

*This sturdy bag collapses into a tiny puddle, making it simple to take to the grocery store. So much more convenient than a big, canvas bag. And the knitting makes for the best kind of puzzle: crazy stitch patterns that work up fast.*



## ***Bid Farewell to Plastic Grocery Bags Forever (And Say Hello to 1971 While You're at It)***

What is it about knitters that makes us think we always have to have a knitted present for someone? A bag is always a welcome present, even if it's a present for yourself. String bags are handy, ecological things to carry around in your purse or the trunk of your car, but they generally have a crunchy granola "I compost in my kitchen" feeling. Not this one. When Ann Buechner sent us a snapshot of this bag hanging over the back of a chair, we mistook it for a scarf, it's so pretty.

This bag is great fun to knit because it's a sampler of stitches that will seem crazy and new to most knitters. Ann was inspired by Mary Walker Phillips's book *Creative Knitting, A New Art Form* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1971) which is full of extraordinary wall hangings with a macramé vibe. Walker Phillips uses stitches composed of multiple wraps that open up the fabric of her pieces when the wraps are dropped. The bag's rim is worked with Debbie New's bind-off stitch, first used in her Cast-Off Sweater in *The Natural Knitter* by Barbara Albright. We named the bag after the Monteagle Sunday School Assembly in Grundy County, Tennessee, where the fashions of 1971 (and 1878) are alive on cottage porches.


# MONTEAGLE BAG

by Ann Hahn Buechner

## SIZE

About 12" (30.5cm) across and 13" (33cm) long; when stretched strap measures 20" (51cm) and bag stretches up to 22" (56cm) in length.

## MATERIALS

-  fine
- 1 skein of Louet Euroflax Sport, 100% linen, 3½ oz (100g), 270 yd (247m) in berry red
- Size 10 (6mm) 20" (50cm) circular needle, or size needed to obtain gauge
- Stitch marker
- Stitch holder or piece of string
- Extra knitting needle for the 3-needle bind-off
- Tapestry needle

## GAUGE

11 stitches over 4" (10cm) in stockinette stitch in the round

## DIFFICULTY

A sampler of trippy stitches that will call for your concentration the first time around. You will want to crank out many more.

Give yourself a good 6-foot (1.8m) tail to cast on and still have enough to sew up the bottom seam.

Loosely cast on 72 stitches and join in the round, taking care not to twist. Place a marker to mark the beginning of the round.

**Rounds 1–3** Knit

**Round 4** Knit into the front and back of every sixth stitch—84 sts.

## Twisted cross stitch

**Round 5** *Right cross.* Knit two together with a double wrap, but do not transfer to the right needle. Knit the first stitch again with a double wrap, and transfer both stitches to the right needle. Repeat

on each following pair of stitches for the entire round.

**Round 6** Knit each stitch of the round by inserting the right needle knitwise between the two wraps on the left needle, knit the stitch and drop the second wrap on the left needle as you pull each stitch off. Remove the marker, slip the first stitch of the round, and replace the marker.

**Round 7** *Left cross.* \*Knit into the back of the second stitch with a double wrap, but do not transfer to the right needle; knit the first and second stitches together through the back loops with a double wrap and transfer both stitches to the right needle; repeat from \* around on each following pair of stitches.

**Round 8** Repeat Round 6.

**Rounds 9–12** Repeat Rounds 5–8.

**Rounds 13–14** Repeat Rounds 5–6.

## Horizontal stitch

**Round 15** To begin the round, knit into the front and back of the first stitch and slip the left-most of the new stitches back onto the left needle; \* *left cross:* knit into the back of the second stitch, then knit the first and second stitches together through the backs and lift both stitches off the needle; slip the left-most of the new stitches back onto the left needle; repeat from \* for each following pair of stitches in the round. When you reach the marker, slip it to the right needle, slip the first stitch of the round to the right needle and pass the last stitch of the round over the marker and over the first stitch, slip the first stitch back to the left needle.

**Round 16** Repeat Round 15.

**Note** The next stitch, fancy crossed throw, or veil stitch is a long, twisted stitch made by wrapping the yarn around the outside of the needles and pulling the last wrap through the stitch.

**Round 17** Insert right needle into first

stitch on left needle as if to knit. Holding the needles crossed in this position, wrap yarn counterclockwise around the outside of both of the crossed needles—like you're lassoing the needles—4 times. Wrap yarn around the right needle, then slip the yarn between the crossed needles and pull this yarn through the wraps to complete the knit stitch, letting all the wraps fall below the new stitch.

**Rounds 18–20** Knit all stitches.

**Round 21** Repeat Round 17.

**Round 22** Knit until the last stitch of the round; knit the last stitch with a double wrap.

**Note** Cast-off stitch: This stitch looks like macramé and is created by knitting each stitch with a double wrap and passing one of the previous wraps over the new stitch.

**Round 23** Knit the first stitch with a double wrap, reach back with the left needle and pull one of the wraps from the previous stitch over the marker and the new stitch; repeat until you reach the last stitch; knit the last stitch with one wrap, pass one of the wraps of the previous stitch over it.

**Rounds 24–25** Repeat Rounds 22–23.

Bind off for straps.

**Round 26** Purl 14, bind off 28, knit 14 (and place on holder or string), bind off 28.

## Strap

Work back and forth on the 14 stitches on the needle in garter stitch until the strap measures 20" (51cm) when stretched. When complete, join the strap with a 3-needle bind off to the 14 stitches on the holder.

## Finishing

Sew up the bottom seam and fill with something heavy to stretch out the stitches.