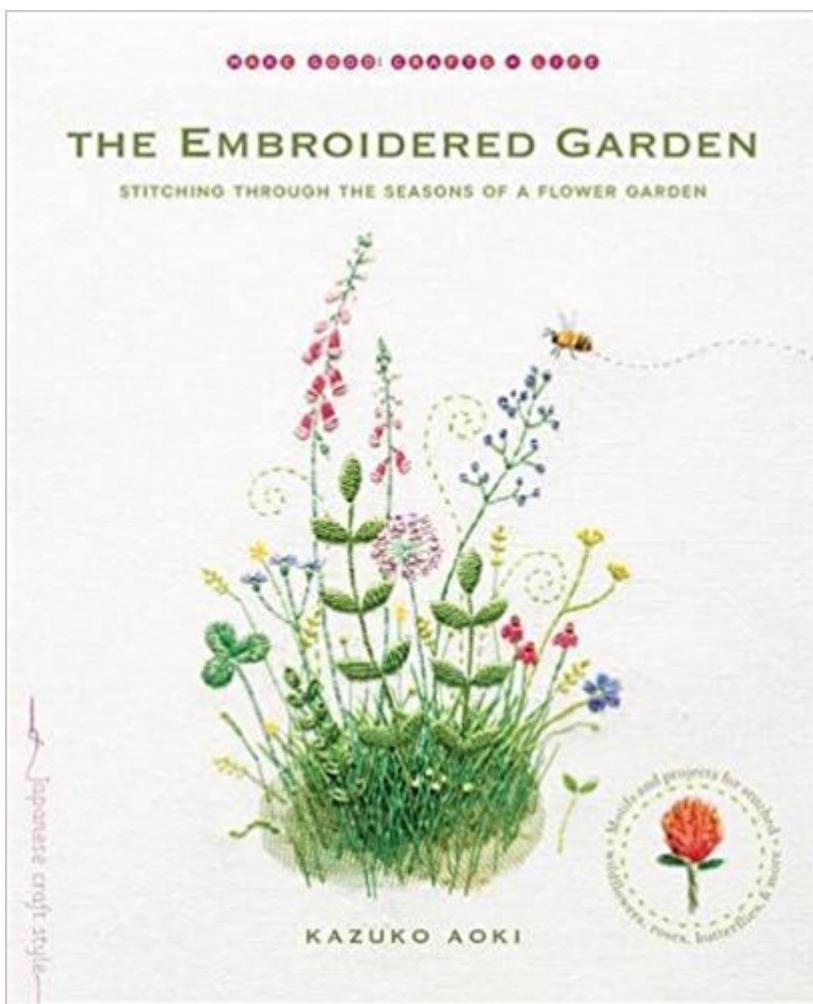


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# The Embroidered Garden: Stitching Through The Seasons Of A Flower Garden (Make Good: Crafts + Life)



## Synopsis

Whimsical, beautiful embroidery motifs created by an avid gardener—stitch roses, bees, or whole garden scenes. Kazuko Aoki has a unique talent for translating the beauty of the garden with needle and thread. By offering forty motifs, Aoki invites us to explore her gardens through embroidery. The forty motifs explore the roses and wildflowers that appear season to season, as well as the bees and butterflies that enjoy their nectar. The designs here are exquisite, detailed, and artfully rendered. Beyond the motifs themselves, Aoki also presents projects that feature the embroidery: brooches, notebook covers, pin cushions, and pouches. For those new to embroidery, detailed how-to illustrations are included.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

KAZUKO AOKI is a talented and popular Japanese textile artist whose work is featured in many embroidery magazines and exhibitions. Her delicate pictures are inspired by her great love of nature and the flowers in her own garden, which often provide the starting point for her creative designs. Kazuko loves to combine other embroidery techniques with cross-stitch to introduce a beautiful and unexpected element in her designs and in the process create an original new style.

