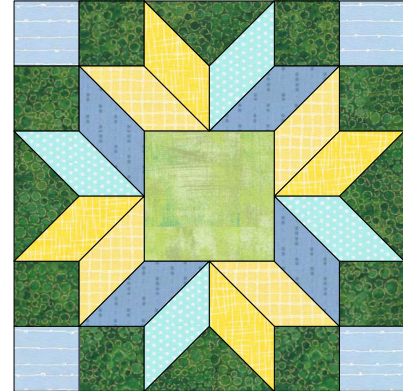




GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR AN ENGLISH PAPER PIECED (EPP) BLOCK



PREPARATION

GATHER YOUR SUPPLIES:

- Assortment of fabrics - always use good quality cotton fabrics.
- Thread to match your fabrics or in a neutral color such as Taupe
(I prefer Bottom Line threads from Superior Thread Company)
- Sharps needles, size 7 or 8
- 65-lb card stock to print the EPP templates.
- Glue stick – water soluble
- Mini clips such as Clover or tape (regular clear tape or blue painter's tape).
My personal preference is blue painter's tape as it tends to hold better.

PREPARE THE PAPER TEMPLATES:

Print one copy of the EPP TEMPLATES for the block you are making onto 65 lb card stock. Once you have printed the templates, cut them out very carefully, exactly on the solid line. Accuracy is very important. You do not want to cut some of the templates on the black line, and some just to the inside or outside of the black line, as that will throw off the way the block fits together. Some quilters punch a hole in the center of each template to make removal of the paper piece easier.

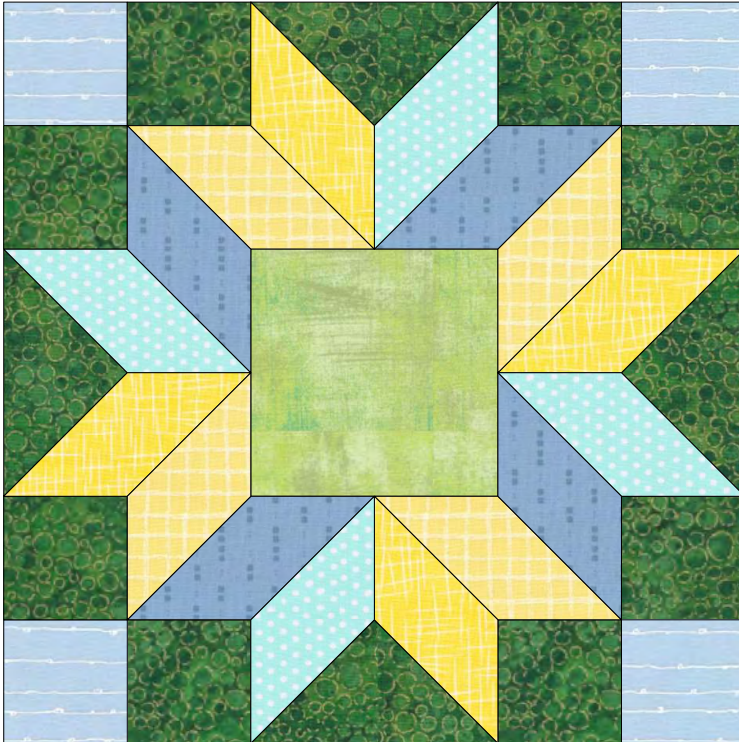
PREPARE THE FABRICS:

Use the provided "Traditional Piecing Templates" to cut your fabric pieces. They include a 1/4" seam allowance. Many EPP'ers like a larger seam allowance (me included) and use a 5/8" seam allowance. You may choose to cut your fabrics with whichever seam allowance you prefer to use.

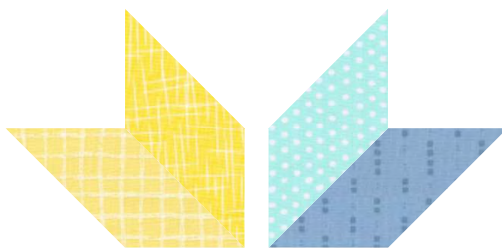
Cut out all the fabrics for one block from your chosen fabrics. Lay them out on a flat surface so you can see how your chosen fabrics will look in the completed block.

