

BRANCH OUT

Nature has crafted trees to be the largest life forms that have ever existed on our planet. They have given shelter, shade, food and inspiration for centuries to artists, poets and storytellers. Let us celebrate their beauty and diversity by using them as a basis for **composition and design**. In this class we will discover the different **shapes, patterns, lines, textures, colours and symbolism** of trees while experimenting with **design** and using **various piecing and appliqué techniques** to make a beautiful quilt top. These will include foundation piecing, block making and appliqué (hand, machine and reverse) There will be a feast of visual inspiration as well as discussions on embroidery, quilting and finishing. So branch out and try something new by making stunning, well-designed quilt top based on trees. You may choose to make representational tree images, or branch out into something completely new.

Class Requirements:

- Basic sewing supplies for hand and machine work:
- Pens and pencils for writing and marking fabric
- Rotary cutter and mat
- Fabric and paper scissors
- A decent -sized notebook or drawing book (i.e. not one of those dinky little things that fits in your top pocket!)
- Paper for cutting up, in black, grey and white. Two sheets of each will be adequate but you may want to have a few different shades of grey or beige for tonal variety.
- Glue stick
- Machine with extension cord and suitable plug and adapter. Make sure your machine is in good working order, cleaned, oiled and serviced if necessary.

Fabric:

- VARIETY is important here, as big and varied as you can bring. Remember trees are not all brown and gray but have a stunning range of color in leaves and bark. You may also want to use colors and prints that are not related to nature but that just please you, or suggest a mood. Make sure you have a good tonal range of lights, mediums and darks including black and white. Among your fabrics try to include small and large patterns, dots, spots, stripes, checks, hand-dyes and commercial solid colours.

- Threads: neutral colours in light, medium and dark, or to match your fabrics, or even as a contrast.
- Stabilizer: you may want to include some Stitch-and-Tear and some fine Vilene (plain and iron on). I find this very useful in preventing fabric puckering.
- Fusible: your choice of the various products available.

Any books, pictures, poems or other inspirational material that the rest of the class might enjoy. There are some wonderful images available in books or on websites. You could even look at my “Trees’board on Pinterest.

Class preparation:

Let's start having fun with this right now. Start LOOKING at trees around you and making notes and sketches of what you see. Take your camera everywhere and record what you are seeing. Along with the color variations, try a black and white film to see the effects the starkness of bare trees against the sky or buildings. Collect leaves and press them. Pile bits of bark, seed pods or cones into a glass bowl and enjoy their shape and texture.

The more preparation you do, the more you will get out of the class and the more satisfying your work will be enabling you to really Branch Out!