



Erindale Tapestry Studio

Laura Berlage

11113N Fullington Road Hayward, WI 54843 (715) 462-3453
laura@erindaletapestrystudio.com www.erindaletapestrystudio.com

Tree of Life Pen Holder Tapestry Kit (Skill Level 1)



Welcome to this colorful and unique tapestry weaving kit! These instructions are designed to help guide you through the process, so you can make your own beautiful creation. Finished dimensions of the tapestry are 3.5 x 10.5 inches, before wrapping onto the pen holder.

If it's helpful, please reference the relevant tutorial videos from Introduction to Tapestry Weaving (Level 1) as a refresher for techniques and methods. The most useful videos for this project include:

- Tying a Weaver's Knot
- Warping a Frame Loom

- Hills and Valleys (part 1 and 2)
- Hatching Shading (for “meet and separate” method)
- Finishing the Tapestry

The kit includes colorful wool weft from our sheep, a full-scale paper cartoon of the design, a filagree tree of life charm (charms may vary per kit), and the wire cupholder. The yarns included are Aran weight, which is slightly thicker than the DK weight we used in class. Enjoy weaving with this yarn and notice how it packs differently from the DK style. You will also notice that it creates a sturdier finished textile, so you can enjoy your decorative holder for years and years.

Warp thread is not included in this kit. Recommended warp thread for Level 1 graduates is #10 cotton crochet thread (in white, natural, or cream). Level 2 students may use Maysville cotton carpet warp (8/4), if preferred instead of the crochet thread.

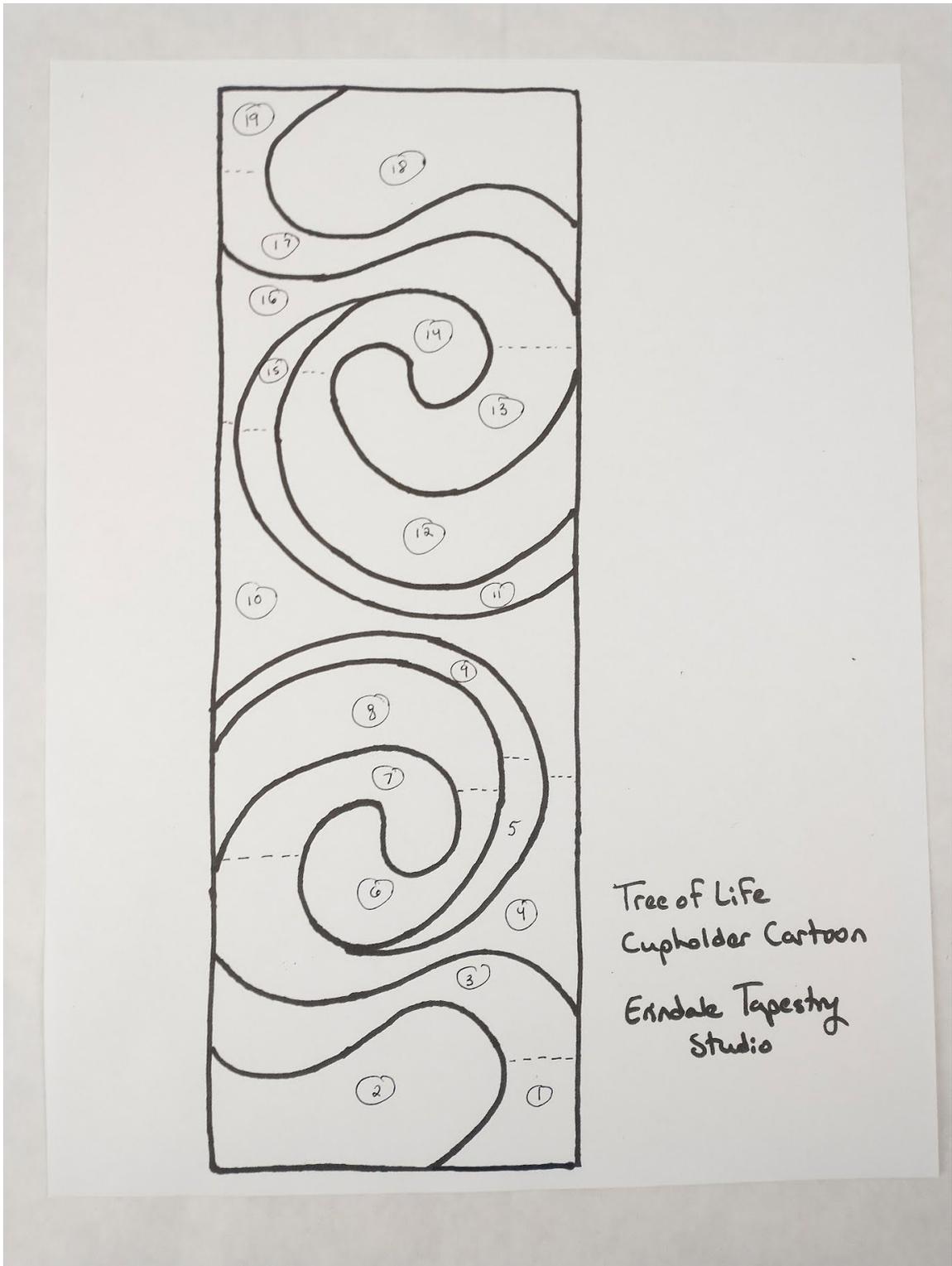
This piece is woven flat and then stitched into a ring around the pen holder. When on the loom, the woven part of the tapestry will measure 3.5 inches wide by 10.5 inches tall. These measurements are important in order for the tapestry to fit around the pen holder. The attachment method allows for minor variations in length, but maintaining a good width measurement will help it best fit the height of the cupholder, as this piece is technically “woven on its side.” (Mine ended up 3.75 inches wide, which still worked just fine going around the cup, so minor variations do work.) This is an excellent project for practicing keeping the sides of your weaving straight, with no draw-in! It’s all about getting enough “wiggle dance” and measuring the width of your piece often to check that the sides remain nice and straight.



