Let’s take a hike on the Rhododendron Trail!

I know you are ready. I’ve been watching your fabric pulls coming through social media for weeks!

I could feel the excitement building - and it is at peak levels here too as I get ready to hit publish on this post that will launch us into this year’s Quiltville Winter Mystery!

Many of you have Thanksgiving leftovers for days tupper-ware’d away in your fridges.

Crockpots may be simmering for others, making for easy meals as we kick into mystery release Friday’s through the holiday season.

Let’s do this!

Part One is sets of pink/neutral half-square triangles!
Instead of working with 2 7/8'' squares (or going larger to 3'' to trim everything down later) I started with 2 1/2'' strips and cut my triangle pairs with right sides together ready to sew with my Essential Triangle Tool.

The Essential Triangle Tool makes working from Scrap User's System strips (that I already have on hand) so easy!

I can get by with 2 1/2'' instead of 2 7/8'' because we cut with one dog ear already trimmed, saving fabric and time.

Place a pink and a neutral 2 1/2'' strip with right sides together. Square off one end.

Using the 3rd red line for 2'' finished half-square triangles, place the ruler as shown with the hang-hole toward you. Notice that the red line is ON the fabric, at the top edge of the strip set, but the line is not above the fabric sitting on the mat.

Learn to cut with the line you are measuring by up on your fabric. If the line is left on the mat, your triangles will be one line-width too small. It all adds up.

Make one cut.

This time place that 3rd red line for 2'' finished half-square triangles at the bottom edge of the strip set with the line ON the fabric, not below it on the mat. Make second cut.

Continue this process to cut 4 matching triangles from each strip pairing you decide to use. You may duplicate fabrics if you wish - or use all the same from yardage. The choice is yours as to how scrappy you make this.

I juxtapose my 4-pair sets for easy counting and moving to my machine.

Before stitching, let's test your seam allowance.

From the scraps created when cutting above, cut 2 squares 2 1/2''. (They can be the same fabric...this is just a seam test.)

Stitch the two fabrics together with your best 1/4'' seam allowance. Press to one side and measure.

Two 2 1/2'' squares sewn side by side should give you a unit measuring 2 1/2'' X 4 1/2''. If you do not reach the 4 1/2'' measurement, adjust your seam allowance until you've got it.

Do this BEFORE sewing triangles - you just may be surprised.

*HINT* NEVER measure the seam allowance by itself. It doesn't tell you anything. You need to measure the whole unit to tell you if the seam allowance is doing the correct job bringing you
to unit size. Thickness of fabric, and of thread, and how we cut, and where we sew all work together to bring us to unit size.

Now sew the 31 sets of 4, stopping after the first few have been sewn.

Press seams toward the pink triangles. Remove all dog ears. ALWAYS. Dog ears belong on the dogs, not in the quilt.

Do a self-check.

Is the seam allowance working for you? Are things squirrelly? Look at how straight your seam is. Does it taper, wiggle, curve or lean?

Instead of guiding triangles from the front of the presser foot only, use your left hand with fingers curled at the left of your presser foot on top of the triangle pair to help steer the triangles all the way past the needle. Don't let them free-wheel themselves.

The correct placement of my fingers helps me get seams that are straight and even.

For the consummate sliver-trimmers out there: Remember you don't have to go BIG to sliver-trim into the oblivion of perfection. When cutting - keeping the line on your ruler ON your fabric, instead leaving it sitting on the mat will help. And you can scant your seam allowance a few threads and still leave yourself plenty of room to square everything if need be.

Recap:

Half-square triangle sets.

31 sets of 4 matching.

Units will measure 2 1/2'' unfinished and finish at 2'' in the quilt.

We'll see you back here next Friday, 12/3/21 for Part Two!