

Circles and Other Closed Shapes

Now that you have mastered feathering deep curves, it is time to talk about circles and other closed shapes.

In the previous examples, feathers have been on straight lines, or meandering lines, and symmetry was not a consideration. When you are feathering the inside of a circle, you want your feathers to be approximately the same size and to fill the inside fairly symmetrically, without getting wonky or having odd spacing.

THE PROBLEM

After more than a few wonky feathered wreaths, I finally realized that no matter how hard I tried, the ANGLE of the first feather was always wrong. It was wrong whether I drew it or stitched. The rest of the feathers were OK, but when the first one was wrong, a big gap was left over between it and the final feather that filled in behind it.

THE SOLUTION

The AH-HA moment came when I realized that if I MARKED the first feathers, I could IGNORE those “wrong” feathers when it came time to start stitching. This will become clearer as you read the following information about stitching order, and when you take the time to follow the instructions in Drawing Assignment Number 4.

STITCHING ORDER

I have listed here the basic sequence in which I mark and then quilt a circle. This would also apply to ovals, or other closed shapes in that you are trying to fill somewhat symmetrically.

1. Mark the spine.
2. Mark 4 feathers (2 OT Feather pairs).
3. Stitch the spine.
4. Stitch the inside of the circle, beginning with the THIRD marked feather. (Erase the first two feathers if you feel they will distract you.)
5. Stitch the feathers on the outside of the circle.

NO ALTERNATING

A feathered wreath (whether it be a circle, oval or some other closed shape) is the only time when I abandon my pattern of alternating side to side. I always stitch the inside feathers, in one pass around the circle, and then I stitch the outside feathers.

FITTING IT ALL IN

If you are unable to fit in a full pair of feathers, do not try to squish two feathers into the space of one. If this happen on the inside, retrace the entire feather back to the spine.

If this happens on the outside of the circle, you can either retrace the entire feather back to the spine before backtracking and cutting your thread, or you can do your backtracking and cut your thread on the top of that last feather.

FILLING A SHAPE (I.E. A SQUARED OFF FEATHERED WREATH)

Use what you have learned from working on the outside of a deep curve to stretch your feathers out to the corners. Don't worry about having to flatten the tops of some as you work your way out of the corner. Start on one of the sides of the square, not on a corner.

CONFINING YOUR FEATHERS

If you are want your feathers to be confined to a certain shape, use another circle to draw a guideline, and don't stitch out any further than that drawn guideline.

INSIDE FEATHERS

Depending on the size of the circle you are stitching, and how big your feathers are going to be (are you filling the inside of the circle, or stitching the feathers smaller?) you may need to treat each of the inside feathers as if they are the bottom-most feather of a deep curve: in other words, only re-trace a SMALL portion of the top of each feather. Also, you need to really watch that your feathers are LAYING down on the circle -- which means backtracking, and following the curve of the circle for a lot longer than you probably "feel" is necessary.

THE DIRECTION

I always, always, always, always stitch my feathers CLOCKWISE around the circle. Always. That way, if I have a quilt with 50 wreaths on them, I can be assured that they'll all be flowing the same direction. If you'd rather have yours going counter-clockwise, that's OK. And maybe you don't care if they don't all flow the same way...

Drawing Assignment

SUPPLIES

Ruler

Circles of various sizes

The examples were done with 1.5, 3, 5, and 7 inch diameter circles. I have a pretty big set of acrylic circles, but you could use anything on hand that will let you draw circles in various sizes: up to and including raiding the kitchen cabinets, and pulling out a compass, though you may need to find a 5th grader to remind you of how to use the compass... I have 2 5th graders, I can send you one if you need to borrow. Or you can keep him.

Drawing pad and drawing tools (pens, pencils, several colors of markers)

DIRECTIONS

Squared off feathered wreath

Use your ruler to draw an 8 inch square on a blank sheet of paper.

