

# Candy Ribbon Ornament

## A Bargello Exercise

By Diane M Scott

**Finished size:** 1 5/8" x 4 1/4"

**Materials required:**

- ¼ sheet colourless or white plastic canvas 14 count
- DMC Jewel Effects E168
- DMC floss B5200, 151, 3804, 150
- #24 tapestry needle

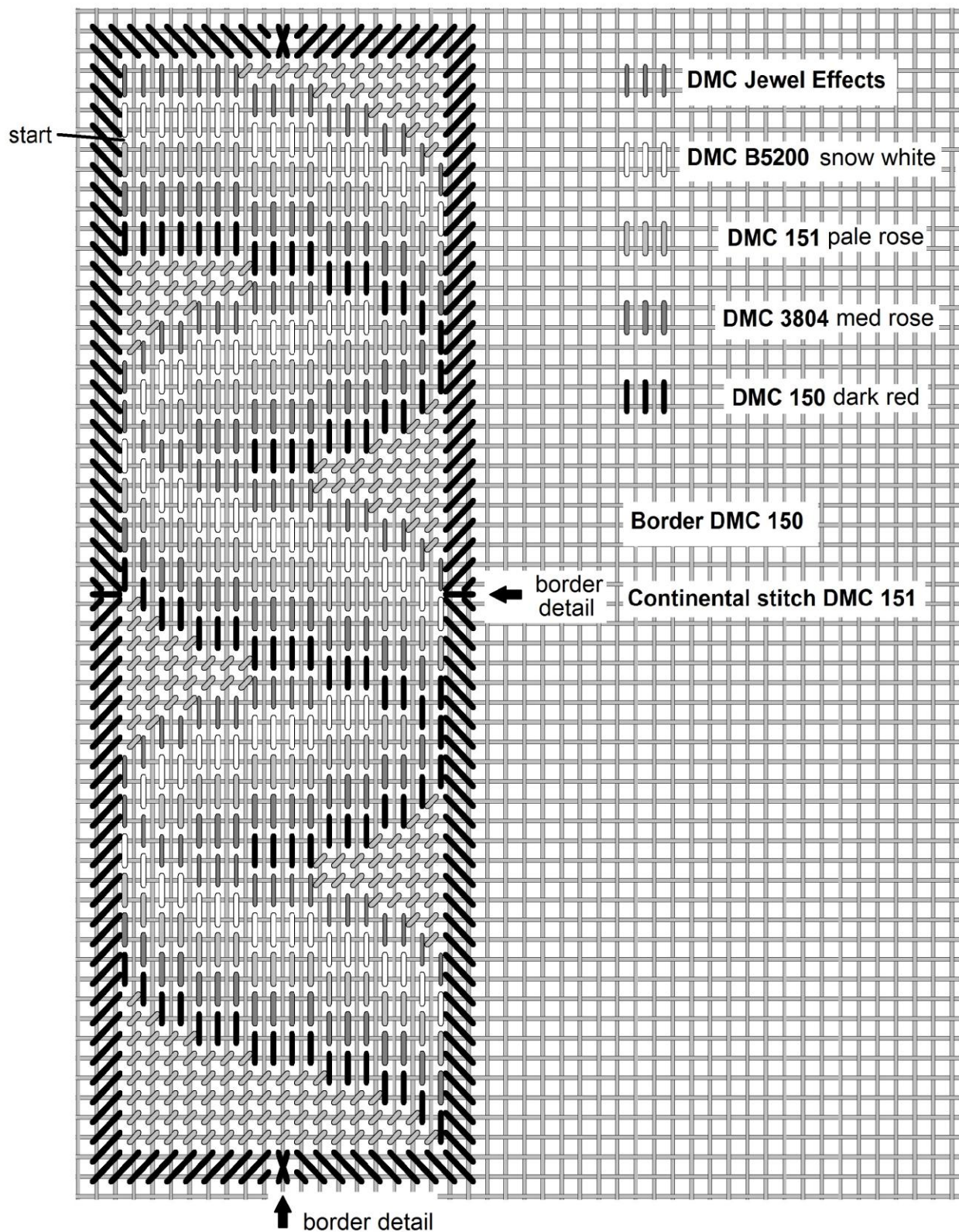
**B**argello is a needlework technique comprised of groups of vertical stitches that are stepped to create a pattern. Shaded patterns are commonly created by using hues of a similar colour. Variations of the length of stitch and of the stepping pattern will create different motifs. This bargello model is stitched over 2 threads, and stepped over one thread to create a gradual curved pattern.

