

DIMENSIONAL FLOWERS

BY LINDEE GOODALL

Dimensional flowers are surprisingly quick and easy to make. Not only that, but they take only minimal supplies and not much time. I love that I can attach them to most anything and have an instant embroidered accent without making a permanent commitment. Embroidered 3D flowers make the perfect holiday accessory or gift! Wouldn't they make a lovely decorative touch on special gift?

SKILL LEVEL

- Basic embroidery and hand sewing

This project involves only simple hand sewing after embroidering (or gluing, if you prefer).

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- How to create a three dimensional floral corsage
- How to keep thin slippery fabrics from slipping in the hoop



Please read through all instructions before starting your project!



Dimensional Flowers

SUPPLIES

- Nylon organza
- Rayon embroidery thread
- Matching bobbin thread
- Small sharp scissors for trimming away fabric
- Soldering iron for melting fabric
- Magnets or pin backs for attaching to garments
- Small piece craft-weight felt (I use dark green most often) and or scraps of cutaway
- Temporary embroidery spray adhesive (TESA)
- White school glue, hot glue, hand needle and thread (I used invisible thread and embroidery bobbin thread)
- Beads, buttons, or brooch for flower centers
- Optional: Acrylic paint, inks, brushes, colored pencils
- Water mister bottle

NICE TO HAVE

- Light table for precise alignment when stacking pieces to stitch in the hoop

PRELIMINARIES

Dimensional flowers and leaves are stitched on two layers of nylon organza (no additional stabilizer), then cut out close to the stitching, and finally finished with a soldering iron to melt away the remaining fibers and fuse the edges. For best results, stitch with rayon embroidery thread with a matching color bobbin. Rayon is more heat resistant than polyester, which tends to scorch, especially on lighter colors.

Pieces thus finished can then be assembled. Some pieces may be attached with an embroidery motif, most often a flower center, which may be part of a design or separate. Sometime I attach them by sewing the bottom most layer last, and then while it is still hooped, place the top layers, then stitch together. Another way is to hoop a piece of cutaway or craft felt, position all the pieces and stitch together. How the flower is assembled depends on the type of flower.

I often prefer to use beads, buttons, or other items as a flower center. Using a drop of white school glue in the center of the flowers will hold the layers together and keep them from shifting while hand stitching them together. Assembled flowers along with the leaves are then arranged on a piece of dark green craft felt and hand stitched or hot-glued in place. Trim the felt back so it isn't visible. Attach a pin back or use magnets. Magnets will let you use your corsage on leather or suede garments where a pin could cause damage.

Your corsage can be used on hats, purses, or garments. They make great gifts and craft show items. Smaller ones work well for hair bows or glued to a hair clip.

ABOUT THE FABRIC

Nylon organza is ideal for this project. Nylon organza comes in a wide range of colors, it's relatively inexpensive, readily available, is lightweight and has enough body to retain its shape, and is quite stable. Indeed, I often use it as a cutaway stabilizer inside cardigans where the inside is likely to be visible. Finding a color that matches or blends looks better than the basic choices we have in standard stabilizers. I usually pick up a few yards when I find a new color or it's on sale so I always have some in my stash. (I find it in the bridal section of the chain fabric stores and also order online.)

Do make sure you choose nylon and not polyester. Nylon melts quickly and easily, well before there is any thread damage. Polyester also has a softer hand than nylon and won't hold its shape as well.

While nylon does have all these wonderful characteristics, it is very thin and slippery. You'll need to take precautions to keep it from slipping in the hoop.

Also, you'll likely get better results stitching each design separately or combining only a few in a small hoop rather than ganging up more and using a larger hoop. Smaller elements can be combined as long as you don't have to increase your hoop size to accommodate them.

Feel free to choose your own colors. Who says you have to use a realistic one? You can also get interesting effects by using two different colors layered together. For example, you could layer white with pink to get a softer color.

ABOUT THE DESIGNS

These designs are organized by folder. There's a folder for each flower and a separate one for the leaves. The leaves are designed to give you some variety and are not meant to be "botanically correct" leaves. Choose any leaf you like for your project or skip them altogether!

With many elements in this collection, you'll find multiple sizes. You may want to stack different size pieces or you may want to have a variety of finished size flowers. Note that using the provided resized designs will keep the stitching consistent between pieces. Use caution when resizing designs to avoid excessively long or short satin stitches.



