

Felted Dollhouse

pattern © 2009 by Jennifer L. Jones

This soft-sided, portable dollhouse could help keep kids entertained on the go without being very heavy or hard to carry. With a little creative imagination, you could create a tiny garden in the "yard" part of the fold-down flap, windows, decorations on the inside walls, and anything else you can dream up to customize it.

The knitting isn't difficult, but even with sturdy felt it still needs reinforcement from plastic canvas and lining, so there's a fair bit of sewing involved. The key to the whole project is in the blocking and lining—it needs heavy blocking to shape it properly, plus the plastic canvas reinforcement and lining. That means this is an advanced felting project, not for newbies. I recommend you read all the instructions in the pattern before starting and make sure you have all the materials you need for finishing before felting.

Finished Measurements: 8.25 inches (length) x 5 inches (width) x 8.25 inches (height) (measurements might vary depending on felting)

Yarn: worsted weight wool for felting, about 220 yds. of each color; sample knit with Patons Classic Wool, one skein each of Too Teal and Chestnut Brown

Needle Size: US 10 / 6mm

Additional Materials:

- * plastic canvas (sample uses stiff #7 mesh)
- * fabric for lining
- * buttons (6 if using elastic button loops, 10 if using the tie method)
- * elastic cord, or ribbon or rick-rack (depending on which button fastening you choose)
- * some kind of blocking form (see felting and blocking below for details)
- * miscellaneous materials for decoration

ABBREVIATIONS

st = stitch

K = knit

P = purl

sl = slip

k2tog = knit two stitches together (decrease)

k2tog tbl = knit two stitches together through the back loops (decrease)

MC = main color (for the main body of the dollhouse)

CC = contrast color (for the base and roof)



PATTERN

Base

With CC, cast on 40 st.

Row 1: sl 1, knit to end

Row 2: sl 1, purl to last st, K1

Repeat these two rows, work 54 rows total. Bind off.

Sides

With right side (the knit side) of base facing you, using MC, pick up 28 st along one side edge (about one stitch in each chained-edge stitch), PM, pick up 38 st along one long edge, PM, pick up 28 st along second side edge—94 st total.

The ridge created by picking up stitches along the edge of the base will be on the outside of the dollhouse.

Row 1: P1, K to last st, P1

Row 2: K1, P to last st, K1

Repeat these rows, working 40 rows total.



Gable Shaping

First gable:

Row 1: k2tog tbl, K to 2 st before first marker, k2tog. Turn.

Row 2: Purl across.

Repeat these two rows until 4 st remain; k2tog tbl, k2tog, turn and p2tog, bind off.

Back wall and second gable:

Join yarn next to completed gable and bind off across the wall.

Work second gable same as the first.

Front Wall Flap

Along front edge of base, with right side (the knit side) facing, pick up 38 st.

Row 1: P1, K to last st, P1

Row 2: K1, P to last st, K1

Repeat these rows, working 40 rows total. Bind off purlwise.

Roof

Cast on 42 st. Knit all rows (garter stitch) for 49 1/2 ridges. Bind off (50 ridges total).

Find the center garter ridge on the roof piece and pin each side of that ridge to the gable peaks—make sure the roof slightly overlaps the gables and back wall. Sew roof to gables and back wall (do not sew the roof to the front wall flap).

pattern from KnitMonster: <http://www.krazyawesome.com/knitmonster>

Handle

The sample uses i-cord (30 inches long before felting). You could also use pre-made purse handles.

Felting and Blocking

Weave in yarn ends. Wash with hot water in your washing machine. The sample was run through two wash cycles to reduce the size as much as possible. The more you shrink it, the firmer the felt will be, but also the more the felt distorts, and the more shaping and blocking will be required.

Once felting is done, the house will need to be heavily blocked. The flap will probably need a good bit of stretching to refine the rectangular shape. The front roof edge by the opening tends to be a bit loose, if it's too wide you can run a sewing thread through it and use that to pull it back into the same width as the rest of the roof.

You'll need to create a form to block the house around. I created one from a cardboard box, cutting one side to form the triangle for shaping the roof, and stuffing it firmly with more cardboard. Other possibilities are CDs, paperback books, or foam blocks used for flower arranging (cut to needed size). Once you've got the form ready, wrap it thoroughly in plastic bags or plastic wrap. Put the wrapped form inside the house and use safety pins to hold the flap in place while it dries. It helps to put a fan on it. Let it dry completely, which might take a couple days.

Lining

Plastic canvas gives the house its structure, you will need a piece in each of the walls and the flap. The roof and floor could be reinforced with plastic canvas, or not, depending on how much structure you want there; I sewed a strip of plastic canvas along the underside of the roof by the opening and left it at that.

Measure the house sides and cut plastic canvas to size. Check the plastic canvas to make sure it fits, it should fully cover the inside walls with just enough space around the edges to sew the lining to the walls.

I used blue fabric to line the inside walls, and green to line the flap (when open, it becomes the dollhouse's yard). Use the plastic canvas pieces as a template for marking the lining fabric, adding a 1/2 inch seam allowance. (Hint: my tape measure is 1/2 inch wide, I used that around the edges of the plastic canvas to mark the seam allowances.) Use an iron to press the seam allowances down, double check again to make sure they will cover the plastic canvas pieces.

Tack the plastic canvas pieces into place. Whipstitch the lining over the plastic canvas.

Buttons

The simplest (and easiest for a child to fasten) would be two buttons on each of the side edges of the flap with elastic loops opposite them, and two buttons on the top edge with elastic loops on the underside of the roof.

The tie method: sew two buttons on the side of the flap, then two buttons on the side wall directly opposite them. Use a ribbon or rick-rack to wrap around the buttons and tie. Sew two buttons on the top edge of the flap and button loops on the underside of the roof.

