

MARCH



March Quilt Block

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What does the month of March make you think of--early spring flowers, spring-cleaning, or a lazy catnap in the sun? We've wrapped up all these thoughts to create this month's block and welcome you back to HGTV's *Strolling the Block* quilt block of the month. Let's get started, the spring-cleaning can wait!

Materials:

fabric selection - Use any desired fabrics. We selected 100-percent cottons in these prints:

- blue-gray print for sky background
- pale green for middle background
- light green flower with pink center print for foreground
- blue-green and pink broken check print for house
- small blue-gray checked pattern for door and chimney
- small tan circle print for flower boxes
- blue-green flower print for dormer
- light green floral on white background pattern for windows
- green and tan with leaf motif for tree top
- light brown for tree trunk
- light yellow for sun
- yellow check for laundry basket
- light green crackle print for clothesline post
- clothes motif fabric

translucent template plastic

Steam-A-Seam 2 double-sided fusible web

embroidery floss - black, yellow, light green, rose

rotary cutter and mat

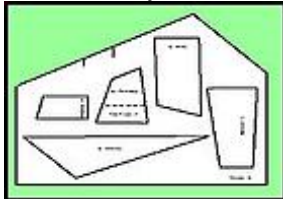
craft scissors

Steps:

Creating Templates

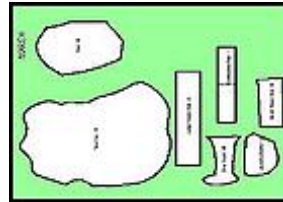
You can make templates from various materials, including pieces of heavy card stock, cardboard, freezer paper or template plastics. Some of the patterns in this block will be reused in future blocks; it's recommended that you use a translucent template plastic due to the durability factor. Keep in mind the finished fabric shape will be the mirror image of the template pattern.

1. Print out the patterns (**figures A and B**). Note: There's no need to print figure A if you've kept the house templates from January and February.



[PDF](#)

[Figure A - Click the image for a full-size pattern.](#)



[PDF](#)

[Figure B - Click the image for a full-size pattern.](#)

2. Place a piece of template plastic over the printed patterns and trace the outline of each using a permanent marking pen (ultra fine Sharpie works great).

3. Cut out and clearly label each template piece.

Background

The finished background consists of three colors of fabric and will measure 12-1/2 inches square when finished. You can assemble it using a fusible webbing technique or a machine-piecing technique. Decide on your method then follow the directions below. One helpful extra step is to make a template square measuring 12-1/2 inches then mark or cut it into three sections as shown in **figure C** to provide a cutting guide and indicate the look of the finished background piece.

Figure C

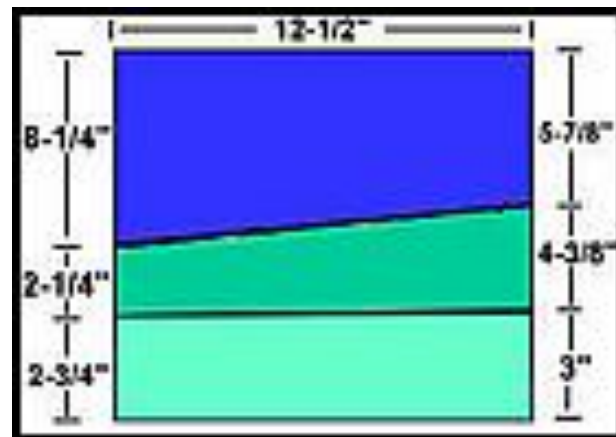


Figure D

Fusing Method

1. If you wish to use fusible webbing to create the background piece, cut fabric pieces as indicated in **figure D**.

2. With right sides up, place a 12-1/2" x 1/4" strip of fusible webbing (or any desired fusible product) along the bottom portion of the sky section. Next, overlap the middle (grass) fabric a 1/4 inch, making sure the fabric covers the fusible webbing. Fuse the fabrics together, using a pressing cloth to protect your iron from any exposed webbing. Follow the same process to fuse the final (ground) section to the background piece.

3. Trim the finished background piece to a 12-1/2-inch square (**figure E**).

Machine-Piecing Method

1. If you wish to use a sewing machine to create the background piece, cut the fabrics as illustrated in **figure F**.

2. Begin by placing the sky and grass fabrics right sides together, matching the raw edges across the bottom. Due to the diagonal cut, the sides will be out of alignment but that's how it should look. With the sky fabric on the bottom, use a 1/4-inch seam to stitch the sky and grass pieces together. Press and trim away the excess fabric.

3. Add the ground fabric by placing it right sides together with the piece sewn in step 2, matching raw edges across the bottom sky/grass section and ground fabric. Use a 1/4-inch seam allowance, stitch the grass fabric to the middle fabric. Again, press and trim away the excess fabric. The background piece will still be lopsided at this point (**figure G**).

