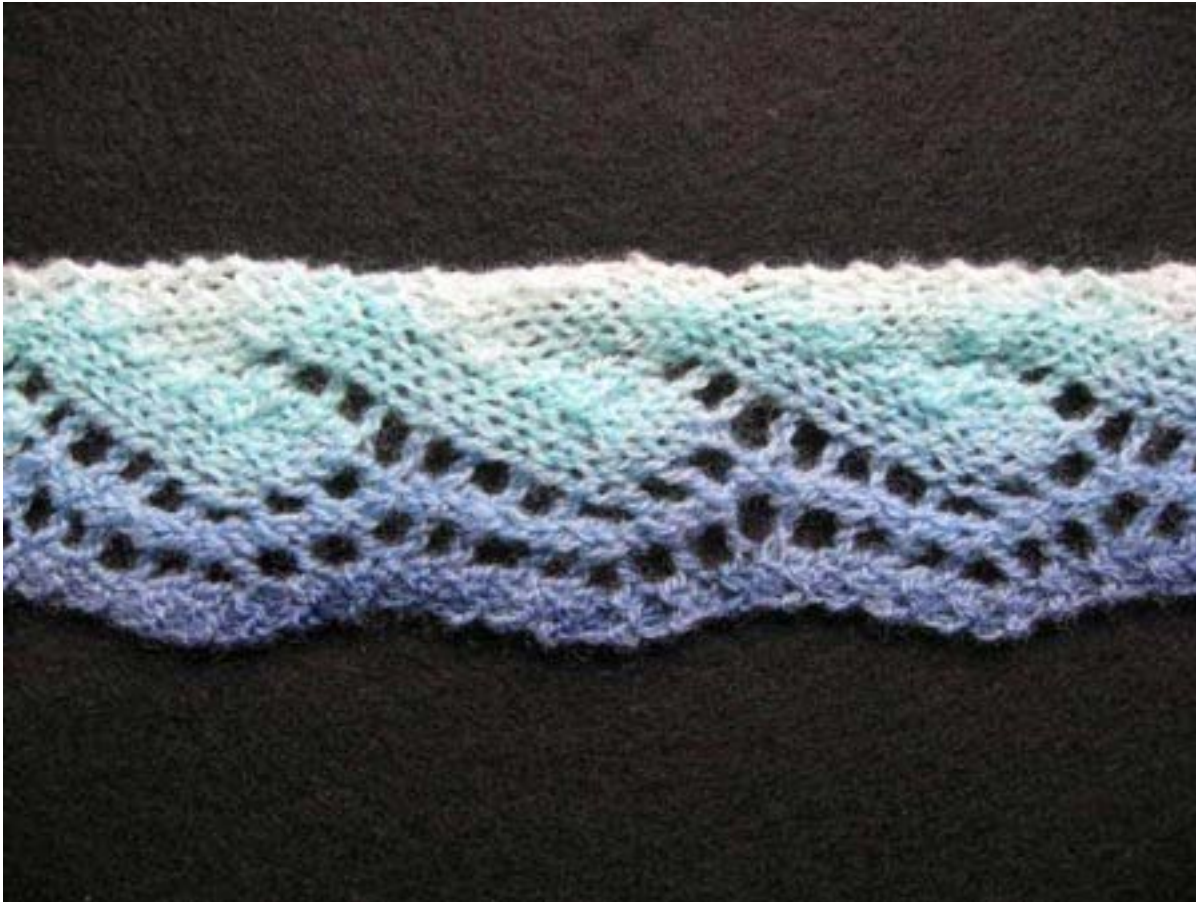


by Linda Whiting

Swatch by swatch notes and tips for how Linda manipulated her dyes for her beautiful lace painting results.

Wave Edging



This edging I painted with blended blues. The first color I used was a light turquoise and I painted using a plastic dropper (the medicine squeeze type) along the lower edge of the wave following the curl. The swatch was quite damp having just been squeezed out. The dye spread up into the wet edge and I helped it along the way by prodding the color along the wave and letting the bleed effect create lighter areas at the edge of the wave as if it were foam. The second color was a medium blue that I painted with the dropper along the middle row of stitches in the pattern. It spread into the

stitches joining the wave and toward the outer edge. The third color was a deeper blue with a touch of violet. I applied it at the very edge and allowed it to blend with the second blue. I liked the way the colors blended on this swatch. It was relatively easy to manipulate them with a small tool to assist the blending.