Working with plastic canvas means there are no raw edges to be worried about. It's a good base to form three dimensional objects from.



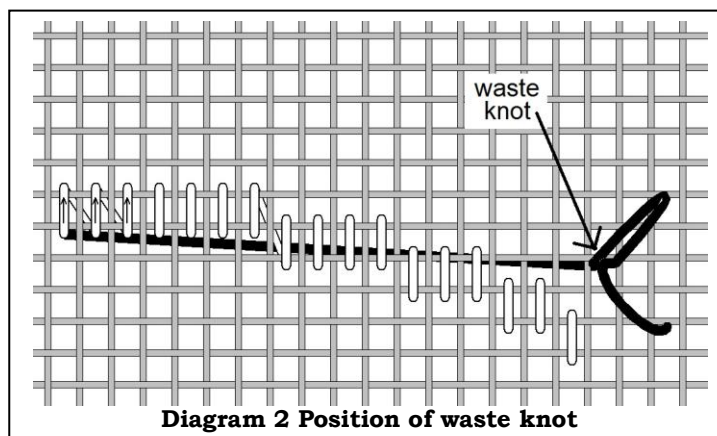
You'll be working with floss lengths of about 24". Any longer puts too much stress on the fibres and causes them to lose their lustre. Any less means more starting and stopping.

Floss comes as a bundle of 6 plies or strands, and we will be working with all 6 plies at a time in this project. To begin, cut a 24" length of white, B5200. Before we stitch, we need to strip the bundle into 6 individual plies. Pull each strand up and out slowly until it is completely separated from its neighbours, then rejoin the strands by holding them together at one end and gently stroking the lengths to smooth and recombine them in the needle. Stripping allows each strand to lie side by side in the stitch. It provides maximum coverage and sheen for your piece, and should be used whenever stitching with more than one ply of a fibre.



**Diagram 1 Master Chart**

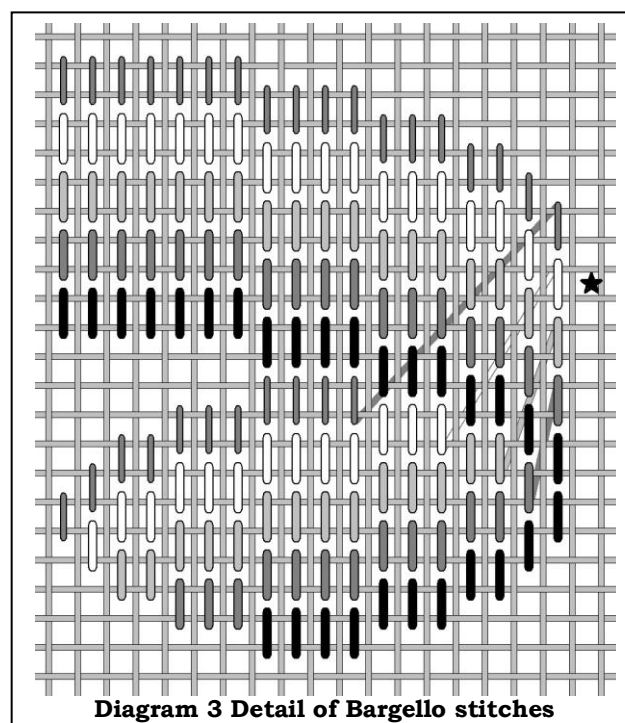
The first stitch of the project is started with a waste knot. This is simply an overhand knot or a slip knot in the end of the thread. Bring the needle **down** somewhere to the right side of the pattern, and bring it **up** where indicated in Diagram 2 (the start position in Diagram 1). This leaves the knot on top and out of the way, and a length of thread underneath the canvas. This thread will be captured and covered up by the first few stitches. All other threads can be started by taking the needle through some stitches on the back of the canvas before bringing it to the surface.



The basic stitch is a vertical over 2 threads. When you pull your needle down through the canvas, try to "lay" your floss. This means teasing the plies of the floss to lay side by side in the stitch. You can use fancy laying tools or a simple blunt needle, but the technique is most simply taking care not to let the thread twist while it's passing through the canvas. Occasionally the floss will twist on itself (it always does). Drop the needle and let the thread hang and untwist while it's dangling from your work. Continue stitching with the white floss by following the stitches illustrated on the Master chart, Diagram 2, needle up at the bottom of the stitch, needle down 2 canvas threads vertically above. Remember to catch the initial thread within your stitches. At the end of the row, you'll be able to cut the waste knot, and your thread will be securely anchored.

