



# Fabulous

## Fantasy Flower Brooch

Creating new textiles with water soluble stabilisers and machine stitching

By Tina Whiteley

**T**his cute and easy to make accessory is not only a fashionable addition to your wardrobe, but a perfect introduction to using water soluble films. It's an ideal way to recycle or use up your spare yarns, threads and fabrics. Although it's designed to be sewn by machine, you can just as easily sew it together by hand if you prefer.

### You will need

- Selection of fancy knitting/crochet yarns
- Fabric Scissors
- Water soluble Vilene
- Romeo or other water soluble film
- Sewing machine, needle at least size 12 and suitable threads / or hand sewing needle and threads
- Beads or sequins to decorate (optional)
- Brooch back & sticky-back felt (optional)
- Old towel

### Step 1 – Preparing your yarns

With your design in mind, select your chosen materials. Cut a variety of yarns, to your chosen length - approx 1 m. Choose a variety of textures, toning or contrasting colours, sheens and vary the ply/gauge.

### Step 2 – Grouping your yarns

Lay out your yarns in an arrangement that you like, grouping or separating similar colours, plies etc. for your chosen effect.

### Step 3 – Wind on your yarns

Wind your selection of yarns loosely around your fingers until you have used them all up and have only a small tail left. Don't worry if the different yarns don't all end at the same place. Don't go too thick though.



### Step 4 – Tie off your yarns

Carefully slip the loops off your fingers without disturbing them and then take a toning or contrasting yarn or ribbon and tie the loops in the middle, but don't make a knot.



## Step 5 – Shape your flower

Start to separate out the loops or petals into an arrangement that pleases you and you can either leave the loops or cut through them to give you a round flower shape.



## Step 6 – Prepare your machine for sewing

- Choose your machine thread to tone or complement your yarn colours and thread up the machine according to your instruction manual. You can use the same thread or contrasting thread in the bobbin depending on the effect you want to achieve. Also try metallic threads for an extra shimmer
- Set your machine up for free machine embroidery. (Refer to your sewing machine manual for appropriate feet, tension and feed dog setting selection).
- Get comfortable in your seat and practice stitching on a spare piece of fabric to get used to the movement.

## Step 7– Make your flower sandwich

- Take a piece of MacRinse or similar water soluble Vilene, big enough for your flower to sit on with space around it and big enough for hooping if you want to use a hoop while stitching.
- Place your flower on top of the water soluble Vilene, flatten down as much as you can, so it's not too thick and then place a similar-sized piece of Romeo, MacSolvly or other see-through water soluble film on top.
- Hoop the flower sandwich at this point if you want to, otherwise pin around the edges to hold all the pieces in place. If not using a hoop, then white gripping gloves, such as Machingers can save your hands from over tensing while sewing.



## Step 8 - Stitching your flower

- Begin slowly, stitching in a circular motion around the centre point. Don't get too close to the centre, as it will be the thickest point. Start and finish off with a locking stitch to ensure the stitching doesn't unravel when the stabiliser is washed away. Work several rounds of stitching - to hold everything together.



## Step 9 - Remove your flower from the machine

- When you've gone round enough times to make sure your yarns are secure. (Remember the lock stitch at the end). Raise the presser foot and carefully remove the flower, and wash away fabrics from the machine.
- Trim off any excess threads, or you can leave them if you like the ragged look.



## Step 10 – Rinsing - The magic bit!

- Take your flower to the sink or bowl and soak in warm water - you'll see the water soluble fabric start to dissolve.
- For a stiffer flower, leave in only for a few moments. The flower will feel quite gloopy, but when it dries it wont feel sticky, but will be stiff.
- For a soft flower, soak over night to ensure you remove all traces of the wash-away adhesive water soluble stabilisers.
- Add a bit of fabric conditioner to your final rinse to soften up the fibres if you want a soft drapey effect.



## Step 11 – Finishing off your flower

- Gently hand wring your flower to squeeze out most of the water and let it air dry naturally on an old towel.
- When completely dry you can choose to further embellish by hand, with stitching, beads, buttons, or sequins to give you added texture and bling.
- Sew on the brooch clasp to the back of the flower and if you want to hide the stitching you can carefully position a piece of black sticky-back felt over the top to complete your brooch.