First, warp your frame loom at 8 epi (warps per inch), which means 4 loops within each inch mark for 3 ½ inches. Start in the 6th inch section as marked on the loom from the left, warping 8 inches in the figure 8 pattern, starting at the lower left. For the last ½ inch, wrap 2 wraps at the top of the “4th” inch, then tie off at the bottom (it will look like 3 wraps in that ½ inch at the bottom). You should count 14 warp loops at the top of the loom. Adjust the tension and warp spacing as shown in the warping tutorial. Remember not to warp too tight.

Measure out a length of the light green color weft for twining that is a hefty wingspan long. Wrap any extra around the right side of the frame when finished. Press down with your comb and adjust warp spacing to make it an even 8 epi.

Now you are ready to weave!



This piece utilizes hills and valleys weaving technique throughout. This version of the cartoon helps your orient which parts are worked in what order.



Aligning the cartoon behind the piece, dot warps with a sharpie that intersect the pattern for the first couple inches. In this piece, the design starts right away! Start with the brown, working back and forth normally in the shed, paying attention to the dots to know when to move the design over. In this portion, the brown is a hill, but you can see in the photo that the angle is now about to change, so this is where I need to pause with the brown.



At first, the light green is a valley, then it becomes a hill. This is a shape I can complete all at one time—woohoo! Now I can work the brown again, but soon I'll need to dot more warps, so I know what's happening next in the design.

Because this piece is so narrow, I found that most of the time I could press the weft down with my fingers and thumb (pinching hand position, sliding downward) and didn't need to use my comb very often to beat down the work. Experiment with what feels comfortable for you.



Aha, I was able to complete all of the brown in this section, as the top line is all hill shapes. I worked the right side until it came to the top of the light green, then I worked the valley of the light green to the left up through the point at the very left. I then came back to the hump at the right and wove that hill. At the end of each shape, feather off and bury the tail in the piece, to create a clean back and front to the piece.

Pro Tip: once you have some height on the tapestry, use fabric clips (or binder clips or clothes pins) to keep the bottom of the cartoon held in place. I often fold the paper over, so it's just the size of the tapestry. Tall, skinny designs can be easy to distort, so keeping the bottom anchored all the time and the paper just folding away from the work can be very helpful. Do this once you have some height on your piece, so that you aren't fighting the paper cartoon in order to weave.



Now it's time for the dark green—or at least as far as we can take it given these curving shapes. This picture shows you where I have to stop, in order to work the two valley shapes in the middle. I can't take the dark green any farther at this point, as it will create orphaned warps underneath that aren't woven yet.

When working narrower shapes like these are becoming, it's very easy to start weaving too tight, distorting warp spacing. Just pay attention to your wiggle dance as you go and watch that the warps are allowed to stay as straight as possible, instead of being bossed around by your weft. You can use a tape measure to see if the warps are still running at 1/8 inch, or you can also cue in with your cartoon to see if the dots are straying from lining up with the cartoon. Both of these are indicators of warp distortion.



