Blackwork Needlecase:

Elizabethan Filling Patterns

Materials   (* = included in kit)

28 count linen* (remember linen edges need to be bound before working)

Floss - Black *

(use a single thread of floss for all filling and outline patterns)

Needle*

Felt*

transfer/pattern marker pen or pencil

Instructions

This kit offers you 2 options for creating a needlecase.

Option 1 -- For Intermediate Stitchers --Transfer the design (on the reverse side of this sheet) to the linen with a tranfer pencil or washable pen (blue) available at any craft store. Then fill each area of the flowers with a filling pattern. You can choose to use several different patterns. Outline the flowers and the tendrils in stem stitch.

Option 2 -- For Beginning Stitchers -- Draw an outline of the case - 7" wide by 4" tall. Draw a line mid way, which is the fold line for the case (3 1/2") and a line half way between top and bottom. You now have 4 sections. Do a different filling pattern in each. Outline each section all the way around in Stem Stitch.

See reverse for information on working the filling patterns.

Additional Finishing Hints: To make a bolder outline, whip the stem stitch with an additional thread of black floss or gold.
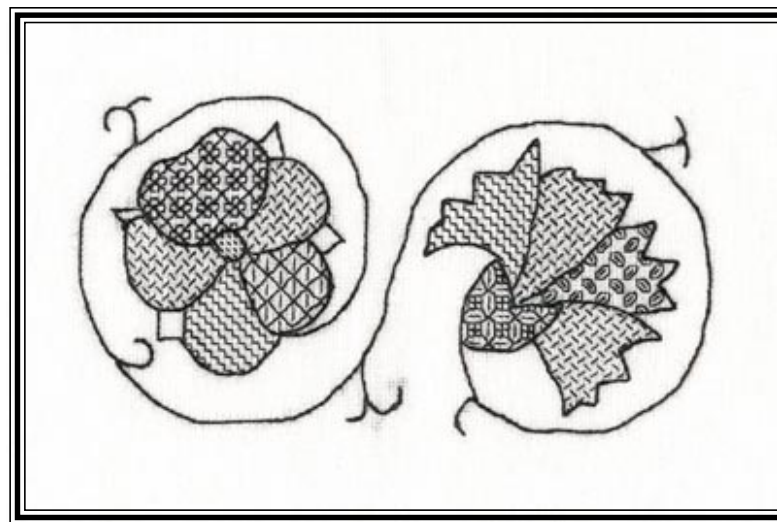
Finishing the Case: Fold the edges of the case under to the wrong side and tack in place. Trim felt to 1/4" less than finished linen. Attach felt to linen with a buttonhole stitch. You may wish to add some sort of closing such as ribbon ties.
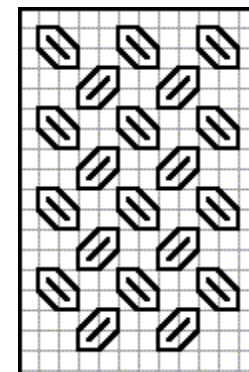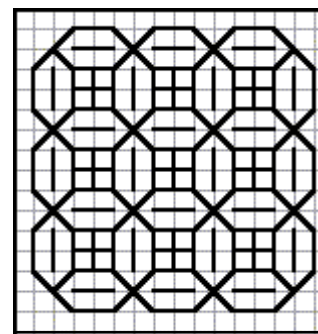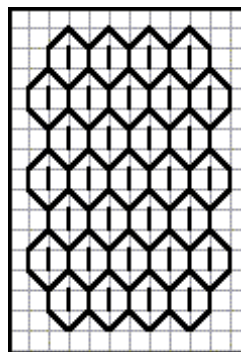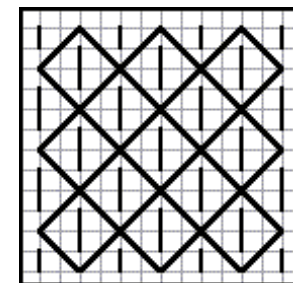
Sources