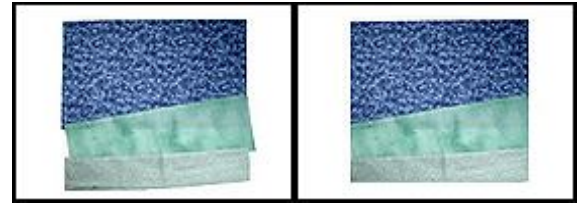


Figure G

4. Trim the finished background piece to a 12-1/2-inch block (**figure H**).

Applique

A quick word about fusible web--follow the manufacturer's instructions for whichever type you decide to use. There's a wide variety of fusibles available on the market and you may want to experiment to find the right product for you. For this project, we use a double-sided type because it allows us to reposition the pieces if desired. Double-sided fusibles come sandwiched between two pieces of paper. Here's how to use them with this pattern.

1. Cut the fusible into smaller, manageable pieces that will accommodate each template size, keeping the protective paper of the fusible intact.
2. Using a pencil, trace around each template onto one of the paper-covered sides of the fusible.
3. Peel away the opposite paper side of the fusible (the one without the tracing) and adhere it to the wrong side of the desired fabric.
4. Cutting along the traced lines, cut out both the fusible web and fabric for each pattern piece.
5. Next, position the pieces onto the background square. There's a lot of room to customize the block with this step. Plus, you don't have to fuse anything until you're sure you like the design. Here's how we did it:
 - Position the house (**A**) fabric on the background square. Refer to the finished block for placement. Tuck the chimney fabric (small side down) so it stands out behind the house.
 - Our objective was to place everything slightly off kilter in order to give the block a bit of a folk art feel. To accomplish this, position the door, windows (**C** and **D**) and dormer (**E**) at a slight tilt (**figure I**).



Figure I

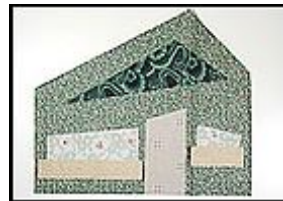


Figure J

- Place a window box (**J** and **K**) on each of the windows, overlapping the boxes slightly on the bottom portion of the windows (**figure J**).
- Refer to the finished block image to place the tree trunk (**M**). Next, layer the treetop (**H**) slightly on top of the tree trunk and behind the upper left corner of the house.
- The clothesline post (**I**) consists of only one template piece but you'll use the one piece to make two clothesline posts. Once the fabric and fusible has been marked and cut, half the fabric piece lengthwise to create two skinny posts (**figure K**). Refer to the finished block picture for placement.

- Place the laundry basket approximately 1/2 inch from the bottom of the block, layering it slightly on top of the clothesline post.
- Once you're pleased with the design, follow the manufacturer's directions to press the pieces into place. Avoid fusing any pieces in the outer 1/4-inch perimeter of the block to allow for the addition of sashing.



Figure K

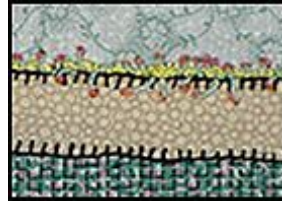


Figure L

Finishing

- Cover the raw edges of the applique pieces with blanket-stitching (click for a [blanket stitch video demonstration](#) from Simply Quilts, episode 664, featuring guest Margaret Peters and host Alex Anderson). To do this, use two-strands of black embroidery floss outlining the house, sun, tree, clothesline posts and laundry basket.
- Add a beige button as a door handle to the house.
- Using yellow- and rose-colored floss, create the first signs of spring blossoms in the flower boxes by embroidering numerous French knots coming up out of the box. Use a backstitch and green floss to create the flower stems (**figure L**).
- Use a simple backstitch to create the clothesline, adding small wayward "clothespin" stitches to "hold" the clothes on the line.
- Cut out "clothes" from fabric depicting clothing and stitch the top onto the clothesline so the clothes appear to be flapping in the breeze (**figure M**).



If March makes you think of line-dried laundry and a lazy catnap in the sun, you're going to love this month's block.



Figure M

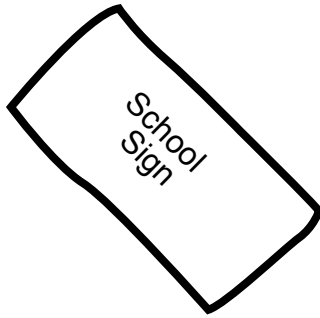
- Stitch a napping cat button to the bottom left corner of the laundry basket. Add another extra touch by stitching an item of clothing so it hangs over the basket (**figure N**).

Optional Challenges Depending on your skill level, here are additional ideas for finishing the block :

- Want a real challenge? Add a 1/4-inch to the template patterns and use a needle-turn method of applique.
- Why not try your hand at creating a miniature quilt to hang out on the clothesline? Or fashion miniature towels from terry cloth fabric.
- Instead of using black floss for the blanket-stitching, consider color coordinating the floss to the fabric color (i.e., the green fabrics would be stitched with green floss).
- Replace the flower box embroidery work with pre-made silk ribbon flowers.
- Embroider rays of sunlight using a chain stitch method and yellow floss or make ray outlines then fill them in with a satin stitch.
- If time is not on your side this month, don't despair. This block could easily be finished on a sewing machine. Depending on your machine's capabilities, employ a zigzag, satin, buttonhole or blanket stitch to finish the raw edges of the applique. Don't be afraid to use your imagination to make the block your own.

Congratulations! Once this block is finished you have completed all the blocks for the first row of your quilt. We look forward to creating another block with you next month.

September



Re-use from March

