

Smokey Mountain Stars!



Quilt size: 64" X 72"

Block Size: 4"

A scattering of rustic stars from thrift shop shirts!

I have an addiction to secondhand stores. I haunt the men's shirts aisles and look for mark downs, bargain of the week, 100% cotton shirts in plaids and stripes!

It got so bad, this shirt collecting, that I've got about 3 bins full of shirts that I've taken apart. I've made a couple of quilts with them...and I love how soft the fabric is, and the look of all the plaids mixed together. I have really had to BAN myself from going to Good Will, because I know if I go I'll come home with yet another bag of plaid and striped shirts!



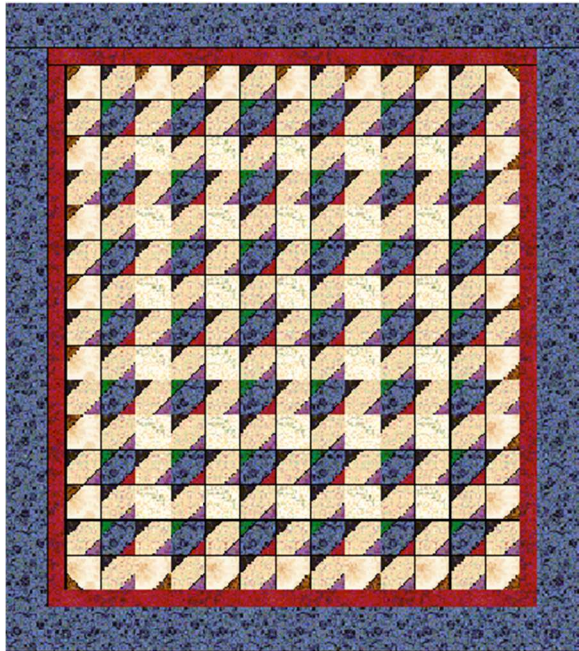
These are just two of the bins of shirts that I've taken apart...you can also see a UFO in progress: Jacob's Ladder blocks that I've started, I've already named that quilt "Jacob's Shirts!" (Or is it the Shirt Off Jacob's Back???)

I'll get around to getting back to those another time! On with the stars! These plaids were just calling out to me to be used in this star quilt!

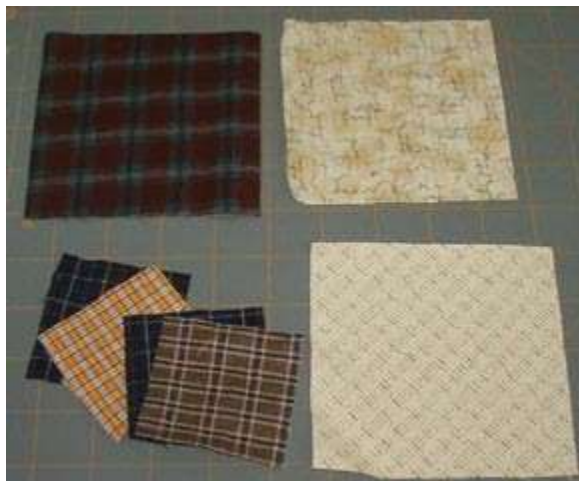
This is probably the easiest star quilt you can ever make. The pieced block units themselves are traditionally known as "Indian Hatchet" blocks.

These blocks can be set in many ways, and with other units like 4 patches or 9 patches to make a variety of quilt designs. I have made stretched star quilts before, but usually the stars are always touching each other. I wanted these stars to be separate, not touching, but lined up

as in blocks.! I drew and colored the block units I thought I'd need and came up with this layout:



This quilt is built out of 4.5" and 2.5" cut squares! All of the blocks finish at 4" and there are four variations of the basic block that make up this quilt.



This picture shows you the building blocks...the second pic shows you the units you will have:



(And the little 1/2 square triangle squares are a bonus if you choose to double sew the seam while sewing the corner triangle squares on the blocks)

I used two different light prints in my quilt to give some variety to the background.

You can use as many light prints as you want or make all the light squares from the same light fabric if you choose. I will be listing the cutting as using 2 fabrics for the lights.