Don't feel that you have to use every piece in folder or that you can only use one of each piece. Get creative! Mix and match and create your own hybrids! You can make more than the samples shown here!

Dimensional Flowers

The aster, carnation, rose, and poinsettia flower elements have an appliqué stop (noted as a color change) after the first outline. This is to allow you the option to add color with paint, ink, or other media. Use the same color as color 2 for this color.

Some of the flower elements (carnation and poinsettia) have small circles digitized into the center. You can use these to align multiple elements.

A separate circle is also included and is in the Center Tack folder. This is a two-step design. Sew the first color as a placement guide onto a piece of hooped cutaway or felt. Then position all the layers on top securing them with tape. Finally, sew the second color.



Figure 1. Stitch the first color of the tacking stitch then align and tape all layers. Return the hoop to the machine and stitch the second color. The tacking stitch can be used with the carnation and poinsettia.



While you likely have a smaller hoop that will accommodate the design used for the flower center, it may not provide enough area to secure the petals easily.



Figure 2. After stitching the layers together, trim away excess stabilizer.

These designs are digitized to sew fast and feature the fabric rather than fully fill stitched flowers. Additional color can be introduced by layering two fabric colors or with ink, paint, colored pencils, or similar media.



Use the smaller (upper) layers of some designs to create smaller flowers.

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Wind a matching bobbin.** Because these designs aren't densely stitched, you can use the same 40 weight thread in the bobbin as the needle. If your machine is pretensioned for a thinner bobbin thread, you may need to do some tension adjustments. Every machine is different so this is something you can check during your test sew.

If you have colored bobbins, they'll work even if they're polyester. The needle thread will wrap around to the back and the soldering iron won't (or shouldn't) be touching the poly so you shouldn't have issues with scorched thread unless you overdo it with the soldering iron.

- 2. Preparing your fabrics.**

Preshrinking is not necessary. If your fabric has creases in it, keep in mind you can't iron it. You can steam it with an iron—just don't touch the iron to the fabric.

I usually buy nylon organza in minimum 1 yard lengths. I hoop whatever amount I have and then just trim out the pieces after sewing. I also wait until I've sewn as many pieces as I plan out of particular color before trimming. This makes the best use of the fabric. (I'm not cheap, I'm economically minded!)



You can reduce waste by working with whole pieces of fabric and then trimming afterwards. In this case, you'll want to hoop so that the bulk of the fabric is out of the way—usually to the left on most domestic single-needle machines.

You can mist the layers with TESA to keep them from slipping during stitching.



TESA will dissipate over time so prepare your layers when you have time to embroider.

Dimensional Flowers

To prevent slippage, I like to cut a piece of scrap cutaway into a “hoop window” that gets hooped with the fabric. This also cushions the fabric from any damage caused by an overly tight hoop.



Figure 3. Hooping with a “stabilizer window” cut from a scrap of cutaway. The extra thickness reduces the chance of both fabric slipping during stitching and fabric damage from an overly tight hoop.



Figure 4. Duct tape is another technique for slip prevention. Strips are cut in half lengthwise and wrapped around the edge of the hoop from the back.

- 3. Stitch your designs.** No special tricks here; just remember to change your bobbin when changing needle thread colors.

Some elements have an appliqué stop programmed. The design will sew an outline and then stop. This is an optional stop to make it easy to add more color using other media. My favorite is a little dry brushing with acrylic paint. This technique requires no drying time and is quick and easy.

Duplication, reproduction or use of this project by any other instructors or groups is not permitted without prior written consent from [Lindee G Embroidery](http://lindeegembroidery.com).

General Instructions

Remove the hoop from the machine but not the fabric from the hoop. Load the brush with a little paint and brush off the excess on a paper towel. Lightly flick the paint onto the hooped fabric as desired. You can paint one or both sides. It's better to layer multiple light coats than one heavy one.

You don't have to worry about "staying in the lines" because anything outside of the run stitch will be removed.



Figure 5. To add more color, remove hoop after color 1, and use acrylic paint to dry brush. Don't worry about "staying in the lines"—it will all get cut off later!



"Dry brush" means exactly that! If you rinse your brush between applications, it must be completely dry before the next one.

Dimensional Flowers

4. Finishing your embroidery.

When all your elements are stitched, carefully cut them out close to the stitching.



Figure 6. Carefully trim away excess fabric.