Leaf Edging



This one was a bit trickier - I used the darkest color at the sawtooth edge and manipulated it up into each leaf. I was interested to see how it would blend. The dye spread a bit more than I wanted it to do up into the open work. This was okay as the color got lighter and lighter and could be thought of as transition coloring. The green was the first applied and the edge was probably damper so there was a bit more spread there than I wanted. It was a successful blending of color in the leaves and could be fun to play around with - Colors need not be strong to blend - and spraying with the citric acid did allow the drift of color to soften. It was possible to touch the blue to the red for the stem and vein, the red to the light orange, etc. to extend the blended color. If I had done this with the

board on a vertical slant, it would have minimized the color spread.

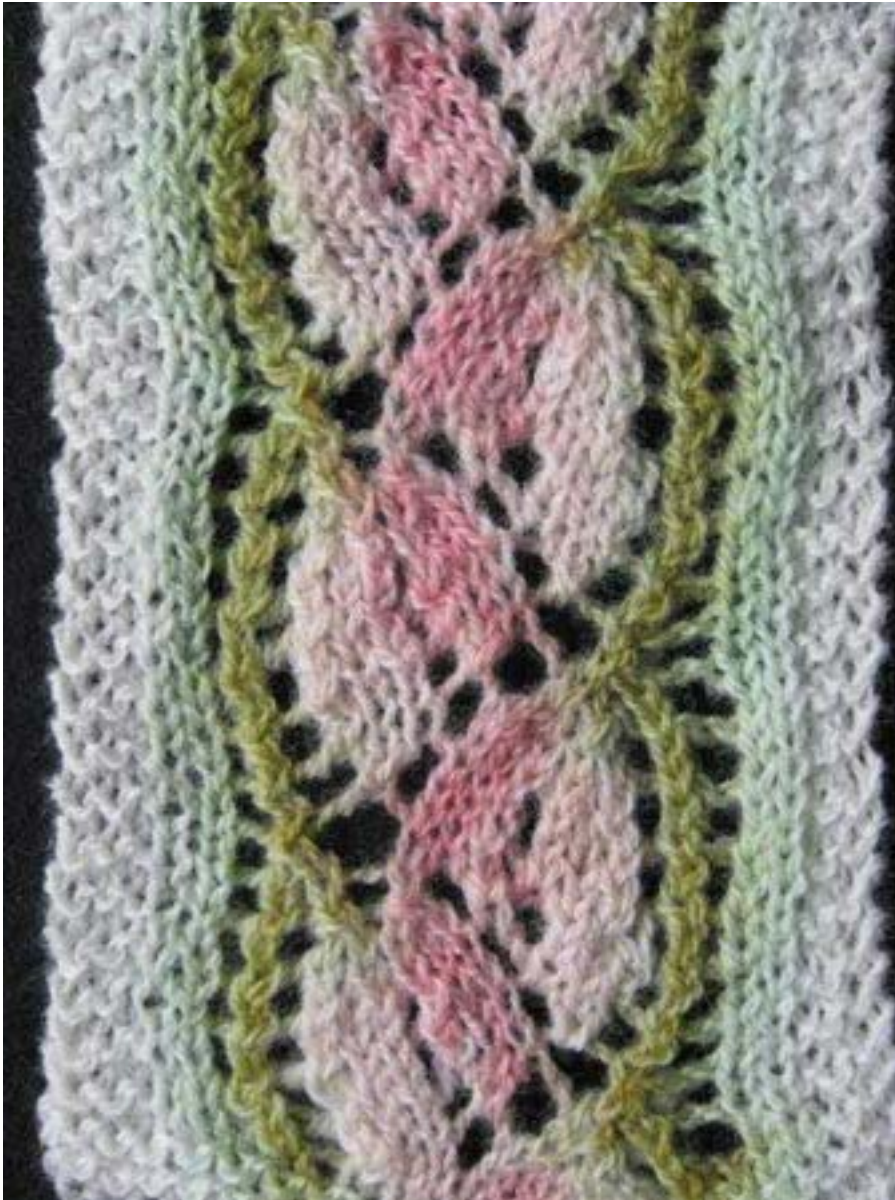
Double Leaf



It's interesting that the camera made this swatch look like it only had flecks of color. To the eye, the whole swatch is a soft heathery green color. This is an example of a close-knit pattern. The easiest