The inner part of the spiral is its most complicated but also it's most beautiful. Here, I first worked brown, then light green. Both of them need to pause at the moment for dark green on the left to fill its shape before they can continue. For light green, I worked the shape up to where it needed to split, then worked the left side, feathered off and then laid my weft back in to work the right side.



With dark green, I worked the left side up to the top of the light green, then feathered off and laid in my tail at the bottom of the valley (the right side of its shape), filling that section. When the right side became level with the left side, I could go all the way across the dark green shape to its completion.

Even very natural curves like these are executed in a stair-step fashion in tapestry. The more you pay attention to exactly where the dots are on your warp, the most natural the curves will appear, especially when viewed at a little distance. If you work mechanically with it, say working 2 turns and then moving 1 warp in succession, when you add color on top, it will straighten out as a hard angle and won't appear as a curve. In hills and valleys technique, I'm not really paying attention to how many "buddies" each step receives, instead listening to how the yarn is working and when it's logical to take on or relinquish a warp in any given color.

Fill as necessary, to keep each color section's top line feeling as straight as possible.



First light green, then brown in the first spiral are finished—yay!

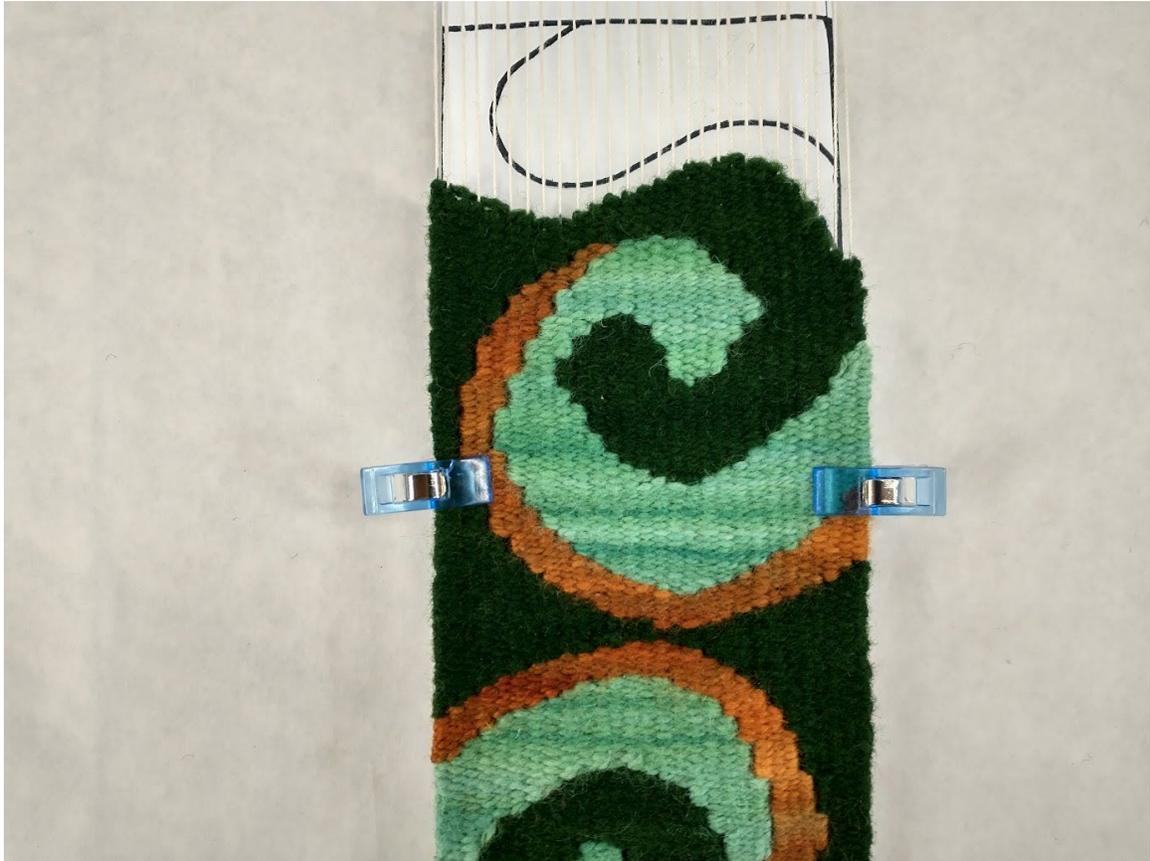
Pro Tip: for shapes like these, which are started at the right, the curve is gentle enough that as you crest the top of the color below, you can carry on in stick shed all the way to the left, letting the weft weave down the angle of the hill. I'll focus more on ways to use this technique (known as "eccentric weft") in later levels of my tapestry courses, but this is a gradual hill to weave down, so give it a try. Just remember to leave a little extra wiggle dance, so that as you fill the valley to the left (returning to normal weaving pattern to fill the space), your original strand that allowed you to be there without feathering off and laying in a new tail doesn't grow too tight. Just like the hypotenuse of a triangle, it takes more length of weft to follow that angle than when weaving horizontally back and forth.

