



Fabulous Felt Flowers

By Wendy Bailye

Make these beautiful flowers to adorn art works, clothing, bags, hair, hats, presents and home wares. Wire the stems and put them in a vase! You will be amazed at what you can create so effortlessly. These flowers were originally created at a social felting weekend at Jondaryan Woolshed (in rural QLD), but the technique has been refined over the years. They are very simple to make and stunning to behold.

- **Yarn** cotton yarn scraps, or non-felting wool scraps for stamens (yellow or colour of choice)
- **Notions** 25cm fine silk Paj/Pongee, muslin, cotton voile or georgette silk. This is enough fabric for approx 4 flowers, depending on fabric width. Fabric can be plain or patterned as long as it is 100% natural and can be easily blown through. You may use recycled fabric scraps (about 20cm square), as long as they are in the fabrics mentioned above; two 50cm x 50cm pieces of bubble wrap (20 inches x 20 inches); one 50cm x 50cm piece of nylon tulle net; carded merino wool tops (rovings) in colours of your choice. 30cm long piece of roving for stem and 20cm piece for flowers. This will be enough wool for approximately 6 flowers; knitting or embroidery wool scraps (must be wool or wool blend and not machine washable/superwash); container for warm water; soap; plastic bag; old towel



Step 3



Step 3 Cont.



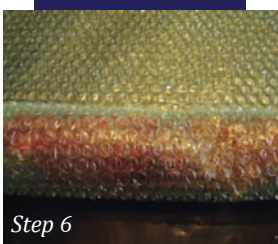
Step 4



Step 4 Cont.



Step 5



Step 6

Step 1

Place the bubble wrap bubble side up on a flat surface. Place warm water in your container and swish your bar of soap until the water is a little frothy. Take soap out.

Step 2

Cut a 20cm circle of fabric (use a plate as your guide). Place the fabric circle on your bubble wrap. Don't worry if the edges are a little tatty or your cutting isn't perfect. Cut six 8cm long lengths of cotton yarn for stamens and put aside.

Step 3

Pull out six 8cm lengths of wool top (rovings). Hold the wool tops in one hand and with your other thumb and first finger pinch/pull out a length of wool from the end of the wool tops. Only pull on the first 1cm of the roving to get a nice layer—not too thick. If it is too thin add another fine layer on top.

Twist both ends of each petal (like waxing a moustache!) until you have a nice petal shape. After twisting the ends, pull out the center of the petal on both sides so it is fatter in the middle (very important otherwise your petals will be too skinny). Place on the silk circle, radiating from the center.

Step 4

Cut your knitting yarn scraps into tiny pieces and sprinkle on top of the wool tops. You can also lay the knitting yarn in a pattern over the wool roving, and/or outline each petal in yarn. When you are happy with the design, cover the flower with the piece of netting.

Step 5

Dip your old grocery bag into the soapy water and apply the wet soapy bag to the (still net covered) flower. Pat gently until the wool is very flat and wet right through. If the wool roving is still puffy add more water. Don't rub! If it is dripping remove excess water by covering it with a dry towel. Pat lightly with flat hands once only. If you remove too much water it won't felt. Take off towel. Remove net carefully.

Step 6

Roll the flower up tightly in the bubble wrap. Put the towel on the table, with your rolled up bubble wrap on top. This will catch any excess water once you start to roll. Roll bubble wrap back and forwards for 40 rolls. Unroll and carefully straighten up the flower stretching it back into a circular shape. Carefully stretch the middle of the petals outward by pulling on either side to fatten up the petals so they won't be too thin. Do this to each petal. Smooth out creases. Re-roll the bubble wrap, each time starting from a different side. Roll for 40 rolls (160 rolls

altogether). The wool should now have adhered to the silk and have started to harden and shrink.

Step 7

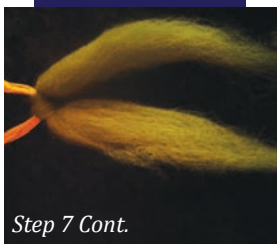
Cut a 1cm slit in the centre of the flower. Pull out a long 30cm length of roving in a stem colour. Hold the wool roving and tear a long piece from the side of the roving, about 1cm in diameter. It should separate off easily. Lay this on the table top. Lay the stamens across the wool roving halfway along the length and tie the wool roving in a knot around the stamens. Pull knot tight. Dip the stamens and knot briefly in the soapy water. The stem section can stay dry for now. Pass the wool knot through the hole in the flower from the outside of the flower to the center. Make sure the knot is sticking through the flower at least 1cm.

Step 8

Carefully gather up the flower around the stamens and place on the flat palm of one hand. Double check that the stamens and knot are sticking through the hole by at least 1cm. Place the other palm over the flower and rub hands backwards



Step 7



Step 7 Cont.



Step 8



Step 8 Cont.



and forwards over the knotted section only for five minutes or until the knot has secured to the base of the flower. Pull the flower petals at the top of the flower gently apart and look inside to the stamens and make sure everything is stuck together. Shape the flower a little so that all the folds of petals sit evenly. Now wet the stem section and roll it between your palms backwards and forwards until it is hard (at least 5 minutes). Rub the flower petal section between your palms very vigorously until it starts to shrink. After 20 rubs open out the petals so they are not felting together and shape them a little, stretching and pulling as required. As before, pull out the center of the petals so they stay fat and don't become too thin. Repeat this process at least four times until you are happy with the shape and the petals are hard. The harder the felt the better the finished flower will stay in shape and the more sculptural it will be. One of the biggest mistakes made in felt making is not to harden the felt enough. You can add a little extra soapy water if the flower dries out with the rubbing. Don't use too much. If you do use too much soap or the flower becomes a slippery unmanageable mess, just rinse and keep going!

Step 9

Rinse your flower until the water runs clear. Roll out the excess water in the old dry towel. Reshape and leave to dry in the shape you wish it to be. Trim the stamens if needed. You have made a beautiful, original flower creation!

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Notes

You can vary the size of the flower by varying the size of the silk circle you cut and adjusting the lengths of roving accordingly. Well made flowers will shrink from 40-50% so bear this in mind when sizing. You can change the shape and number of petals for a creative flower experiment. Each flower has a life of it's own and every flower will have its own personality!

Wendy runs felt making classes on all aspects of felt making from her picturesque rural studio in Samford, Brisbane. Special hen's nights and baby showers can be booked by appointment, where a beautiful blanket or wall art is made collaboratively with your friends and family. See www.heartandsoulaustralia.com for class dates, pictures, newsletters and details.

Step 9