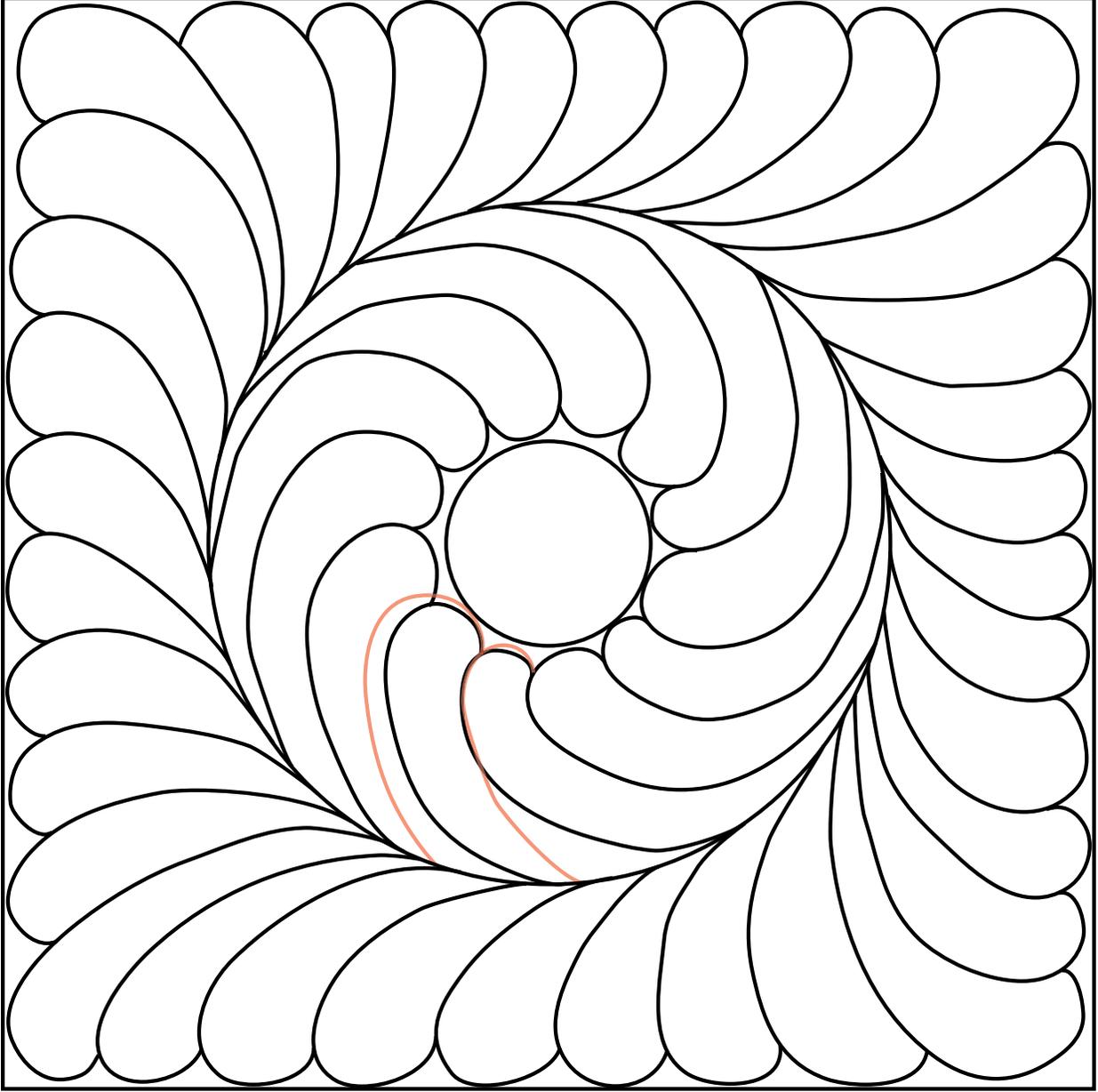
Draw diagonal lines from corner to corner.

Using the diagonal lines as centering guides, center and mark a 5 inch circle and a 1.5 inch circle.

The 5 inch circle will be the spine of your wreath, the 1.5 inch circle is a guide for sizing your feathers on the inside of the circle.

Using a pen or pencil, start drawing feathers on the inside of your circle. After you draw 4 feathers (two feather pairs) switch to a different color pen, marker or pencil. Retrace the 3rd feather and then continue feathering around the rest of the inside of the circle, drawing over top of your first feathers and ignoring them.

Feather the outside of the circle, filling your feathers into the corners of the marked 8 inch square.



