

Stitching Sewcial

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Free Design: Bobbin Work Tea Towel

September 3, 2020 | By Joanne Banko | Accessories, Embroidery, Free Design of the Month, Projects, Sewing, Tips & Tricks, Tutorial | No Comments

Opinion by Paid Consultant



Nothing says late summer like a beautiful sunflower! The Brother Free Design of the Month for September is a sunflower motif with a light fill, ideal for embellishment on a tea towel. I chose a monochromatic color scheme, stitching the design in one of my favorite Brother embroidery thread colors, Light Brown #323. To me, this color evokes a look that mimics what you might see on antique linens. A coordinating color of ribbon and cream-colored bobbin work stitchery give this ivory towel even more nostalgic charm. Of course, you can stitch the single-color design in any color you choose and then match the ribbon

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or use a contrast color. It's your choice. You'll learn a bit about bobbin work in this project, yet another technique that adds old work charm to this tea towel. Are you ready? Let's go sew!

Materials and Supplies:

- **Brother sewing and embroidery machine. Note:** Machine featured in this project is the Brother XP1 Luminaire. You can embroider the featured design using any machine with a 5-inch X 7-inch hoop.
- **SABWRK1** Brother Bobbin Work Kit, **or** Brother Bobbin Work Bobbin case accessories included with select machine models. **Note:** SABWRK1 is available for use on many Brother machine models.
- **Brother Embroidery Threads** and Bobbin Thread for embroidering.
- **SA184** Brother Edge Joining Foot for sewing edge of ribbon.
- Presser foot **N**, included with most machines.
- Size 11 embroidery needle for embroidery.
- Blank tea towel. **Note:** The featured ivory towel is a blend of 75% cotton and 25% linen, measuring 17-inches wide X 26-inches long.
- Two pieces of 7/8-inch wide grosgrain ribbon to fit width of towel, plus 1-inch for turning under raw edges on each piece. Add a third piece of ribbon in any length necessary for testing bobbin work stitches.
- Basic sewing notions including thread to match ribbon.
- Heavy weight thread for bobbin work stitchery. **Note:** There are many suitable thread possibilities for bobbin work, including ordinary size 5 pearl cotton sold on skeins. Similar embellishment novelty threads are sold on spools. Your Brother sewing machine dealer will likely have several options for you to choose from. I used an embellishment thread similar to the pearl cotton, commonly sold on spools for decorative applications on a serger. Watch for a special bobbin work tip sheet with additional information and thread options coming later this month on the Brother Stitching Sewcial site.

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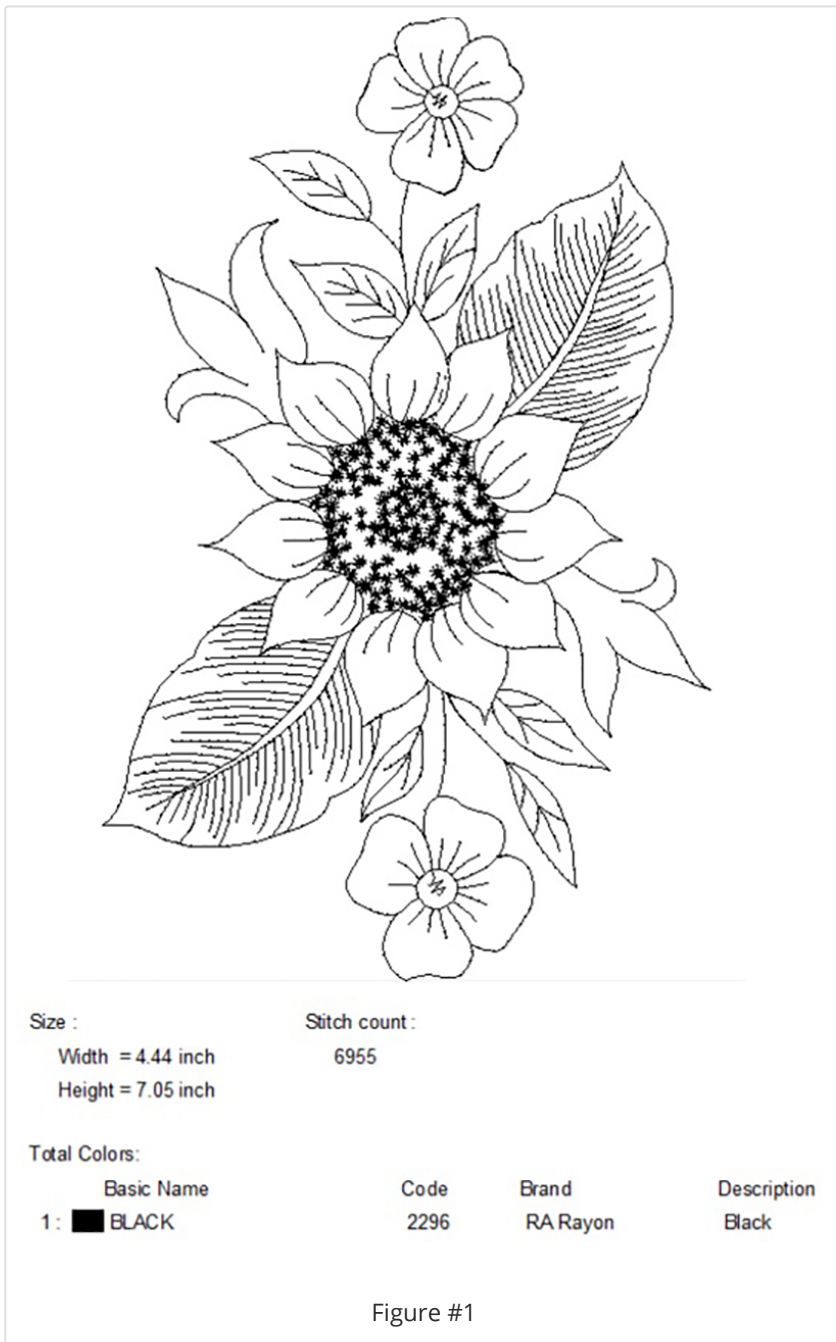
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- Wash-out liquid fabric stiffener for stabilizing ribbon prior to stitching.
- Spray starch for pre-treating towel prior to embroidering.
- **Brother Free Design of The Month, [CLICK HERE](#) See Figure #1.**