Heat up your soldering iron and quickly glide around each piece right next to the stitching. The remaining fibers will melt away and the fused edge will be a little more secure. Be sure to clean off your soldering iron frequently by wiping it on several layers of old towel. This is especially important if you're working with lighter colors or polyester thread to avoid dark scorch marks.

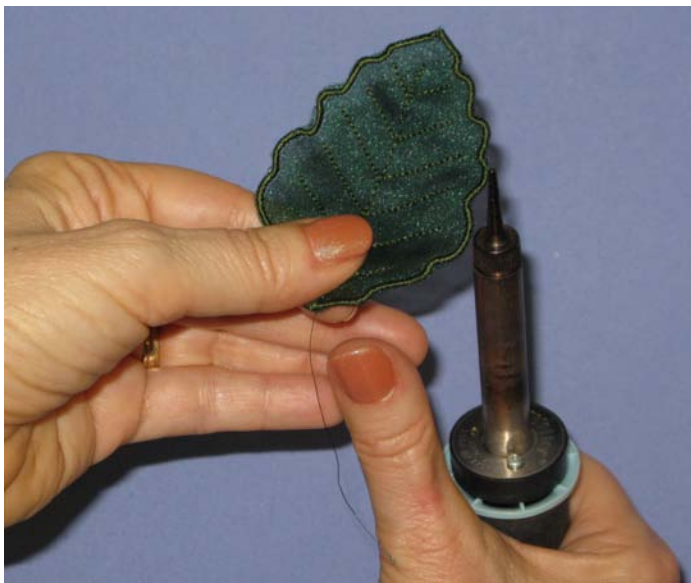


Figure 7. Carefully melt away remaining fabric with a soldering iron.

Some people prefer to leave their flowers or leaves hooped and place it on a tile and then quickly zip around it with the soldering iron or wood burning tool. Since I prefer to sew a strip full of pieces to maximize my fabric usage, I think this method wastes fabric. Try both ways and see which you prefer.

5. Build your flowers and create your corsage.

Now the fun really begins. Some flowers will need to be hand stitched while other can be stitched together in the hoop. Leaves can be hand-stitched or hot-glued.

Layer your pieces and decide how you will assemble them. Separate instructions are included for each flower. Get creative with the elements. For example, stitch just the inner petals of the rose for a bud or use the smaller inner petals of the poinsettia to make a smaller flower. Leaves can also be used as petals—simply stitch them in different colors and combine them as you wish.



Figure 8. Poinsettia can be layered and stitched together in the hoop using the small circle or hand stitched. I used small glass beads and hand stitched the layers.

When combining several small flowers into a cluster, I prefer to attach them to a piece of green craft felt. You can hot-glue or hand-stitch as desired.

Dimensional Flowers

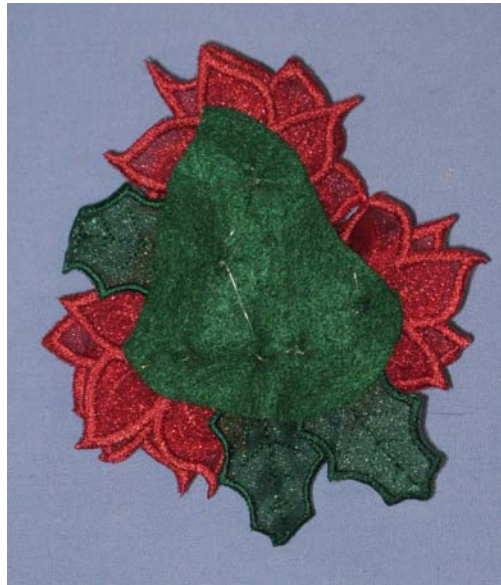


Figure 9. View from the back. Pieces are hand stitched to craft felt with invisible thread. Trim off excess felt.

- 6. Shape your flower.** You can shape your flowers by pinching and scrunching them. Misting with water will cause them to curl a bit into a more natural looking shape. Misting can also revive a flattened corsage.



Figure 10. Mist your flower lightly with water and scrunch, pinch and shape as desired.

- 7. Attach a pin or a magnet to the back of your corsage.** I like the magnets because I can use it with my suede and leather jackets without damage. Just hot glue one magnet to the corsage and use a second inside your garment. I found them on the notions wall at my local chain fabric store.



Figure 11. I like to use magnets so I can attach them to leather and suede garments and accessories without damage.

