

Busy Bee

Encourage the bees to make honey with this charming hanging

See pattern sheet for full size templates

Skill level 

Finished size

Approx 50.5cm x 39cm
(19½ x 15½in)

Materials

- ◆ Five fat quarters of 'honey' coloured fabrics
- ◆ One fat quarter of dark brown fabric
- ◆ 25cm of blue fabric
- ◆ 22in x 17in piece of fabric for backing
- ◆ 22in x 17in Warm and Natural cotton wadding
- ◆ Small piece of black fabric
- ◆ Small pieces of calico or other lightweight foundation fabric
- ◆ 30cm square of Bondaweb
- ◆ 30cm square of freezer paper
- ◆ Matching sewing threads
- ◆ Matching embroidery threads for blanket stitch appliqué stitches
- ◆ Matching cotton perlé and top stitch threads for quilting
- ◆ Invisible machine thread
- ◆ Two bee buttons or similar

Where to buy

Fabrics similar to the ones used for this project are available from all good quilt shops

Designed and made by
Sue Appleton

This hanging reflects the styles of beehives or skeps that have been used in the past. The materials used, such as wood and willow, are represented by textures with the fabrics. The tiny hexagons represent the honeycomb. These shapes are repeated in the quilting. Bees flying around complete the hanging! The hanging is made from seven different blocks as follows:

BLOCK 1

1 Cut a piece of brown fabric 5½ x 6¼in. Cut a piece of calico 5in square. This will be used as a foundation piece to apply the bias strips on to. Using two of the honey coloured fabrics (light tones), make bias strips to cover the piece of calico. The easiest way is to use a bias binder maker that makes strips ¼in wide. Otherwise cut ¼in bias strips and fold and press the raw edges to the WS. Apply thin strips of Bondaweb to the reverse of the bias strips.

2 Arrange the strips alternately on the calico and iron into place. Hand stitch along the long edges with a tiny appliqué stitch to secure the strips firmly.

3 Using bee template 1 on the pattern sheet, trace the beehive onto Bondaweb. Cut out with an extra ¼in all round and apply to the calico side of the bias strip covered foundation piece.

4 Cut out on the drawn line, and press the beehive shape onto the centre of the dark brown fabric with a warm iron.

5 Template 2 is the beehive 'hole'. As above, trace the hole onto Bondaweb, cut out, apply to the WS of the black fabric, cut out along the drawn line and press onto the bottom of the beehive.

6 Using matching threads, blanket stitch around the edge of the pieces.

BLOCKS 2 AND 6 (identical)

1 Cut a ½in sided hexagon from card (Template 3). Use this to draw 84 hexagons on the freezer paper and cut out.

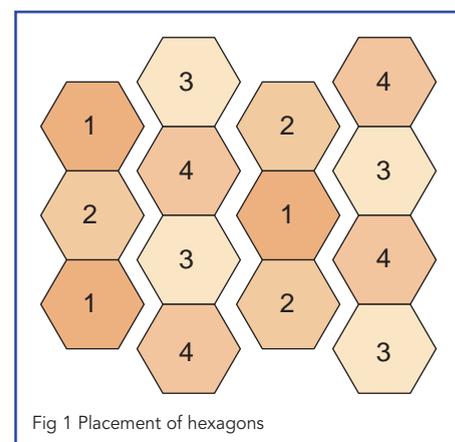
2 Choose four of the honey coloured fabrics and on the reverse side of the fabric draw around the template. Cut out with ¼in seam allowance around each one. 42 hexagons are needed for each block. In Sue's blocks she used 12 each of two fabrics and 9 each of the other two fabrics.

3 With the dull side uppermost, iron a freezer paper hexagon onto the WS of each fabric hexagon. Fold the fabric edges over, tack into place and press.