Steps to Create Embroidered Towel with Bobbin Work Trim

1. Transfer design to machine. Treat the lower half of the towel with spray starch, firming it up in preparation for embroidery.

Tip: With a light-weight design and natural fibers I find that a bit of starch often means I can skip the stabilizer. I tested this design on a remnant of similar fabric before stitching the towel so I knew it would be successful. Feel free to apply starch more than once, ironing it completely dry before additional applications. Another option would be to stabilize the wrong side of the towel using **SA5906**, Brother Adhesive backed water-soluble stabilizer.

2. Hoop the lower half of the towel so the design is centered a few inches above the hemmed edge. I used a **Snowman Embroidery Positioning Marker** to mark the precise center of the towel 5-inches from the lower edge, and then touched the Snowman icon to scan the fabric and position the centered design.

Notice that my towel is in the approximate center of the hoop, but my marker is off. If you have a Brother machine with Snowman placement technology, your hooping can be slightly off and the machine will adjust for perfect placement. See **Figure #2a** and **Figure #2b**.



Figure #2a



Figure #2b

Tip: Let me share a cautionary tale with you. This particular design takes up nearly all of the height of the 5-inch X 7-inch hoop. In my first attempt at hooping, the Snowman marker was in the right spot, but my towel was hooped a little “too” crooked. The machine was unable to adjust the design because there wasn’t enough room around it for rotation and centering in the hoop. Re-hooping with the design closer to the center of the hoop’s height from top to bottom solved my hooping issue. Keep these principles in mind when you are using Snowman marker technology in combination with a design that is close to the size of your chosen hoop. See **Figure #3**.