Fill Patterns (additional pattern on back of sheet)
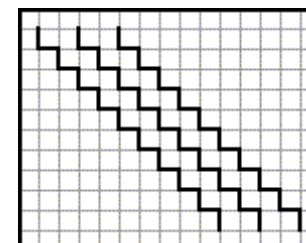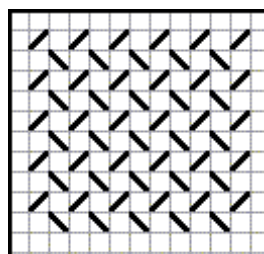
Hints and Techniques for Doing Blackwork:

Blackwork is about making lines that in turn form patterns. Therefore, the objective is to make the lines as clean as possible.

1. Keep your needle as perpendicular to the fabric as possible. Since your thread follows your needle, you want the thread as straight in the hole as you can get it.

2. Blackwork is not about pulling on the fabric or looping. Keep your tension even -- not too tight and not too loose.

3. Anchoring threads -- use an away or waste knot to start and leave enough to weave the end in after. When using a single thread you can usually whip the thread around prior stitches on the back side of the fabric. If the fabric is thin you will want to make your tails look like the line of stitching For instructions on this technique see Marion Scoular "Why Call It Blackwork".

4. When determining how to work the pattern you need to break the pattern down into "runs". The objective is to do the pattern in the cleanest, neatest manner with the fewest overlap in threads or threads flowing on the backside where there is no thread on the front side. Such threads tend to show through the fabric and detract from the crispness of the pattern. See the example to the right.

5. Plan on doing any side trips on the first or outward run.

6. Determine if the pattern is linear, repeating, or diagonal in nature. The patterns here have both both linear and diagonal elements. This will help determine your runs. Remember there are many ways to work any pattern and no one right way.

7. Sharing holes - the debate is whether to use a blunt needle and not pierce the thread resulting in a slight offset of stitches or to pierce the thread and make the lines perfectly straight. Your choice.

8. When doing the filling stitches within the flower parts, you will need to do compensating stitches to make the patterns fit.
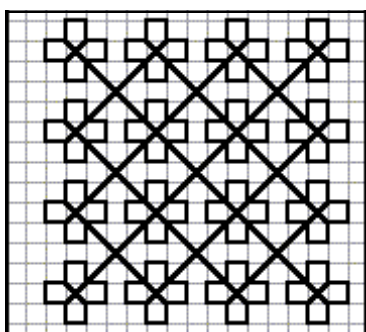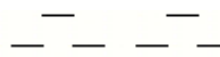
Stitches:
Double Running
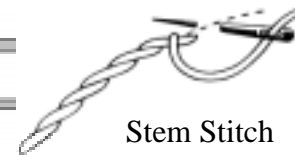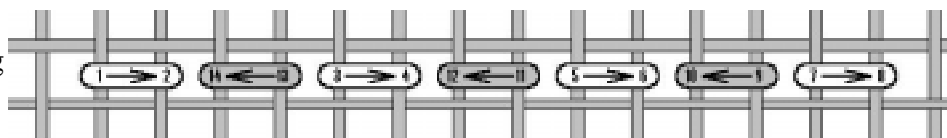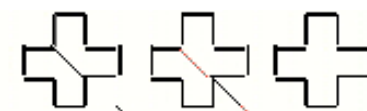
Stem Stitch

Breaking Down A Pattern:

The cross pattern can be broken down into the runs as shown here. This pattern has both linear and diagonal elements, each of which needs to be treated as separate runs. There is no one way to break down a pattern.
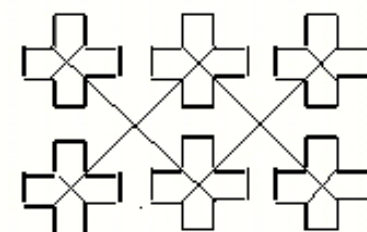
row 1 run 1
L-R

row 1 run 2
R-L

row 1 run 3
L-R

row 1 run 4
R-L

row 2 run 1
Diag Down

row 2 run 2
Diag Up

repeat diagonol run as needed then reverse angle