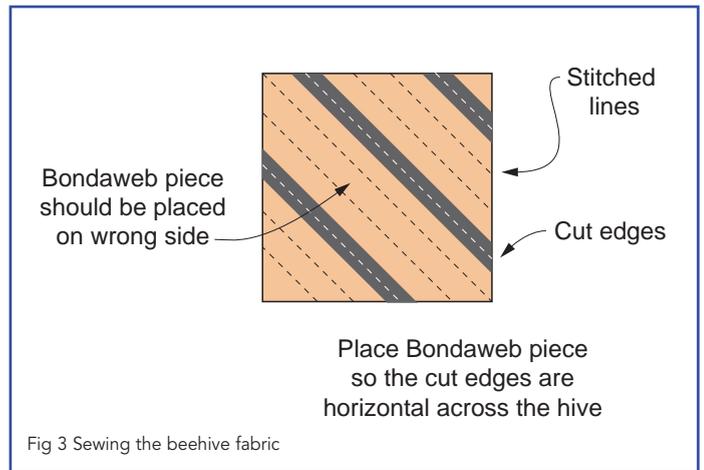
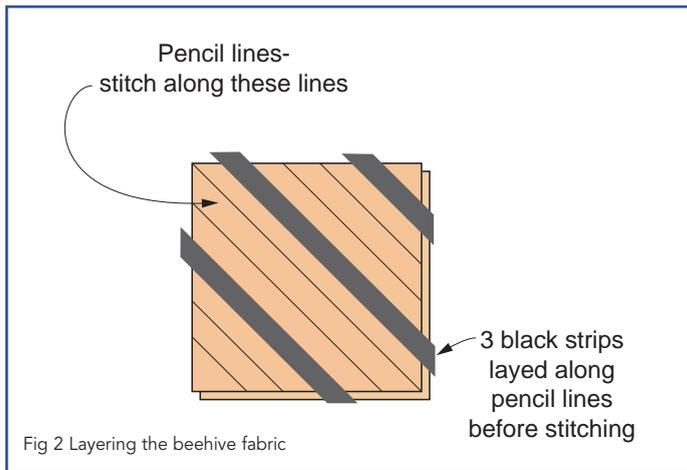
4 Decide on the placement of the hexagons – you will need six columns of three hexagons and six columns of four alternately. Join the hexagons into columns using a small slipstitch and then join the columns together. See Fig 1. Press.

BLOCK 3

1 Cut a piece of brown fabric 5½ x 9½in. Cut two pieces of fabric 7in square each from two of the honey fabrics. ➤







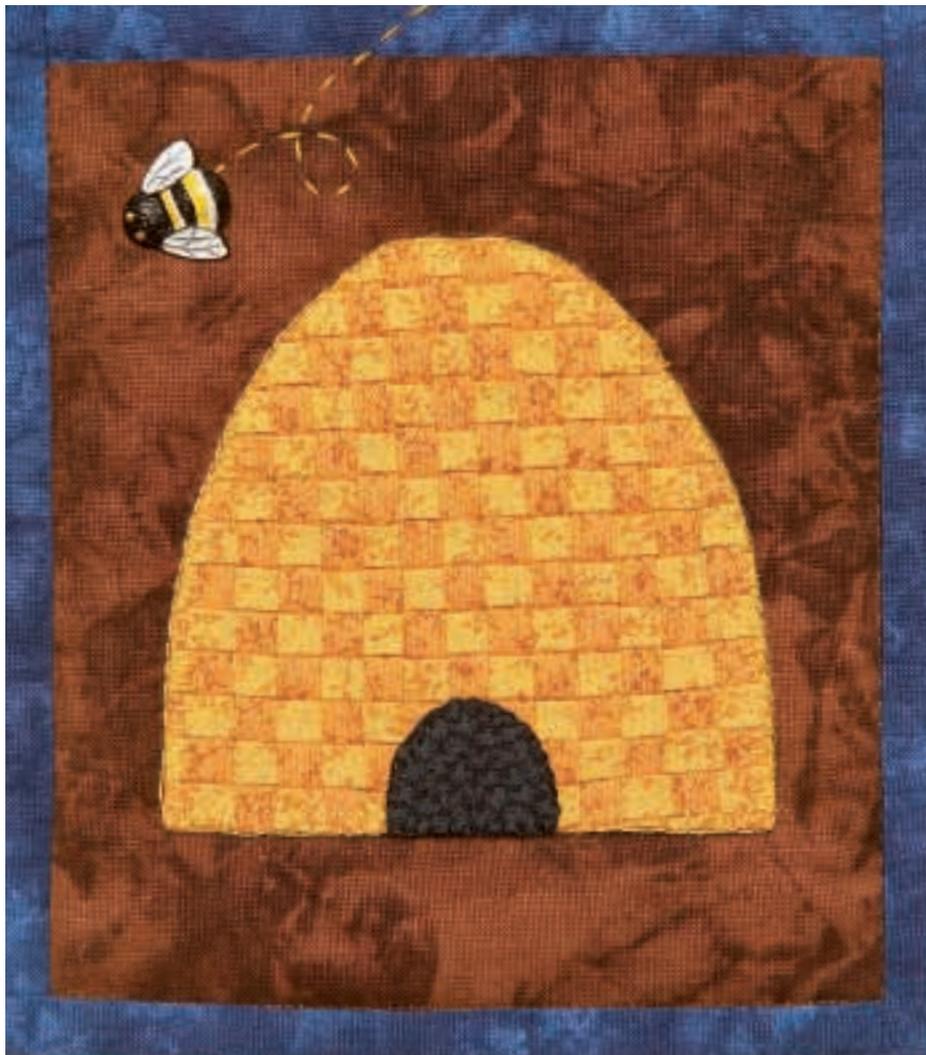
2 Layer the four pieces on top of each other, with the RS uppermost and on the top one use a pencil to mark lines $\frac{7}{8}$ in apart at 45 degrees to the straight grain. To add contrast to the surface, take a piece of the fabric that is not the top layer and cut $\frac{3}{8}$ in wide bias strips approx 8in long and place at intervals along three of the pencil lines. See Fig 2.

