

A Touch of Summer Grasscloth Journal Covers: Leaf Preparation and Sewing Instructions

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HARVESTING AND DRYING LEAVES FOR WEFT

The stems of daffodils and the leaves of Siberian and Flag iris work well for grasscloth. It is best to harvest daffodil stems soon after the blossoms fade, and cut iris leaves while mature, but still green.

- 1** Clean the leaves by washing in a sink or tub with warm water, a squirt of dish soap, and ¼ cup of bleach. Swish for a minute, and rinse with clear water. Be sure to wear rubber gloves and eye protection.
- 2** Spread the leaves to dry in thin layers on newspapers or old window screens, with each layer stacked at 90 degrees to the one below. Alternatively, you can hang them in bundles to dry in a barn or well-ventilated attic. Secure about 30 leaves very tightly with a rubber band at one end, and hang. The leaves take 1 to 4 weeks to dry. The leaves are quite fragile when dry, so handle them with care.
- 3** Once dry, store the leaves in paper or boxes to protect them.

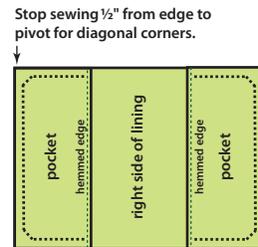
SEWING INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Place press cloths on top of and underneath the grasscloth and gently flatten with a steam iron.
- 2 To secure the cotton weft, spread white glue over the plain-weave cotton areas. Let the grasscloth dry. Once the cloth is dry, apply tung oil to the right side of the journal bodies. Use one rag to apply the oil, and another to wipe off the excess. Lay each cover out flat to dry for 1–2 days in a well-ventilated area. Dispose of the rags safely, as they are flammable.
- 3 Machine wash and dry the lining fabric. Press and cut it and the interfacing according to the schematics in Figure 1.
- 4 Set the pocket lining and interfacing pieces aside. Center and apply interfacing pieces to the wrong sides of the corresponding body lining pieces according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- 5 For the pockets, align the interfacing pieces along one long edge of the pocket pieces and apply according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- 6 Trim the leaves that stick out on the wrong side of the grasscloth, and trim the selvages to $\frac{1}{2}$ " being very careful not to bend the cloth weft-wise. Leaving the pairs of covers attached, iron the 2" interfacing strips to the wrong sides of each end of each cover piece. The interfacing will span the narrow cotton strip as well as 1" or so of the grasscloth. It won't stick tightly to the grasscloth, but will help to prevent breakage.
- 7 On each pocket piece, fold a narrow hem under twice on the non-interfaced edges. Press and machine stitch. Using $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam allowance, sew the wrong side of the pockets to the right side of the lining as seen in Figure 1. Make sure that you sew diagonally across the corners.
- 8 Slip one of your blank journals into the pockets to check for fit. The fabric should fit the journal nicely when closed, but quite loosely when open. If the book doesn't fit easily, open the seams and re-stitch. It is important to make these adjustments at this point, before the grasscloth has been attached.

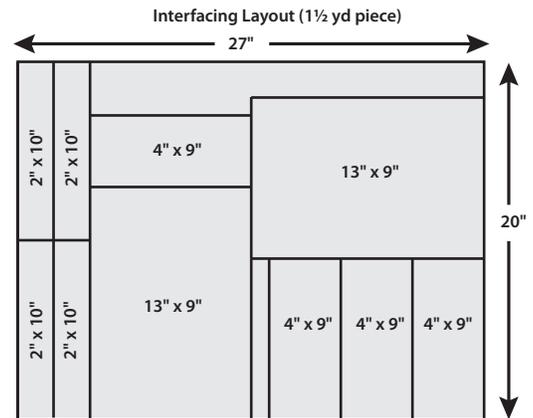
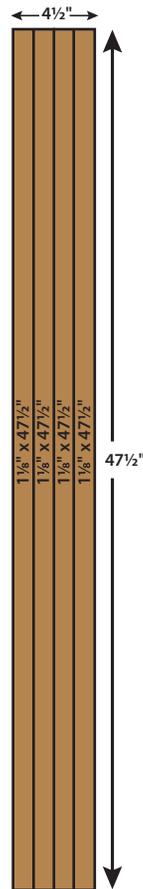
- 9 Using a rotary cutter and mat, carefully cut the journals to $13\frac{3}{4}$ " x 10" rectangles.
- 10 Wear eye protection while sewing. Set your sewing machine stitch length a little longer than usual, insert the leather needle, and using a $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam allowance, sew the grasscloth to the lining, wrong sides together, grasscloth on top. Sew diagonally across the corners as before. Test fit the book into the cover again.

- 11 With the lining side facing you, trim seams to $\frac{3}{16}$ " and corners to $\frac{1}{8}$ ".
- 12 Cut binding according to schematic in Figure 1. To apply binding, start in the center of one long edge of the cover with the grasscloth facing up. Fold the binding around the raw edge of the journal cover so there is $\frac{3}{8}$ " of the binding showing on top; wrap tightly. I found that stretching the binding tightly around the edge and adjusting as I sew works better than pinning. Sew in place $\frac{3}{16}$ " from

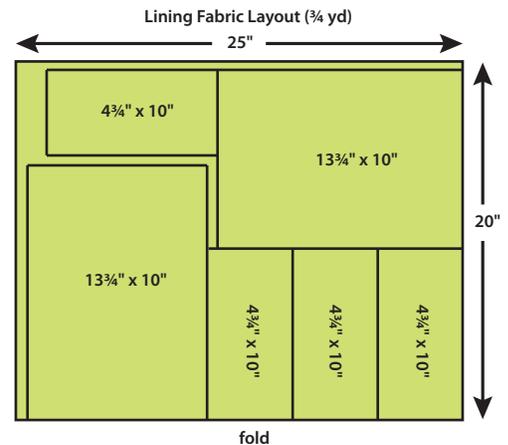
1. Schematics



Ultrasuede Layout



Cut 8 pocket pieces 4" x 9".
Cut 4 body pieces 13" x 9".
Cut 8 end pieces 2" x 10".



Cut 8 pocket pieces 4 3/4" x 10".
Cut 4 lining pieces 13 3/4" x 10".

the edge of the top binding. At the corners, stretch and adjust as you sew, leaving the needle down and pivoting as needed. Go slowly and make sure that all layers are caught in your stitching and that the corners are smooth.

13 When you are 1" away from your starting position, stop and cut the binding at a 45° angle with the longer part on top. Finish sewing.

14 Using a short, sharp scissors, trim the binding a 1/8" from the stitching on the lining side and 3/16" from the stitching on the grasscloth side where needed.

15 Repeat these sewing steps for the other journal covers.

16 Grasscloth leaves a mess inside your sewing machine, so remove the throat plate and clean the bobbin case.