CREATE A "STITCHING PLAN"

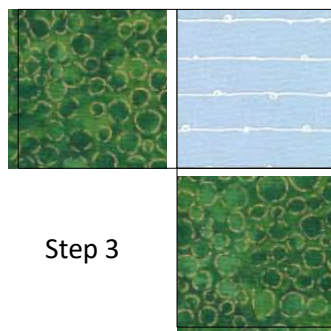
After all the fabric pieces are cut, lay them out as they will be in the finished block and make a plan for how you will complete the block. For this block I would proceed as follows:



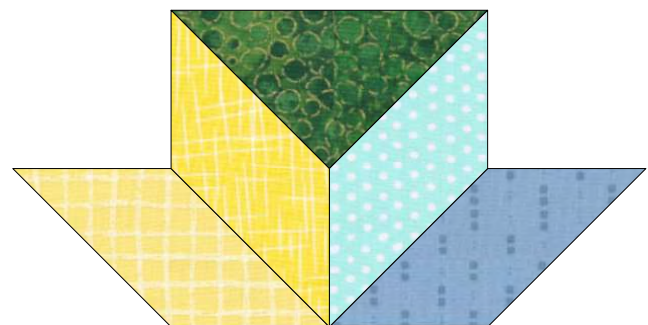
1. Sew four units consisting of two yellow star points.
2. Sew four units consisting of two blue star points.
3. Sew four units consisting of the three corner squares.
4. Sew one 2-pc yellow unit (Step 1) to one 2-pc blue unit (Step 2). You will make four of these.
5. Add the green triangle to each of the units completed in Step 4.
6. Sew each of these units to the center square. Then sew the seams where the star point sides come together.
7. Sew the corner units completed in Step 3 to each corner.