3 Sew along the lines through all the layers. Cut through the top layers,

making sure that the bottom layer is left uncut. Rub the cut edges to roughen.

4 Using template 4, trace the beehive onto Bondaweb, press onto the WS of the slashed fabric, so that the cuts run horizontally across the hive as shown.

5 Cut the fabric out along the drawn lines and iron onto the centre of the dark brown block. Using pale thread, blanket stitch around the edge of the beehive.



BLOCK 4

1 Cut a piece of brown fabric $12\frac{1}{2}$ in x $3\frac{3}{8}$ in. Using the beehive quilting template, mark three of the shapes centrally ready to be quilted later. Mark the hexagons onto the fabric for quilting.

BLOCK 5

1 Cut a piece of brown fabric $5\frac{1}{2}$ x $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. Choose two of the honey fabrics (Sue used the lightest ones) and cut a 6in square from each.

2 Sew small tucks across each piece on the RS of the fabric. Using template 5, trace the sections of beehive and legs onto Bondaweb. Cut out, leaving $\frac{1}{8}$ in all round.

3 Iron the pieces of Bondaweb onto the wrong sides of the pin tucked pieces of fabric, making sure that the pieces will alternate in colour when put together and with the tucks running horizontally.

4 Cut out as before and press into position on the background fabric. Using matching thread, blanket stitch around the edges of the hive and legs.

BLOCK 7

1 Cut a piece of brown fabric $5\frac{1}{2}$ x $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. Cut a piece of calico 5in square. This will be used as a foundation piece to apply the bias strips on to.

2 Using the two of the darkest honey fabrics make bias strips as for block 1. Apply thin strips of Bondaweb to the reverse of the strips, remove the paper backing and weave the strips together, using one fabric for the vertical strips and the other fabric for the horizontal strips. Press the woven piece onto the calico.

3 Trace template 1 onto Bondaweb and apply to the calico side of the woven strips. Cut out the shape as before and iron on to the centre of the brown fabric.



4 Create the 'hole' as for block 1. Using matching threads, blanket stitch around the edge of the beehive and hole.

JOINING THE BLOCKS

1 Remove the tacking stitches and papers from the hexagons in blocks two and six. When sewing strips to the edges of these blocks it is easiest to unfold the edges of the hexagons and sew along the fold line.

2 The sashing strips are cut from the blue fabric and are all $\frac{7}{8}$ in wide. See Fig 4 for placement of the blocks. You can cut long strips and trim to size for each section as you come to it or follow the measurements below.

3 Join the blocks in the following order:

- ♦ Cut a strip $5\frac{1}{2}$ in long to join blocks 1 and 3
- ♦ Cut a strip $5\frac{1}{2}$ in long to join blocks 5 and 7
- ♦ Cut a strip $8\frac{3}{4}$ in and sew to the bottom of block 2
- ♦ Cut a strip $8\frac{3}{4}$ in and sew to the top of block 6
- ♦ Cut a strip $15\frac{1}{2}$ in and sew to the right hand side of the joined blocks 1 & 3
- ♦ Cut a strip $15\frac{1}{2}$ in and sew to the left hand side of the joined blocks 5 & 7

4 Lining up the top of blocks 4 and 5, sew block 4 to the strip on the sides of blocks 5 & 7. Sew block 2 to the top of blocks 4 and 5. Sew blocks 2 and 4 to the joined blocks 1 and 3. Sew block 6 to the bottom of blocks 3 and 4.

5 Sew the remaining edge of block 6 to block 7. Check the measurements of your quilt top before cutting the following strips. Cut two strips $14\frac{1}{2}$ in and sew to the top and bottom. Cut two strips $18\frac{1}{2}$ in and sew to both sides.

6 Add a border in one of the light honey fabrics. Cut two strips $\frac{3}{4}$ in wide and sew to the top and bottom. Repeat for both sides. Press the quilt top ready for layering and quilting.

QUILTING

1 Cut a piece of backing fabric 22 x 17in and a piece of wadding 22 x 17in. Layer the backing, wadding and top and pin together.