NOTES ABOUT RESIZING

Many elements are included in different sizes for design consistency and flexibility. “Design consistency” means the satin columns on each element are the same width and the stitch lengths on run stitch details are the same. If you choose to resize any elements, choose an element that is closest in size to what you want. Shrinking may make the satin stitches too short.

Dimensional Flowers

ASTER

The aster includes ten sizes of petals and two sizes of sepals allowing you to make a range of sizes of this flower. Asters come in a variety of colors; I've stitched them with a lighter lavender under a darker one. The shape of these petals makes them useful for other similar flowers like daisies or chrysanthemums and even marigolds.



Figure 12. The aster includes many pieces to create a range of sizes.



Figure 13. Some possible combinations.



The sepals and the smallest aster petals are the same shape; use them to make a small flower by stitching them on a “flower colored” organza.

The aster can be finished with the fringed center in the aster folder, the center circle or by hand with buttons or beads. Hand stitched French knots would be lovely.

General Instructions

The fringed center has three color stops and can be sewn in one color. The first color is a placement guide to align petals. Color two is the candlewicking stitches and color three is the fringe. Don't want fringe? Stop after color two.



The three separate colors in this design are for convenience and to force the machine to stop. Feel free to use as many or as few colors as you like.

When using the fringed center, take care to align your pieces accurately; a light table can help. I recommend sewing on only the inner most petal design you plan to use to avoid stitching through too many layers of stitches.

To create the fringe, trim the bobbin thread and then lift the fringing stitches on the front with a pair of tweezers. You can have loops by cutting only the bobbin thread or you can cut the loops for a fluffier finish.

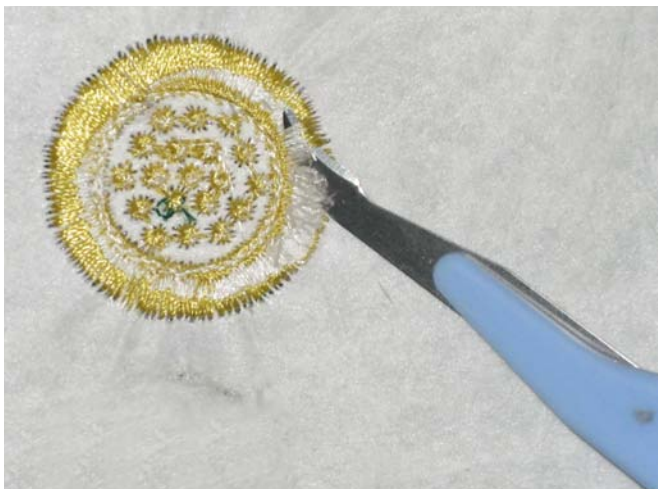


Figure 14. Use a seam ripper to cut the fringing bobbin thread.

Use the center tack design to layer and stitch the rest of your design. Hot glue the fringed center to the center of the other layers.

Dimensional Flowers



Figure 15. The inner most petal layer was stitched with the fringed center onto cutaway. The larger petals were layered with a sepal and stitched together using the center tack.



Figure 16. Hot glue the fringed center over the other layers.

CARNATION

There are two sizes of this design; the smaller one will fit a 4x4" hoop.

I painted around the edges on both sides of the carnation using the dry brush technique.



Figure 17. Carnation pieces were all stitched individually to make the best use of the fabric. Petals were dry brushed with red on both sides of the fabric.

Use the center tack stitch to embroider the sepal and petals 1 - 5 together.

Roll Petals 6 into a loose tube shape and glue at the base. I used Elmer's to avoid burning my fingers. Hold with a paper clip until dry. Use a hot glue gun to attach Petals 6 to the center of the rest of the flower. Leaves were also hot glued to the back.

Dimensional Flowers

HYDRANGEA

This flower will require the most hand work!

Individual petal groups are hand stitched with small pearlized bead to the base piece. Sew as many or a few as you like. The sample here uses slightly more than the smaller group. Because the beads add weight, you may want to add a layer of cutaway or felt as a support beneath the base flower.