Steps 1 and 2

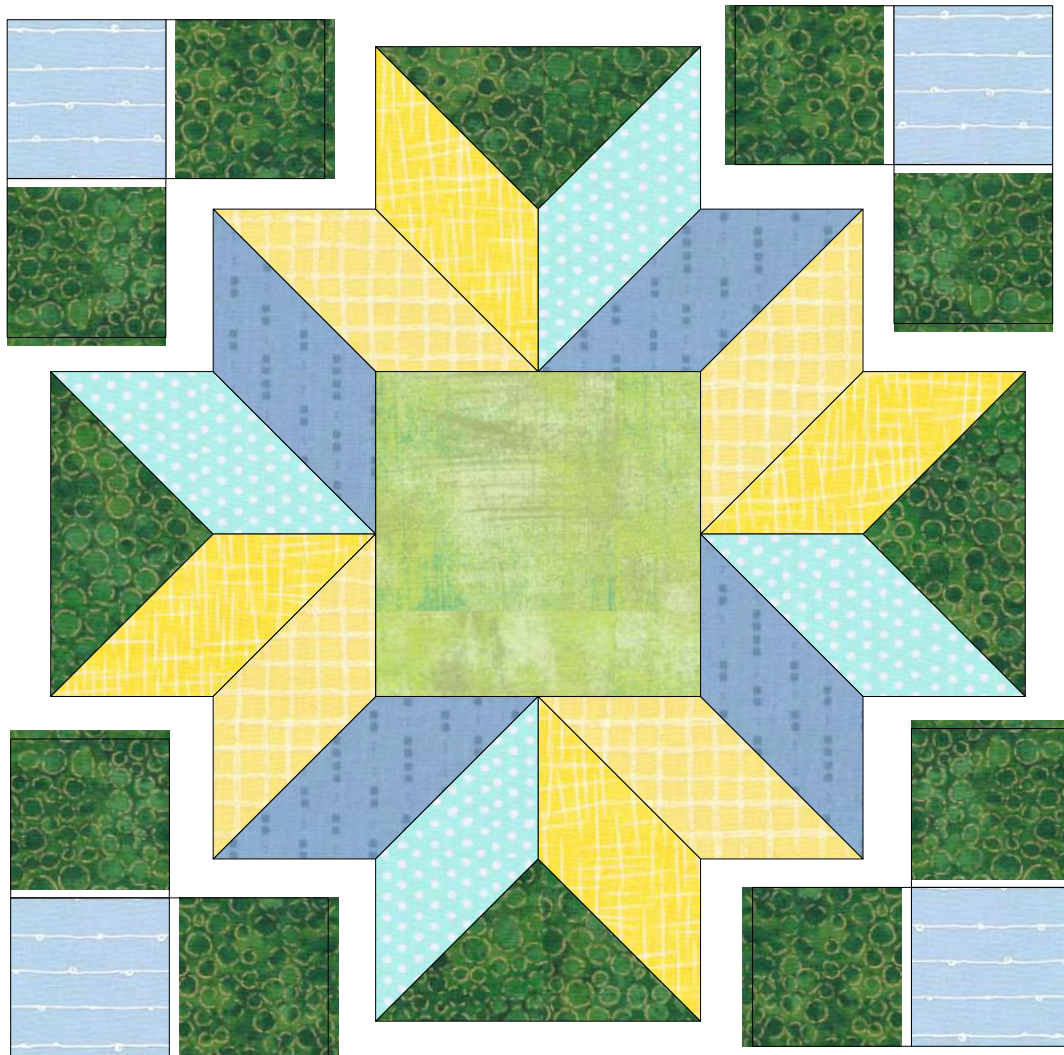


Step 3



Steps 4 and 5

STEPS 6 and 7

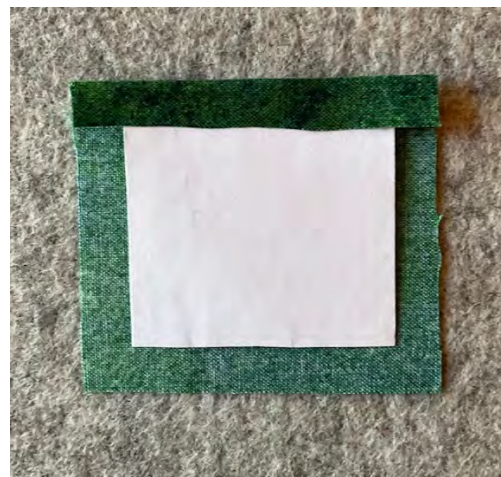


PROCESS

Now that we have a plan, we can get started. First step will be glue basting.

GLUE BASTING

Center a card stock template on the wrong side of the desired piece of fabric. Using a water soluble glue pencil or glue stick, apply a thin line of glue to the template, fold the fabric over the template and press firmly. Go around the piece from one side to the next, folding the corners neatly. Always go in the same direction as this helps the pieces nest together in the completed block. Try to avoid getting glue on the edge of the paper template, as it is difficult to sew through the glue. (Please see note on the following page regarding glue basting the outside edges of the block)



NESTING OF THE SEAMS



See how nicely the seams will nest where all the star points come together if you always baste in the same direction

BASTING -- IMPORTANT NOTE: If you plan to English Paper piece the finished blocks to the sashing strips and/or borders, you can baste all edges of every piece. But, if you plan to use a machine to attach sashing strips and/or borders, leave the seam allowance along the outer edge of the outside pieces unglued or un-basted as shown in the corner unit below. You may need to pin the un-basted section to hold it firmly together until ready to attach sashing strips or borders. (SEE PIC BELOW OF THE CORNER SQUARES LEAVING OUTER EDGE UNBASTED.)



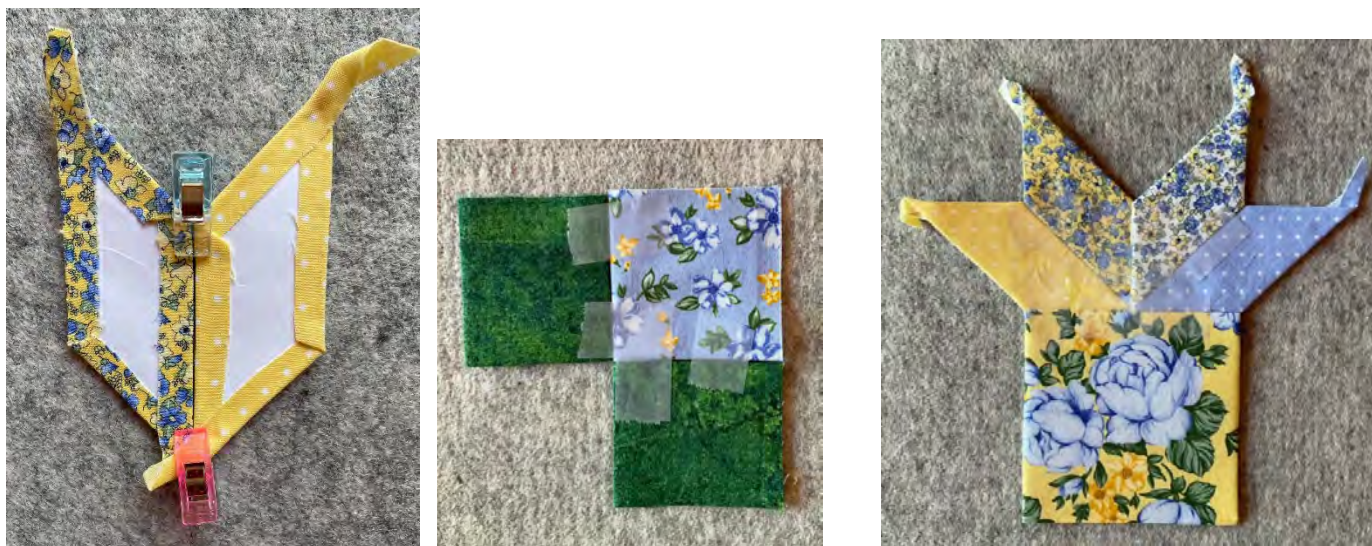
SEWING THE PIECES TOGETHER

STITCHING: Use a thread color that matches the fabric or a neutral color that will go with many colors. I usually use a taupe color thread which works well with almost all fabrics (except white). Use a single strand of thread no longer than 18" to avoid tangling. Follow the **stitching plan** you made and stitch one unit at a time.

