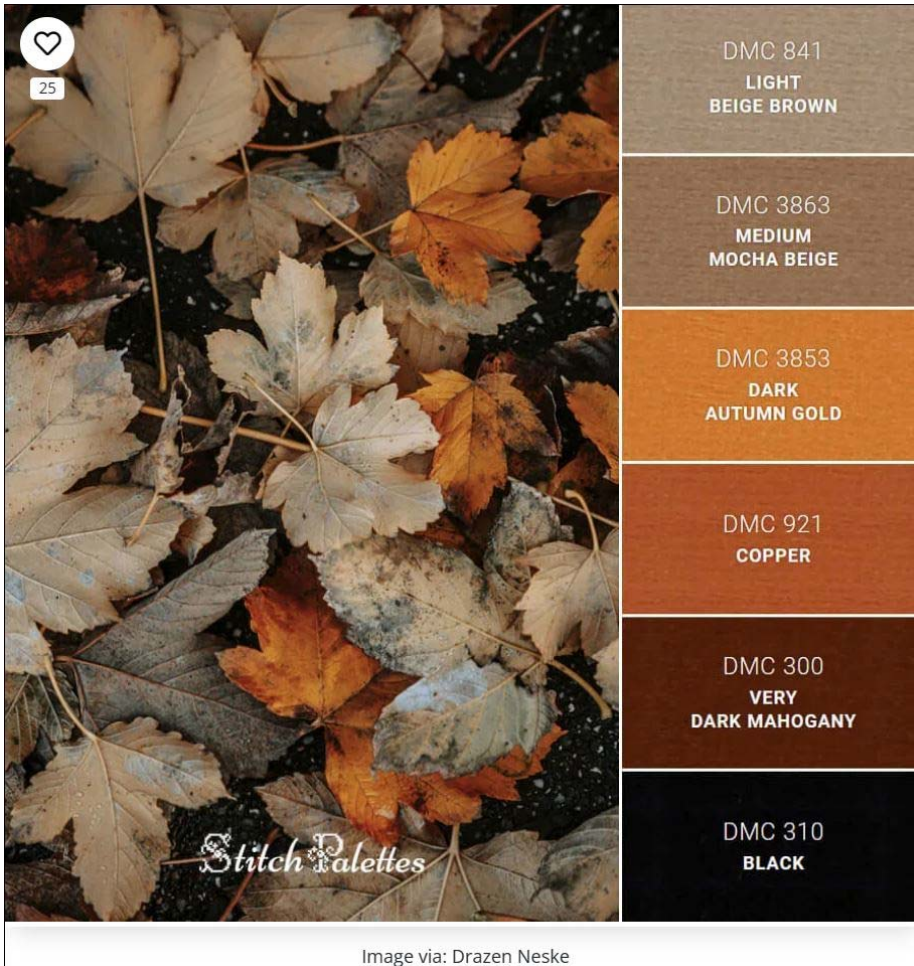


Image via: Drazen Neske

Shades of Autumn -Embroidery Colour Palette (With Thread Codes) (stitchpalettes.com)

Start an autumn project by selecting a suitable fabric and then lay your chosen colours on the fabric. Walk away and leave it for a while then come back and take another look. Do you still like what you have chosen? Do you need to add another colour or take some away?

The choice is yours!



Playing with stitches

I enjoy the challenge of designing new patterns and working them in textured embroidery stitches using a variety of threads and introducing them to classes that I teach. I am very interested in Japanese history and textiles and often find them a source of inspiration.

Bowl decorated with the nanten plant

Blackwork Journey Blog, October 2023

This pattern uses a plant called “nanten” that is said to have been introduced from China for medicinal and ornamental purposes during the Heian period.

Nanten was considered an auspicious plant because of the pun “nan o ten-jiru” (Japanese for “escape from calamity”). It is not only used as a New Year’s decoration and planted in gardens as a protective charm, but also put on various items in the form of a pattern.

Using the leaves as a base and adding sprays of flowers for decoration as seen on the bowl, I drew the leaves in a circle and worked from there using a variety of textured embroidery stitches, cotton P rle and floss on white pre-washed calico



The design is mounted in an 8 inch flexi- ring.

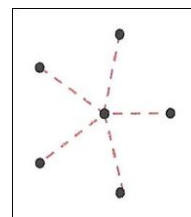


There are at least sixteen different embroidery stitches used in this design. How many of the stitches can you name?

Stitch of the month - Woven wheel stitch



Woven wheel stitch is constructed from a wheel with odd number of spokes with the same or a different thread woven around them. The pattern uses 5, 7 or 9 straight stitches to form the wheel. 5 is the minimum number of spokes that can be used.



1. Stitch the correct number of spokes as straight stitches.
- 2 Bring your needle up through your fabric in between two spokes and near, but not through the centre.
3. Using the same or contrasting thread and weave over and under each spoke until the wheel is filled. Take the thread through to the back and finish off.
4. Add any embellishments such as colonial or French knots to the tips of the spokes.



Using different colour spokes enhanced with lazy daisy stitch leaves and colonial knots produces a different but equally pleasing effect.



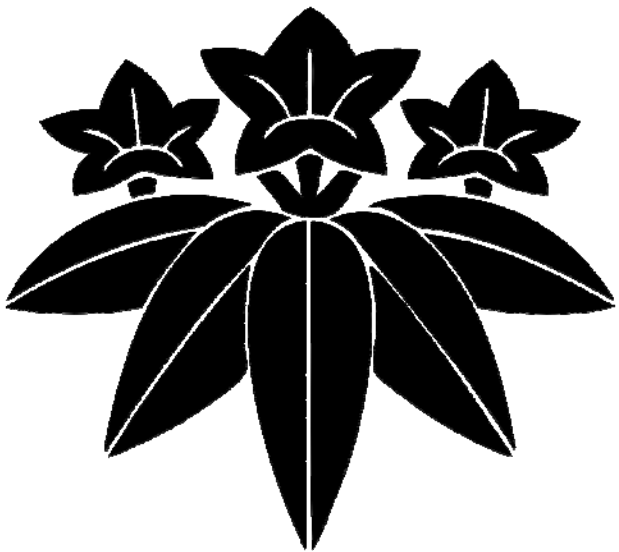
A circle of wheatear stitch surrounds the flower wheels.

This design is taken from **EB0024 Christmas in September**

Try the same idea yourself using a kamon crest as the basic pattern. There are hundreds to choose from.

The origin of Kamon crests go far back into Japanese history.

Mon (紋), also called monshō (紋章), mondokoro (紋所), and kamon (家紋), are Japanese emblems used to decorate and identify an individual, a family, or (more recently) an institution or business entity.



While mon is an encompassing term that may refer to any such device, kamon and mondokoro refer specifically to emblems that are used to identify a family. It is similar to the badges and coats of arms in European heraldic tradition, which are also used to identify individuals and families.

This crest would make a wonderful freestyle design in textured stitches

Just Cross Stitch Magazines Halloween and Christmas Ornaments

Halloween and Christmas are well on their way and the seasonal magazines are already in the shops. Both magazines have Blackwork Journey designs in them.



I have already designed, stitched and posted the designs for 2024 and have a number of other designs in the pipeline for 2024/25. I find that the years fly by and the seasons roll into one another especially Valentine's Day and Easter, but designing for the Summer in the middle of Winter seems really odd!

However, to see the embroideries in print is very satisfying. This month has been more complicated than usual, but I will explain more when I write the November Blog.

I hope you have enjoyed this month's blog.

If you have any queries please contact: lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching,

Liz

