

Scrappy Sister's Choice!



or what to do with an overflowing bin of 2 1/2" scrap strips - All in Pinks!

Block Size: 10"



Green star points

Maybe you are in the same situation I am. I confess to being a fairly organized quilter, who trims leftovers down into useable sizes for scrap projects. If anything can be used, I hate to throw it out! However, after cutting down the remainders of quilt backings, left over border pieces, odds and ends left from Fat Quarters or other yardage, and throwing in leftover binding strips...I am overflowing! I have bins of different sizes of 1 1/2", 2", 2 1/2", 3", and 3 1/2". By FAR the most overflowing is the 2 1/2" bin!



So here we go! I'm going to make something fun out of this mess. I decided on the Sister's Choice block as a good candidate for this project because of the appealing 9 patch center, and the fact that I could cut EVERY piece from the same width of strips.



I planned on doing all different 2 tone 9 patches in the block center but since I was using stuff ONLY from the scrap bin, I decided to pull out all the neutrals I had in there, from white to tan to use as the background pieces.

I cut these up into piles of 2 1/2" X 6 1/2" rectangles and cutting the rest into 2 1/2" squares. The one unifying thing I am doing with the blocks is to use all GREEN as the star points. So I pulled out the greens and cut them all up

into sets of 8 matching 2 1/2" squares.

Then I went fishing for the 9 patch fabrics! You could do this one at a time, or do as I did, spend an evening playing match up!

9 patches usually involve 2 separate strip sets and make several blocks of one kind. What to do when piecing one 9 patch block for the block center?

Simple. I made this easy for me!



Lay the two 2 1/2" strips for the 9 patch center with right sides together. Cut these strips 11" long. Then, depending on which fabric is your corner fabric for the 9 patch, cut one extra 2 1/2" square from that fabric.



This is what you need to complete one block:

(2) 2 1/2" X 11" strips for 9 patch center + (1) 2 1/2" square for the final corner.

(in this case it's the yellow square at the top left)

(4) 2 1/2" neutral squares for block corners

(4) 2 1/2" X 6 1/2" neutral rectangles for block sides

(8) 2 1/2" Squares of green for the star points.

Now before I go any farther, I want to tell you about another little trick I'm implementing. I learned a long time ago to use a scrap piece of fabric to sew on and off of so I don't have thread tails everywhere, and it keeps the pieces from being sucked down into the needle hole.

Now, instead of using just a scrap and sewing on and off of it again and again until it is full of thread, I cut a bunch of 2" squares in different neutrals and blues. I am using these as the leader pieces, sewing them into pairs, and then into 4 patches as I go so as a bonus, I have a continually growing pile of little 3 1/2" 4 patch blocks that will finish at 3" wherever I use them.



Back to the Sister's Choice Block!



Stitch your 11" X 2 1/2" rectangles with right sides together, using a scant 1/4" seam allowance and then stitch another pair of leader squares through the machine (if you are doing this along with me) and snip the long strip apart from the leader squares, just behind the presser foot.

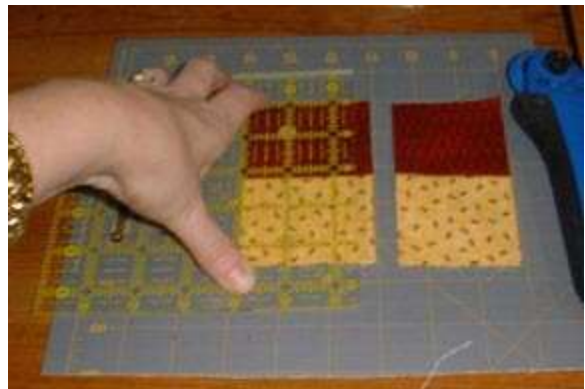
I keep a little pair of spring snips right there on the machine bed just for this purpose. The little thing you see screwed up next to my presser foot is a seam guide. I love how it keeps my seams accurate when strip piecing.



Press your strip set with seam allowance going towards the darker fabric. If you started your sewing with a pair of leader squares, press this open to the dark too, and set it aside to match with another pair to be made into a 4 patch.

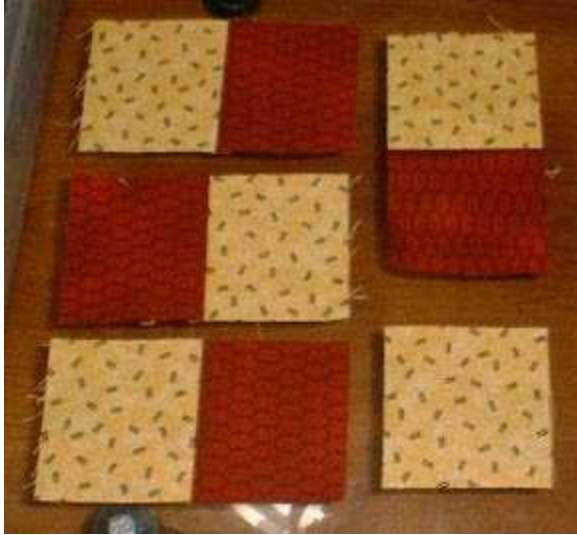


Press toward the darker fabric.



Another tip: When a cutting mat is no longer useable, I cut a corner out of it to use near my machine, so I don't have to get up and down so much.

Fold the strip set in half, trim up the ends, and cut two sections each 2 1/2" wide. This will give you 4 pairs of squares.



Lay out your 9 patch center as shown above using the spare 2 1/2" square to fill in the bottom corner. Assemble by rows into a completed 9 patch. Set it aside.

Star points!



(see my leader squares still leading off and ending each sequence of stitching as I go?)



Place one green 2 1/2" square on top of one of the 2 1/2" X 6 1/2" rectangles as shown with right sides together. You can either draw a line from corner to corner on the green square as a guideline, or if you have been sewing as long as I have, you can 'aim and shoot'.

Stitch from corner to corner diagonally being sure you come out right at the point. Without cutting threads, feed the next rectangle and square through the machine, chain piecing all 4 of them in the same manner. End the sequence by sending another pair of leader squares through the machine, snipping off the rectangles just behind the leader squares.

Now trim the excess 1/4" from the seam line. Press towards the dark triangles.



Now for the other end! This is where it is important to watch which angle you are sewing. We want these points to 'V' from each other. If

you sew the second triangle on the diagonal the wrong direction, you'll have a parallelogram for a background instead of a trapezoid.

Sew all 4 remaining star points this way. Trim and press as above.



Lay your block with the 9 patch in the center, the rectangles on each side, filling in your corners with the 2 1/2" squares.



Assemble into rows, stitching the rows together to complete one block.



This is my pile of 4 patches just since starting this project!

I've so far made 20 sister's choice blocks. It isn't making a huge dent in the scrap strip bin, but I am really liking how the blocks look when laid out together.

The multi-fabric neutral background just gives it so much more depth and interest than just using one fabric. Give it a try!



April 19th, 2004:

The pile of blocks is now a TOP! I set 72 blocks
8 X 9:



I really like how it turned out! And it felt great
to really make a dent in that bin of 2 1/2" scrap
strips!



Here is a close up of the border fabrics I used:
I chose green for the outer border because all
of the star points are a different green, and it
just seemed to pull it all together.



I quilted this quilt with an all over design called
"Ground Cover" by Keryn Emmerson.
It worked up beautifully in an antique tan
thread!

Sew Many Quilts Sew Little Time!

If you loved this pattern, please check out my
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