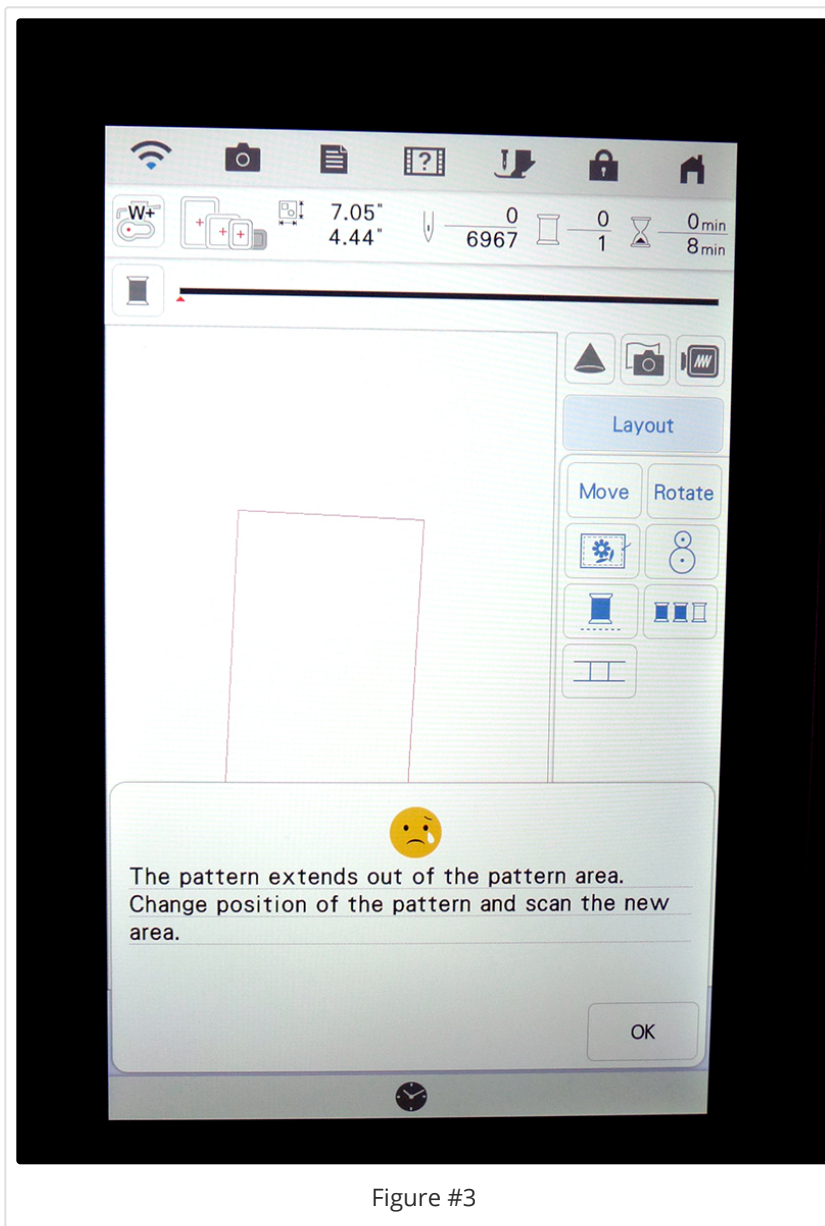


Figure #3

You'll get a happy face when the machine has room to adjust the design and precisely target the placement point for you. See **Figure #4**.