If this feels confusing, you are welcome to feather off and lay in a new tail to complete the left side of the light green or brown shape.



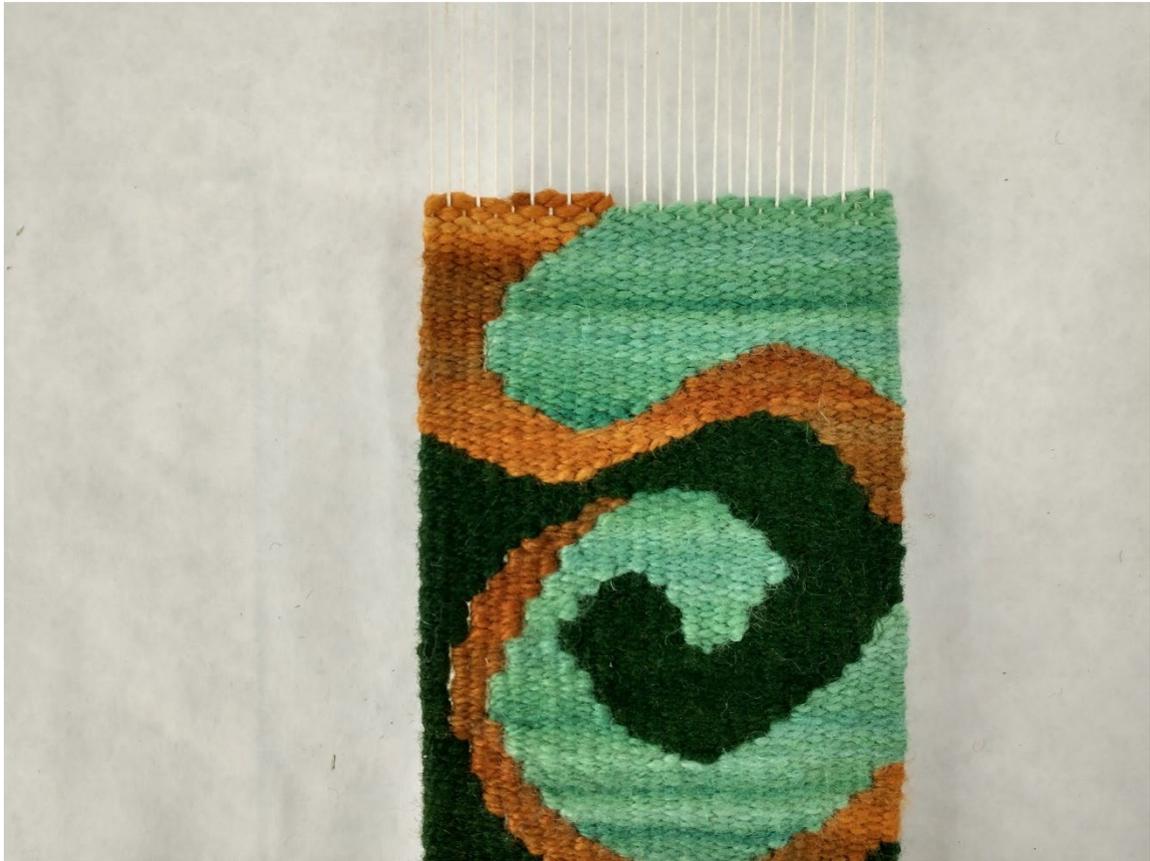
The second spiral can certainly be worked using the same hills and valleys techniques as the first, but it can also be an invitation to practice another skill we learned in Level 1. Here, I'm using hills and valleys technique combined with "meet and separate" that we learned on our hatching hill.

In meet and separate, wefts next to each other run in the sheds in the opposite direction. I chose to have dark green carry on in the regular way of shedding we learned (stick shed right-to-left, pull shed left-to-right), since it was already weaving that way from below. That means that brown would be opposite (stick shed left-to-right, pull shed right-to-left). Then, light green can be the same as dark green. It's a bit of a brain bender, but good practice if you want to experiment more with this European pictorial technique.