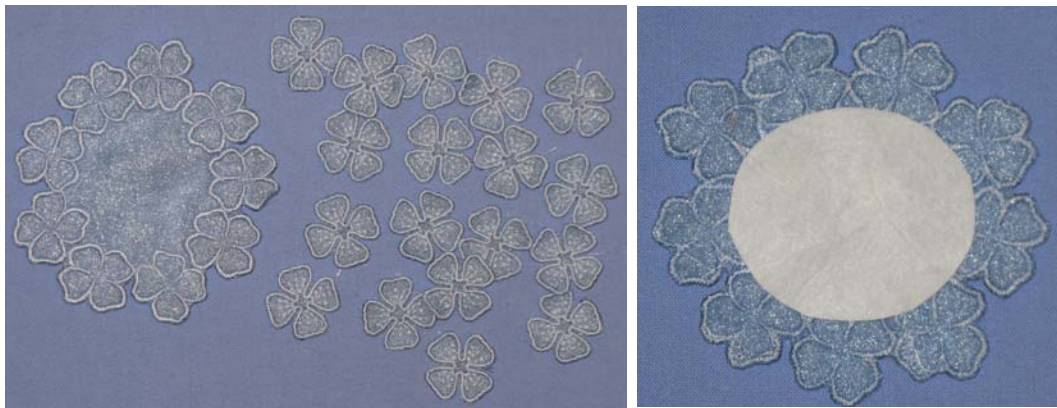


Figure 18. Left, hydrangea elements. Right, cutaway on back for extra support.

Pinch up the petals to make them more dimensional.

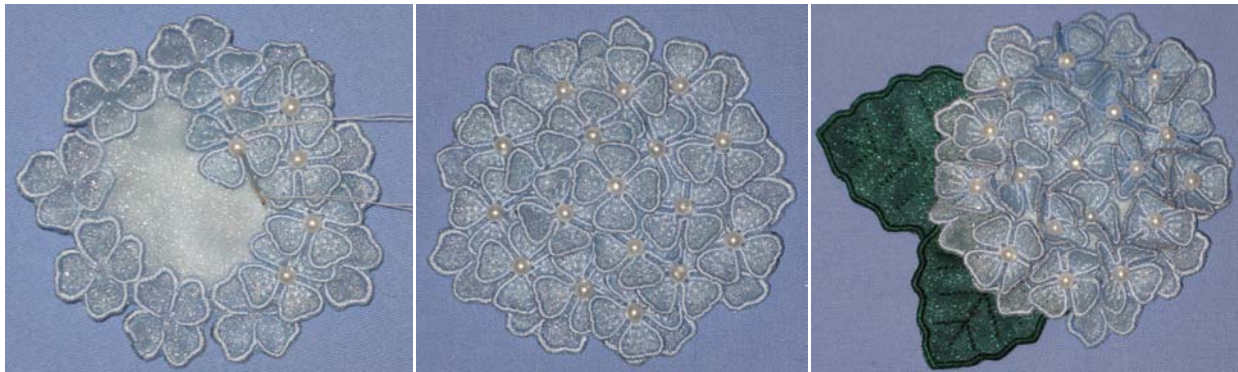


Figure 19. Attach individual pieces with a small bead hand sewn in place, overlapping the flowers. Hot glue or hand stitch leaves and pinch up the small flowers around the bead for more dimension.

POINSETTIA

The poinsettia, like the aster, includes a wide range of petal sizes to allow you to create multiple sizes. You can choose graduated sizes or use several of the same size.



Figure 20. Multiple sizes means multiple options.

Stitch and stack petals as desired. The petals can be stitched together with the center tack circle design or by hand with beads or a button for the center.

This flower offers the most opportunity to create different sizes of flowers since each set of petals is just a resized version. The larger petals do exceed a 4"x4" sewing field.

You can also create small flowers using 2 or 3 of the smaller sizes. Try combining multiple pieces of identically sized petals just offsetting the points for variation. Sew in different colors to get a more daisy-like flower.

ROSE

I stitched my rose in [Softlight Soft Gold](#) in the needle and bobbin with one layer of pink and second of white organza underneath with some paint applied to the pink side only for additional interest.

The rose petals are grouped to fit a 4" x 4" hoop. The rose pieces increase in the number of petals from one (the center) to six (the outer most).

The rose is finished by hand stitching, building from the center out. Start by rolling the center most piece into a "bud" and hand stitch to hold shape. Stitch the other partial petals by whip stitching the open ends together.