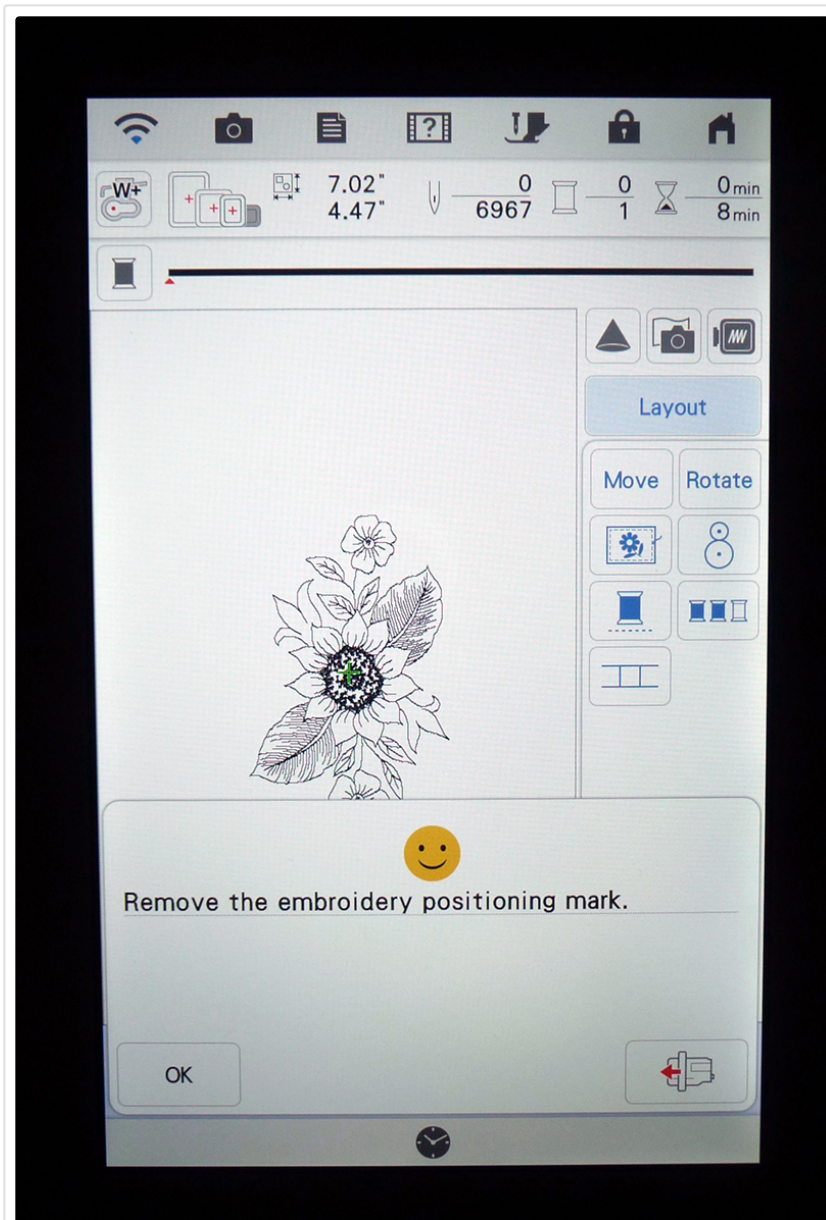


Figure #4

See finished embroidery in **Figure #5**.



Figure #5

3. Prepare to embellish ribbon with bobbin work. Change machine set up to sewing and replace standard black bobbin case with the specialty grey case for bobbin work, taking care to seat the bobbin case properly, aligning the arrow on the bobbin case with a small dot. These white alignment marks are indicated with red arrows in **Figure #6**.

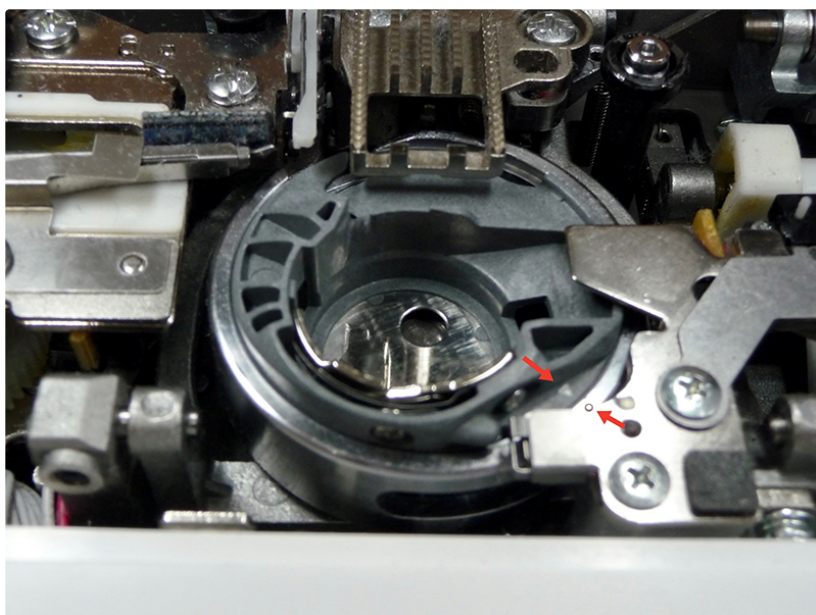


Figure #6

Note that the small screwdriver is designed to adjust the screw on the case to accommodate a variety of threads. See **Figure #7**.



Figure #7

Tip: This is a good time to clean the dust bunnies out of your machine!

Choose standard sewing thread for the needle, selecting thread that closely matches the decorative bobbin thread. Fill two empty bobbins with the heavy thread, one for practice and one for your project. **Tips for preparing the bobbin for bobbin work:** Hand wind thread onto the bobbin, keeping it smooth and winding it so it is snug but not tight. It may be possible to machine wind some threads, taking care to bypass the tension spring for the bobbin winder. Place the bobbin in the machine and thread as you would for a normal bobbin, stopping when you reach the cutter. Send the needle down and then up and tug on the needle thread to bring bobbin thread to the surface. Use your fingers or tweezers to pull thread to the surface. See **Figure #8a** and **Figure #8b**.