Cutting:

- (42) 4.5" dark plaid squares
- (97) 4.5" light squares (light #1)
- (56) 4.5" light squares (light #2)
- (304) 2.5" dark squares

Set aside 30 of the 56 light squares from light fabric #2. These are your "plain" spacer blocks.

I stitched these in sets so I wouldn't drive myself crazy trying to remember how many of this, or how many of that.

I started with the remaining 26 light squares from light #2. These only get one corner triangle sewn to them, and they are all used in the outside edge of the quilt to complete the spaced sawtooth border at the edge of the quilt.

The piecing for all the units is the SAME, only you will have some with dark centers, some with light centers, and these little fill ins that we

are doing now from light #2, with only one triangle square in the corner.



Place a dark 2.5" square with right sides together on top of the base square. Starting in one corner, stitch diagonally down the square from corner to corner.

If you don't feel you can be accurate, draw a pencil line down the 2.5" square from corner to corner to give you a guideline to sew by.



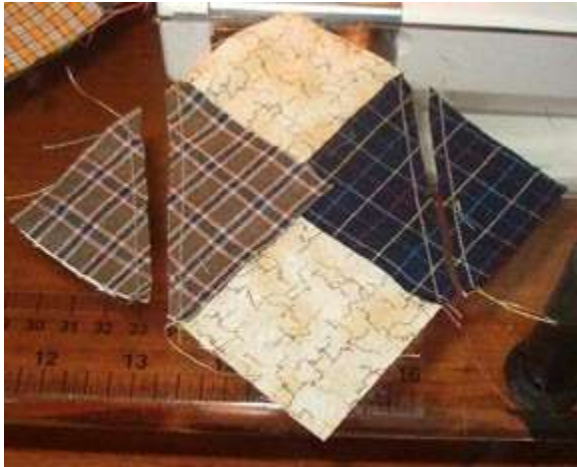
When you get to the corner, don't remove the unit from the machine! Leave it under the machine needle and feed the next pair through. Sew them all through this way until you have them all in one big chain.



This is another nifty trick I love to do. Waste-not Want-not and save every bit! I like to "double sew" these seams so I can cut between them and give myself bonus 1/2 square triangles.

Believe me, this quilt gave me handfuls of already pieced triangles ready for a scrappy project!

Yes, these are small. And because they are small, I use a bit smaller seam allowance between them.



Moving my needle to the right gives me just a bit less than 1/2" seam allowance - more like 3/8" so the seam allowance when I cut between is 1/16" smaller than 1/4".

I do this because I need the bonus to be a useable size I can square it up to.

If I do the 3/8" seam, I can square them up to 2" and they will finish at 1.5", perfect for mini piecing.

If I did 1/2" seam? They square up to something like 1 7/8" and that just isn't as useable to me.

After you are done double stitching and trimming off the bonus triangles take the "one corner triangle" blocks to the ironing board and press the seam towards the triangle in the corner. Set these aside, and onto the next batch!



After I pieced the ones with one triangle in the corner, I went to the next set which were the units with the dark plaid base (all 42 of them) and the two plaid corner triangles on opposite

corners. Chain these through the machine, double stitch if desired, trim the corners on both sides that you sewed the triangle squares to, and press them with the seams going towards the triangles in the corner.



This is what's left to make! And you need to do 97 of these. They are pieced the same, there are just more of these than anything else and it might seem like it takes a LONG time to stitch (and double stitch) and trim and press them all...but once they are done, you are ready for lay out!



I laid this out on the floor to get the layout that I wanted, I tried to have a good mix of colors and different scale in my plaids and stripes.

Use this picture or the graphic drawing at the top of the pattern above to help you lay out your blocks.

You can also make the quilt bigger by adding more rows in length, and also adding to the width.



I framed the quilt with an inner border from a taupe/black stripe, cut 2", and a plaid outer border, cut 5".

Both borders have scrappy cornerstones from various plaids, and I really like the look. The photo above shows the quilting in progress with pine boughs and berries in the outer border, curling tendrils in the inner border, and swirling wind in the quilt center.

More shots of the quilting detail:



I love the pine bough and berries quilting in the border. I know it's hard to see it in that plaid, but it was so fun to quilt, and it has so much texture.



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