Ooh, now we've met a complication with the "meet and separate" version. Because light green was shedding in our customary way, dark green to its right had to shed in the opposite way (like brown was). But what happens when the two greens combine at the top? At this point, I had to just pick one shedding method as they combined, so I kept the left one and feathered off the right one.

Because they were opposites of each other, when the left dark green strand came over in pull shed, it did not run in parallel shed with the dark green below, and the splice of the colors appears seamless. That's part of why "meet and separate" exists!



To carry on with the process, brown is worked next, in the opposite shedding style, up to where the curve changes directions at the left. The all of the light green shape can be worked (in regular shedding), followed by brown finishing off. Whew, we've made it to the top of the design!



I really enjoyed how quickly this piece worked up compared with wider tapestries, and the variegated yarns in contrast with the solid background give a shimmering, rippled effect.

Double check that your piece measures 10.5 inches. If it happens to be a bit short, visually extend the top of the design if needed. If it's too tall (by more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch), Penelope a few rows. This will make mounting the piece much easier.



Measure out a length of light green weft for the top twining that is a shy wingspan long. We do not need to tie off to the loom, so less length is necessary.



Cut the warps free from the loom as shown in the finishing tutorial and tie them off in pairs with square knots—both top and bottom. Make sure not to wait too long to tie your warps as the piece can accidentally unravel. No! Tie knots snugly, with even tension.

Using a tapestry needle and working on the BACK SIDE of the tapestry, bury each warp into the tapestry following where the warp ran previously. Check the front side periodically to make certain that the warps aren't accidentally showing on the front face of the piece. Bury them approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch into the tapestry to prevent them from pulling out. Snip off the extra length with a sharp scissors, careful not to cut the textile in the process.



Next, continuing on the **BACK SIDE** of the tapestry, bury both ends of each tassel and trim. Bury each one following a separate warp, pulling snugly to draw the end knots down as close as possible to the edge of the textile.

You'll notice that this creates a firmer, slightly draw-in edge to the piece. On a large tapestry, this would not be welcome, but on our small piece it creates a reinforcement that will make the later lacing process more successful.



Locate the filigree charm in your kit and place it on your piece. There certainly is no rule as to where it has to go—so long as it is visually pleasing to you! I selected using a filigree piece so you can see your lovely weaving through the charm as well as enjoying its tree of life design.

I placed mine in the center, so it is opposite of where the lacing stitches will be. Remember that the piece will be viewed on its side as compared with how you wove it! Whether the left or right side becomes the bottom is entirely personal preference. On mine, the left side became the bottom of the piece, but you are welcome to choose either side, keeping this in mind when stitching on the charm.

To stitch the charm in place, take a length of the color weft that the charm sits against and thread it onto a tapestry needle with an eye small enough to fit comfortably through the middle of the top or bottom hole (the first needle I tried to use was way too fat!). I stitched through each hole separately, leaving a tail of yarn at the back of the tapestry and looping through the charm and back through the tapestry several times, until the metal loop was covered. Then, tie off with a square knot at the back and bury the ends of the yarn into the back of the tapestry. I repeated this step separately for both the top and the bottom of the charm.



Now it's time to lace the tapestry onto the pen holder! Double check that you have it placed with the charm right-side-up, then draw the ends together. Take a wingspan length of your choice of weft color (I'm using dark green, so it's easy for you to see, and the contrast is fun) and thread each end onto tapestry needles.

Imagine you are lacing up a bodice. Starting from the inside (back side of the tapestry), come out through the piece to the front on both sides of what is now the top side of your pieces, as shown in the picture. Adjust your lengths so there is an equal amount of yarn on both the right and left needles.



Starting with the right strand, come through the gap between the ends of the tapestry and from behind poke out through the front on the left side. Then take the left strand and come through the gap, poke from the back side through out to the front side on the right side (as shown). It's like lacing a shoe. Pull snugly.

If you always start with the same side, this will help the stitches appear more even.



As you build on more stitches, it will appear to have a “V” shape. Draw your stitches together snugly as you go, so that the tapestry wraps tightly enough around the pen holder that it won’t slip off later.



When you come to the bottom, tie both ends together securely in a square knot. Double check that the tapestry looks like it is fitting the pen holder well.



Bury the ends of the ties back up into the stitches and trim.



Yay! Your delightful and useful piece is now ready for action!

Hmm...what to put inside. I think that this could be ideal for my smaller weaving tools, like tatting needles, scissors, measuring tape, and sharpie.



You have completed your piece—congratulations!

I hope you have enjoyed making this project, and I hope that you will also enjoy using it or gifting it to a loved one. Tapestry is a very durable textile, and this cupholder should give you years and years of service.

Happy weaving!