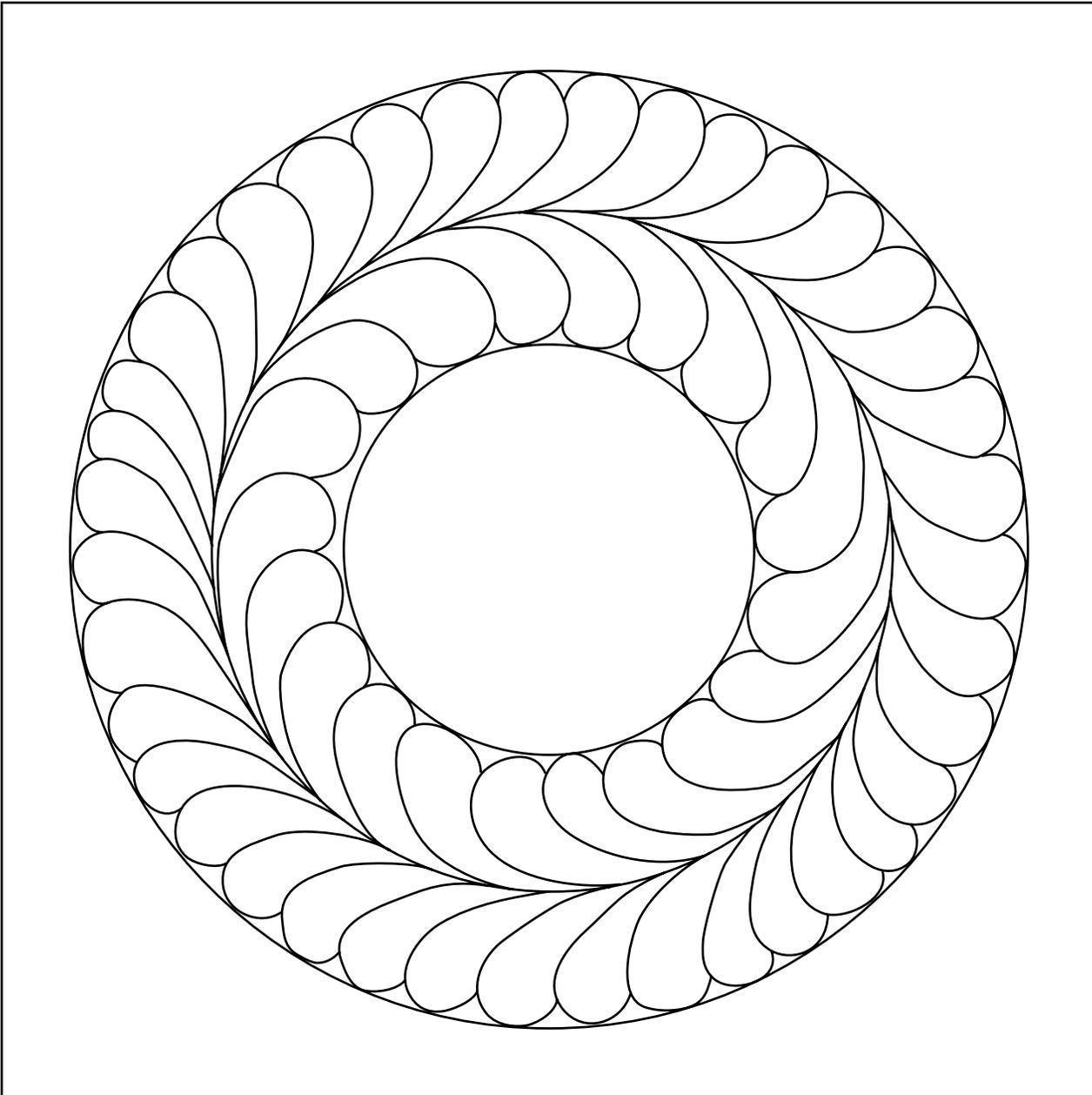
Step by Step Feathers

Confined circular wreath

Use your ruler to draw an 8 inch square on a blank sheet of paper.

Draw diagonal lines from corner to corner. Use the diagonal lines to help you center 3 circles: 3 inch, 5 inch and 7 inch.

Use the 5 inch circle as the spine, and the other circles as guidelines for the size of the feathers. Feather the circle, using the tips to cheat the start of the inside feathers. You'll find that the feathers on the inside of this wreath are easier to draw.



Step by Step Feathers