FLAT-BACK STITCH THE PIECES TOGETHER:

The whip-stitch (overcast) is the stitch most commonly used for English Paper Piecing uniform pieces such as hexagons together. For blocks such as this one I have found the flat back stitch results in a more accurately pieced block so that is the method I will detail.

You will start by choosing the pieces that you will sew together and holding them together with binder clips or tape. See the pics and descriptions below.

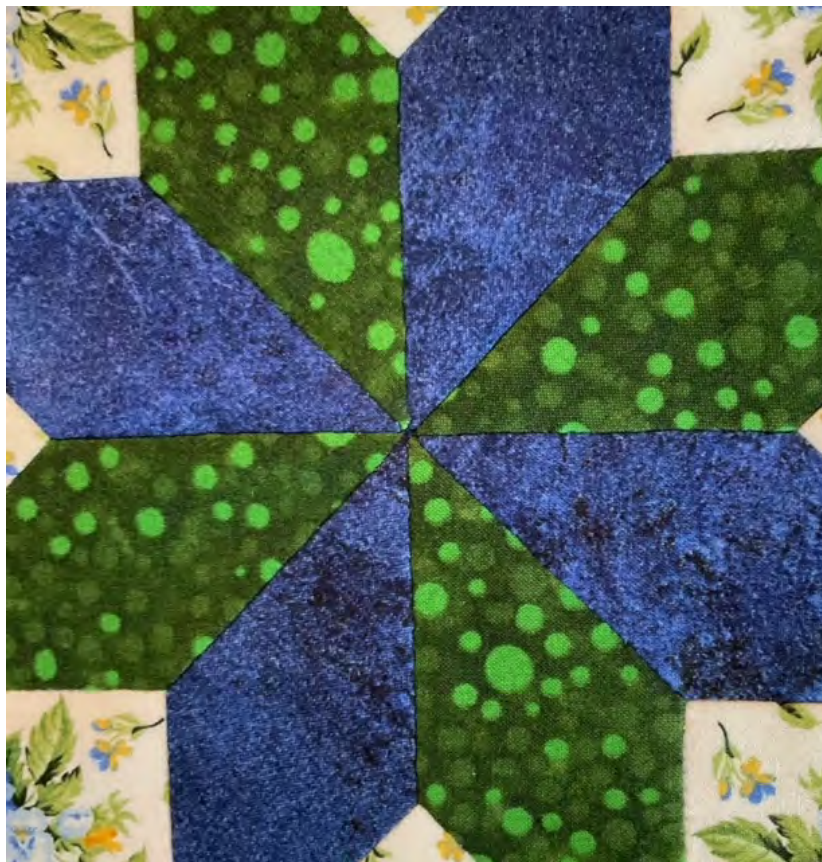


The above picture of two yellow star points show how they are held together with mini clips. The pic of the three corner squares shows three pieces held together with tape on the right side of the fabric. The pic to the right shows a four-unit piece taped to the center square ready for sewing. I normally use blue painter's tape because it tends to hold better. I tape all the block pieces together into smaller sections per my "Stitching Plan", then pop them all into a plastic zipper bag along with needle, thread, and a small pair of scissors. I then have a portable project that fits right into my handbag.



Thread your needle with a single strand of neutral color thread and knot the end. Slip the needle under the fabric on one piece, about a quarter inch from the beginning of the seam line. On this first stitch, the needle will exit the fabric in the fold. Insert it into the fold of the adjoining piece directly across from where it exited the first piece, but only pick up a couple of threads and exit above the fabric. You will never be piercing through the paper. This is what makes the stitches invisible. Stitch back towards the beginning of the seam line (just like back stitching with a sewing machine). Then stitch towards the other end of the template. Continue stitching in this manner until you get to the end of the piece, then take a couple of stitches back towards the center and knot off your thread.

This is a pic of a block sewn using the flat back method with taupe thread on very dark fabrics. Can you see my stitches?



PRESSING AND REMOVAL OF PAPERS

When your block is completed, press without steam with the papers still in the block. Nest the fabrics of adjoining pieces whenever possible. Set aside until you have completed all the blocks for the quilt.

If you are planning on attaching sashing strips or connecting to other blocks using English Paper Piecing, leave the papers in and proceed with adding the sashing strips and blocks in the same manner as you used for the blocks.

If you plan to attach the sashing strips or connecting to other blocks using a sewing machine, carefully remove all the papers. I use a stiletto and loosen one glued edge and then work my way around the piece. Once all the papers are removed, press the block again.