I collect needlework books and don't know if I more like the old classics or brand new books like this that may be bound to become a classic. Very many books are being published by Japanese

designers recently and their perspective adds a different dimension to our Western ways. Omigosh! I just learned a new word: atelier. (I have a BA in English so I have no business not knowing this word!) It's first mentioned in the Introduction where author Kazuko Aoki relates that her first interest is her garden and from that stemmed her desire to capture its beauty in needlework. It's the ever-changing plants and flowers of the season that keep this endeavor always fresh."Atelier" means an artist's or designer's studio or workshop and Ms. Aoki encourages us to begin with a journal or diary of plants and flowers we like and translate them into potential drawings and then needlework designs. We are first presented with a pretty photo of her Garden Diary which is covered with embroidered linen with images of several plants, a spade, topiary, watering can, and garden boots. She says she began keeping this diary when she first started gardening and she uses it to reminisce on what she's done, to memorialize what she is currently doing and to make notes on what she would like to do in the future. She explains how to make this journal later on in the book. (A huge problem, though, is that she gives no clue about the pages of the journal. She doesn't talk about covering a printed book and I have no idea if all the pages are made of linen like the front and back cover where she practices stitches or if they're paper upon which she writes and draws. It's probably the latter but it's not good that she doesn't display the inside of the journal and the list of materials gives you no clue.)The book is very well laid out: she begins with Spring and each season is covered over 8 to 10 pages. Each season has a paragraph discussion of what flowers excite her for that season and pictures 7 embroidered flowers on the left-hand page and then a larger picture of a wreath of completely different flowers also of the season on the right-hand page. Spring and Summer also have a picture to stitch with a bunch of flowers together and every season has not only individual stitched pictures on linen but also cute projects like frogs or bugs on throw pillows or a linen-covered cork board with pockets for notes and letters and bands to hold other paper. You could also pin paper onto the board. She shows detailed photos of how she get inspiration from her garden and translates them into sometimes 3-D designs. (Again, though, she shows a bunch of butterflies with raised wings and I can't tell if that's stumpwork or not. The whole back of the book is the patterns for all the projects which could have been improved if they weren't so fine and with quite small-font labels and directions. In her stitch "catalog" (as opposed to guide), she diagrams 19 different stitches: although they cover only two pages, they're remarkably easy-to-follow. The most unusual part of the book though is "Kazuko's Stitch Lessons" on pages 49-52. These begin with standard Material's and Tools; then Basic Techniques of transferring designs onto fabric and using a hoop; then Extra Techniques like how to use applique and needle felting; and finally Lessons on Finer Points like how best to make French knots, weaving stitch, and work with ribbon

embroidery. The single best thing in the entire book to me is the "Secret Finishing Techniques" on page 51. She displays how she finishes framed pieces: sprays them with a very fine mist of water and uses a wet Q-tip to "fix" the stitches by carefully smoothing them down, gently enough not to make them fuzzy. She shows that this is the best way to make satin stitches be perfectly parallel and neaten all other stitches. Finally, if you have drawn the pattern onto the linen, the water will erase any errant marks. This book is in line with other recently published books and in combination, I think they'll be very useful to expand my vision of designing for myself or at least better stitching others' patterns: *Rebecca Ringquist's Embroidery Workshops: A Bend-the-Rules Primer* *Secret Garden Embroidery: 15 Projects for Your Stitching Pleasure* *Shakespeare's Flowers in Stumpwork* (Milner Craft Series)

This book is well titled. The important part to me is the clear flower and insect patterns which are divided among the four seasons. The photographs of the completed work are lovely, and clear enough to see the original stitches. The directions to replicate the work are clear and complete. It is important to me that the directions also include the DMC thread numbers so that if the directions are followed the work actually looks like the photographs. OK. my needlework is not that as exquisite as Kazuko Aoki's but at least the shape and colors are true to the photographs. Directions for each stitch are also given in bold and easy stages. I embroidered a row of delicate flowers along a pillowcase for my pre-teen granddaughter and she loves it. I practice on pillow cases just above the border because I hate to practice on scraps and then toss it. This time I may have to place a row of the delicate flowers along several plain white cases because every kid in the family wants one. I am so happy to find this book. It is different from the color drenched Elizabethan things I've been doing. This book is perfect for beginners and for the really experienced.

A wonderful book on the embroidery of seasonal flowers and projects. It has detailed instructions for the projects with diagrams and pictures. I look forward to making some of them and creating my own.

I love the book, wish her thread was sold in the US. Unfortunately she does not reference another brand of linen thread nor the wt she use so that you buy the closest equivalent thread.

This is a must have book for embroiderers! So beautiful and inspiring. The author is sharing some very sweet secrets.

This is a lovely book with lots of pictures and ideas for projects using the patterns. Half the book has photos and the second half shows the reader how to make the projects. Just poring over any page is enough for a Zen moment.

Gorgeous, gorgeous book, for all levels. You can easily build upon each technique to create fantastical pieces.

I received this beauty today. The quality of this book is great. I am going to enjoy embroidery again. It has been a long time. What an inspiration!

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