

GERANIUM OVAL

by Peggy Hannum

Heirloom Patterns, 50" x 36"

3 & 4 cut dyed wool on linen

picture on front cover

Hydrangeas and geraniums with their miniature petals shaping a beautiful blossom have for years fascinated me as hooking projects. The closest I came to actually zeroing in on one of these in my 17 years as a McGown teacher, has been to plan and dye for both types of floral rugs. Since I enjoy dyeing even more than hooking, the subtle dyeing satisfied my urge for a while. More recently, before I retired, I decided in one of my classes to plunge my students into hooking a hydrangea blossom, planning which petals were on top and which receded into a darker shading to capture depth and roundness.

However, once retired, and looking through patterns collected through the years. I came back to an old oval burlap purchased many years ago from Bob Zeiser, whose mother, Louise, was the creator of many of the beautiful Heirloom designs. I had always put this aside as I love ovals. They seem to nest nicely in just about any space, beside the bed, in an entrance to a room.

Now retired, and looking over my long list of 'wish to dos' and 'the great unfinished', I decided that the Geranium Oval's time had come! My very favorite colors are reds: red-reds, orange-reds, blue-reds, whatever. The geraniums would become 2 shades of red with green leaves on a dark background, and don't forget the spot to pull it all together. I gravitate toward dramatic, and what better than red and green on black!

I was preparing for my yearly trek to Maryland Shores Rug Hooking School and signed up again with my friend and mentor, Nancy Blood. Nancy wove her magic and mailed me formulas for reds, greens black and a spot. In each rug that Nancy has planned for my yearly trip to Ocean City, MD, she would choose a group of dye formulas from a different teacher. Through the years I've learned so much about dyeing formulas and rug planning from Nancy, to say nothing about hooking techniques.

My friend, Helen Lynch from my classes and fellow MD Shores traveler, offered to copy the burlap pattern onto linen for me which is no small undertaking considering the myriad of small flowers and petals. (Hint: Keep the original burlap at hand for that occasion when something doesn't quite mesh!) As a matter of fact – 5 petals in each flower, and approximately 5 to 6 flowers in each of 15 blossoms. Do the math, which you probably shouldn't do, but I can't help myself with something so tedious, especially since I was putting 7 to 8 values in each petal. Don't ask me why; it just happens.

The end product is lovely, but, oh my! I find hooking meditative, like weeding my garden, which is a good thing since this rug offered me many hours to lose myself in my thoughts. When you use an 8 value swatch repetitively, you don't have to think much, just start with v.8 and work down to v.1 or vice versa. But again, pay attention to which flowers are on top and which are underneath as contrast is everything: dark against light and light on top of dark, to keep each petal distinct.

I love my geranium oval. However, I've embarked on a sunflower project which I am attacking in a 'painterly' fashion. This one takes a lot of attention and thought as each petal is a new creation, a different way of approaching a project. I love rug hooking as it provides so many ways to imagine an image, so many boxes to move out of.

FORMULAS

Reds: NCB (Nancy Blood) 120 over Woolrich Scarlet 401 and Dorr orange 456 - 4 8 value swatches of each

Greens: NCB 93 over Dorr 101 and Dorr 102 and Dorr grey 8218 - 4 8 value swatches of each

Background: NCB Black Olive 42 over 1 yard of Dorr 44 Antique Black - need 2 and ¼ yds

Spot: NCB 246 (not yet published) over 1 yd. Dorr grey 8218: ¼ t. Reseda, ¼ Olive Green, ¼ Myrtle green, and 1/8 Burgundy each in 1 cup of boiling water and ¼ c. vinegar. Use spot method.

If you drop a yellow hat in the red sea, what does it become?

It becomes wet!

Where do crayons (or dye jars) go on vacation?

Color-ado!