way to paint this was to color the whole thing and then deepen the color on the veins of the leaves and shift the bluer green of the original color toward a yellower green to play up the leaf. This sample is relatively subtle and could be used for a lovely effect with limited color, especially if someone was concerned that more colors would be too much to try on a first try painting knitted lace.

Day Flower



This worked pretty well. I used a pale pink for the flower and a yellowy green for the "stems" element in the pattern. The color struck well enough and it was not until much later that the bluer green halo effect showed up. It is very light and perhaps makes it a prettier piece that if the stems stood by themselves. The flowers did not seem to have enough definition so I added a tiny bit of darker pink along the top edge to separate each flower from the next one. This came out like a soft Victorian paper cut. Worked carefully, I think each color held its own and yet they combined to create a nice effect together.

Fern/Wheat



This swatch deals with painting negative space - or lace in which the holes make the figure. I began with a darker green along each center rib. This spread a bit to softly suffuse the surrounding stitches. The halo effect worked well on this pattern but after it had a chance to set a bit I added just a little more color to the stems to give them a bit more needed definition. Using just golden colors it could resemble wheat. The golden greens were used to resemble fall ferns. The halo was extended by spraying the swatch with citric acid to bind the color and soften the halo.

Lily of the Valley



This is a curious little swatch. I did not want the color to seep into the nups but to surround them. Just adding color for a 'stem' did not play up the pattern enough. The nups were lost. By adding soft color behind and around the nups they became a stronger element in the pattern. On one side I added the bluer green to see if it created more character and depth. Different color greens could be used to shift this any number of ways but I think adding a slightly darker color below the nups enhances the white and gives the pattern more definition.

Ribbon Lace



Again, the camera picked out the colors when they were fully in the yarn. This is an open pattern with some closely knit areas. The swatch was fairly dry when I applied the color. It had to go on in tiny dabs since a large bead of water would only sit on the top of the yarn and then spread beyond where I wanted it to go working over the plastic. I used a medium pastel blue/violet in a citric acid - no water solution to paint the ribbons. For the most part the color stayed right where I wanted it but there were a few places where the color strayed from the ribbon. For this swatch I decided to play that up by using a very diluted solution to color the whole piece. This doesn't really show in the photo, but the background is a pale lavender blue. This morning after a night of drying, I touched the ridge stitches with a darker version of the same color and let it sit a bit. Then I touched the area just next to the ridge with a little acid solution to blend the color down into the ribbon. Instead of leaving it sitting flat I brought it in and stood it up next to the wood stove to dry. The color homogenized a bit more than I wanted it to but I was anxious for it to dry. If you look at the photo you can see the ribbon on the right doesn't have as much definition -- that one I didn't add any extra dye to this morning. I am sure that if I had left the board flat there would have been even more definition showing in those two ribbons.

Conclusions

Use a very light hand. Better to use a light pastel and have a subtle result that you can live with than to use strong color and be disappointed with the effort.

Practice on a swatch or two -- learn ahead of time how the dye behaves.

Check on the colors a little while after they have been applied -- you may have some surprises. An eye dropper works best for controlling the amount of dye when working on small details. If you are painting the whole piece of lace (a large shawl for instance) you can use a foam brush and lay the color on in broad strokes.

Do not have the fabric too wet or the colors will spread away from where they are applied. It is difficult to isolate individual stitches or figures in the pattern as the colors will want to wick away from where they are applied.

Painting lace is fun and interesting -- especially when the whole piece is painted and you plan to allow the colors to blend. Some effects just happen because of the nature of the dyes and the knitted fabric.