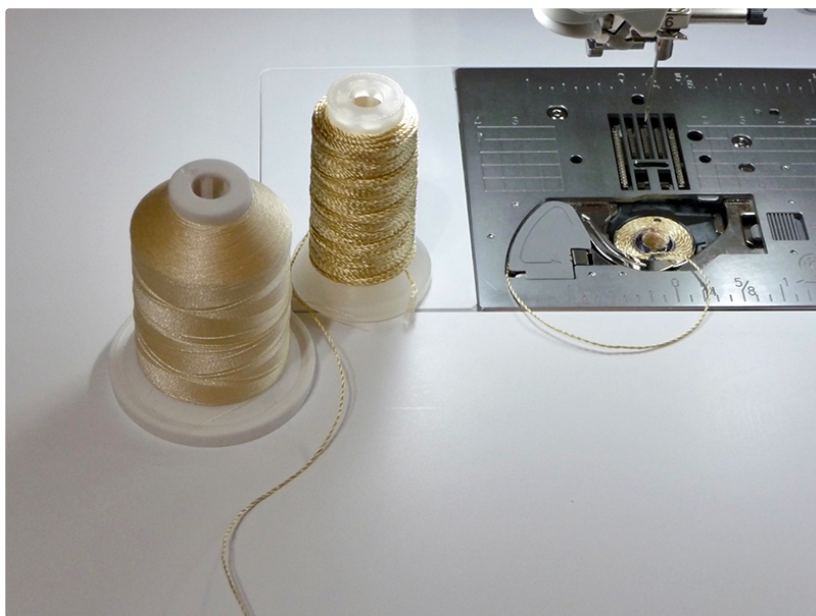


Figure #8a

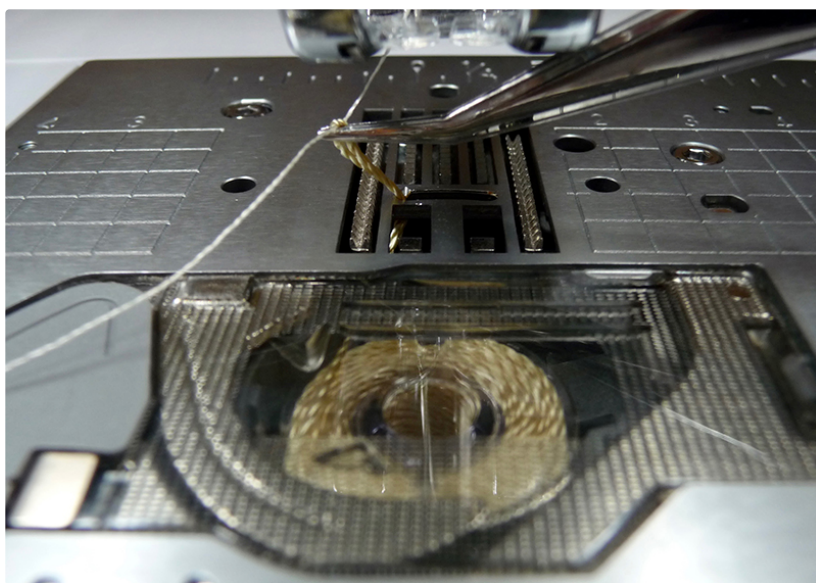


Figure #8b

Stiffen the ribbon, allow it to dry thoroughly, and press flat. The ribbon should feel very stiff in preparation for successful stitching. Attach presser foot N. Choose a stitch and sew along the center of the ribbon. **Note:** This ribbon looks the same on both sides. When stitching bobbin work on anything with a distinct right and wrong side you will always stitch with the wrong side facing up, so bobbin work is featured on the right side. Here are a few more tips for selecting appropriate stitches and stitching the bobbin work:

- Do not use the cutting feature on your machine. Instead, cut threads manually.
- Sew slowly.
- Tighten upper tension if you see the top thread showing on the bobbin work side.
- Choose stitches that are open and airy, made up of simple stitches without any satin stitching. Lengthen stitch slightly for best results. Test a few stitches on the ribbon.
- I used the projector feature and guidelines to help guide the stitching on my ribbon. In Figure #9 below, you'll see that I selected green for the main guideline in the center and used a red gridded sub-guideline to help keep ribbon straight while stitching. See **Figure #9a**.