Dimensional Flowers

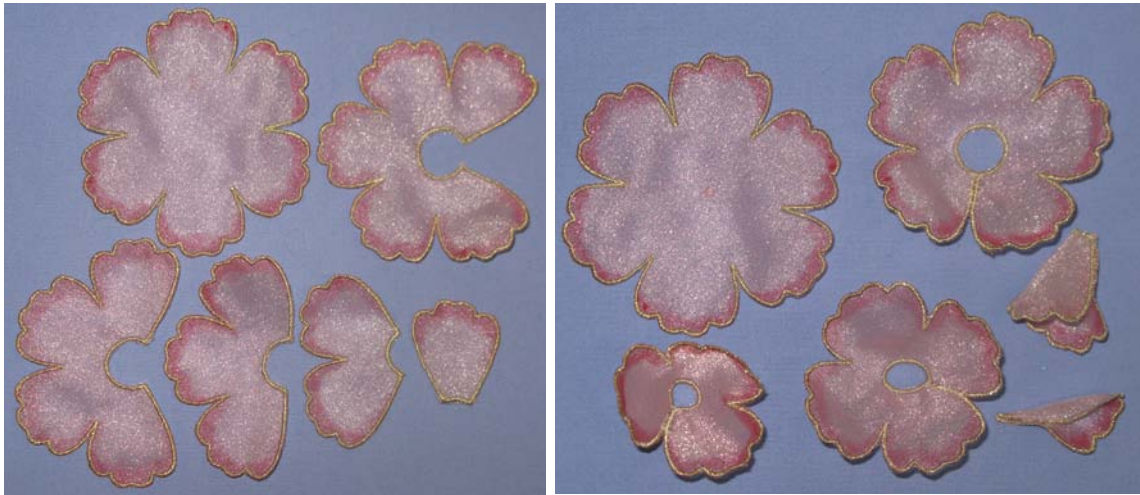


Figure 21. Left, embroidered and painted rose pieces. Right, individual pieces are hand stitched closed.

Nestle the five inner pieces inside each other and hand stitch at the base from the bottom.

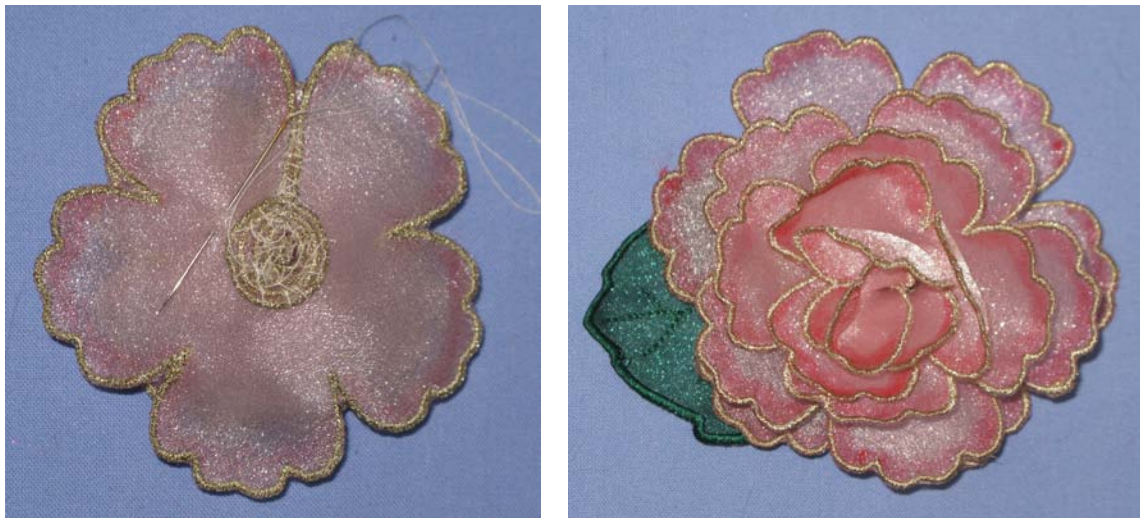


Figure 22. Left, nest and sew the five inner petals. Right, finished rose after attaching outer petals and a leaf.

Hot glue the inner petals to the center of the outer most petal, add leaves, and pin or magnet.

LEAVES

A variety of leaf shapes and sizes are included; simply select the ones you want to use and hot glue or hand stitch leaves, arranging as desired to the bottom of your corsage.

SUMMARY

I love making these corsages. They're quick to sew and offer a lot of creative options. Plus, I can add embroidery to any garment or even a hat or purse that's changeable with the season, occasion or my mood! Keep a stash on hand for easy gift-giving throughout the year!