2 Using invisible thread on the top and thread to match the backing in the bobbin, machine quilt 'in the ditch' around the blocks and the beehives.

3 Using cotton perlé thread, quilt the shapes on block 4 by hand using a backstitch to create a strong outline.

4 Mark and quilt small groups of hexagons on blocks 3 and 5 using a topstitch thread and backstitch.

5 Add bees and their 'flight path' using the topstitch thread and a running quilting stitch.

BINDING AND FINISHING

1 Machine stitch through the three layers, $\frac{3}{8}$ in from the seam with the blue sashing to stabilise the edges. Trim through the layers $\frac{1}{8}$ in from this line.

2 To make the binding use three of the honey fabrics with a similar tone. Cut nine pieces from each fabric 4 x $1\frac{3}{8}$ in. Join these pieces with bias seams for strength to make one long strip, alternating the fabrics. Press the seams open.

3 Machine stitch the binding to the hanging – with false mitred corners. Fold the binding to the back, turn under the edge and slip stitch to the backing fabric. Add a hanging sleeve and label to complete. ♦

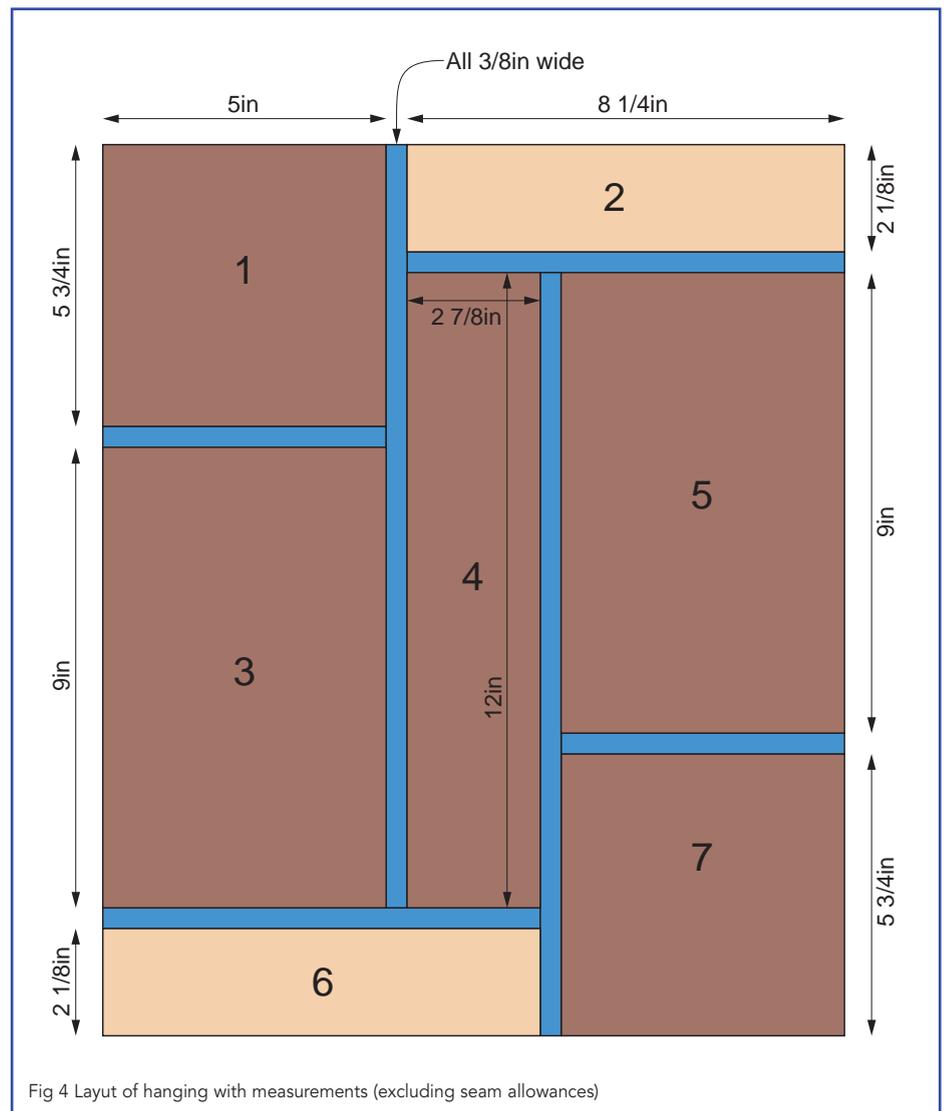


Fig 4 Layout of hanging with measurements (excluding seam allowances)