When you come to the right edge of the first band, indicated with a ★ in Diagram 3, and if you still have a substantial length of thread left, don't complete the last stitch yet. Instead, leave the thread "parked" on top of your canvas until some of the other coloured bands have been stitched. The other bands' placement will determine where the white will next be used. You can then "travel" under the canvas with this white thread to continue stitching its next band.

A goal when stitching is to come up in an empty hole and go down in an occupied hole. This rule won't apply to this first band of white floss, but it will become more important with each subsequent row of stitching. When you're stitching each subsequent band, come up at the bottom of each stitch, and go down at the top, which will be a shared hole with the previous colour.



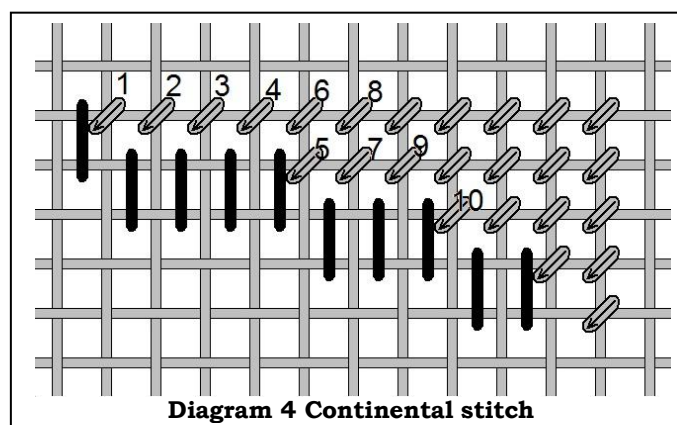


Stitch the next three bands, the light rose 151, medium rose 3804, then dark red 150. Remember to strip each bundle before you start stitching. These threads can be started by running the needle through some stitches on the back of the canvas before bringing the needle to the surface at its starting point. Similarly, when you reach the end of a thread, anchor it through some stitches on the back of the piece. No knots required!

The last band of the ribbon is stitched with metallic floss. Jewel Effects also comes in a bundle of 6 plies; for this project we use 3 plies folded in the needle, to create a 6 ply unit. This floss is more fragile than cotton, so we stitch with shorter lengths. Using the rule of "come up empty, go down full" the first band will be stitched top to bottom. Subsequent bands can be stitched bottom to top.

Continue stitching the bands of colour in the ribbon. I'm only encouraging you to park your threads after the first pass at the top of the ribbon. Once you are more comfortable with the rhythm of the pattern, feel free to complete each thread to the fullest.

Once the bargello ribbon is complete, the balance of the interior space is covered with Continental stitch. Diagram 4 gives the direction and order of stitching for this stitch. The direction is important because some of the continental stitch will need to tuck under some of the bargello stitching. The Continental stitch is done with 6 plies of the pale rose 151.



The border is completed next, with 6 plies of the dark red 150. It is mostly a diagonal stitch over 2 intersections, but it does change direction at the midpoints. The master chart, Diagram 1, gives the detail of the transitional stitches at the mid points. Note the elongated cross stitch at the centre top and bottom.

When the border is complete, you are ready to cut your plastic canvas. Leave one complete mesh outside the border. Cut a second piece of plastic canvas for the back the same size as the front. Both pieces should be 22 holes by 59 holes. Carefully trim the excess canvas diagonally at the corners. The simplest way to finish the pocket is to stitch the front and back together. You do have enough canvas to make an open box if you prefer. You will need 3 additional pieces - 2 sides and a bottom.

Start an overcast stitch across the top of the ribbon ornament, then proceed to join the two pieces of canvas with the same thread and overcast stitch. You can insert a twisted cord handle near the top if you wish. Continue to join the two pieces over 3 sides, remembering to stitch an extra stitch in the corners and to incorporate the second half of the handle if you're using it. Finish by overcasting the top edge of the back, blank canvas if you desire. All the joining threads are anchored in the back of the ribbon stitching. You can anticipate the need for new threads by anchoring some ahead of the time you'll actually need them. This is a finicky process because the ornament is relatively small, but persevere, the effort is worth it.