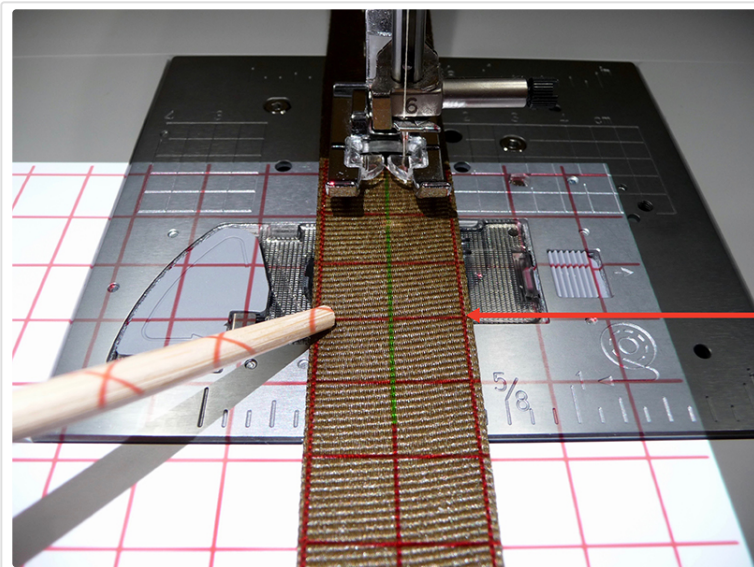


Figure #9a

- See Figure #9b for featured stitch and stitch settings used in this project. See **Figure #9b**.

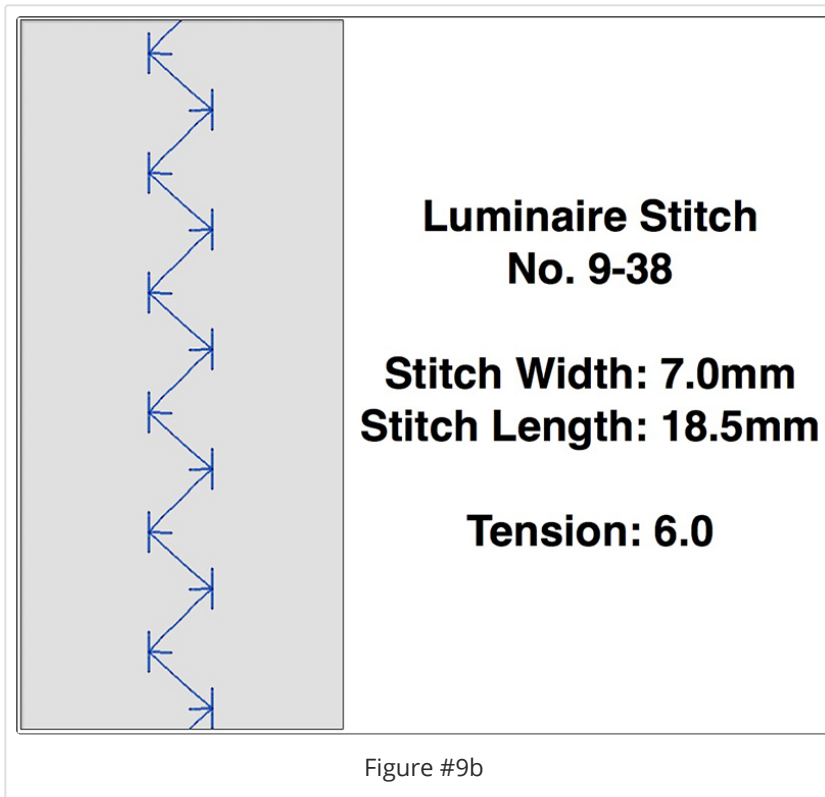


Figure #9b

4. Wash ribbon, dry and press. Pin in place above and below embroidery, turning under raw edges of ribbon at each end. See **Figure #10**.



Figure #10

5. Set up a machine for regular sewing with a standard bobbin case. Attach edge stitching foot, select a straight stitch and shift the stitch so blade on foot rides along edge of ribbon and the straight stitch forms on the very edge. See **Figure #11**.



Figure #11

You are finished! Enjoy your beautiful new embroidered tea towel!



Options and ideas:

- You'll find many single-color designs and redwork style designs available for purchase on the Brother iBroidery.com design download center. This design is part of a Morango Designs collection called Floral Artistry.

- If you prefer, you can stitch bobbin work decorative stitches directly on the towel. Rows of stitches would make a nice border accent for the hemline.
- SABWRK1 Brother Bobbin Work Kit includes free motion designs suitable for use with a free motion accessory foot.
- Visit Brother Support for more information, including a copy of the Bobbin Work Kit manual.



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