

Strewn Leaves

Block basics:

- Strewn Leaves is a flexible appliqué block, with many potential variations in appearance and technique.
- Completed block size is 12 ½" square. (This is the size when you turn it in before it is sewn into a quilt.)

Choose your fabric:

You will need several fabrics: one background fabric that should be tan, beige, or light brown; and several fabrics for leaves in fall colors, such as red, orange, rust, yellow, or brown. Your block should have several leaves appliquéed on the background using any technique of your choice. Odd numbers are best, so you will likely add 3, 5, or 7 leaves to each block.



Preparing fabric pieces:

Background fabric: Cut one 12 ½ inch by 12 ½ inch square. (If you prefer, cut it a bit larger and square it up at the end.)

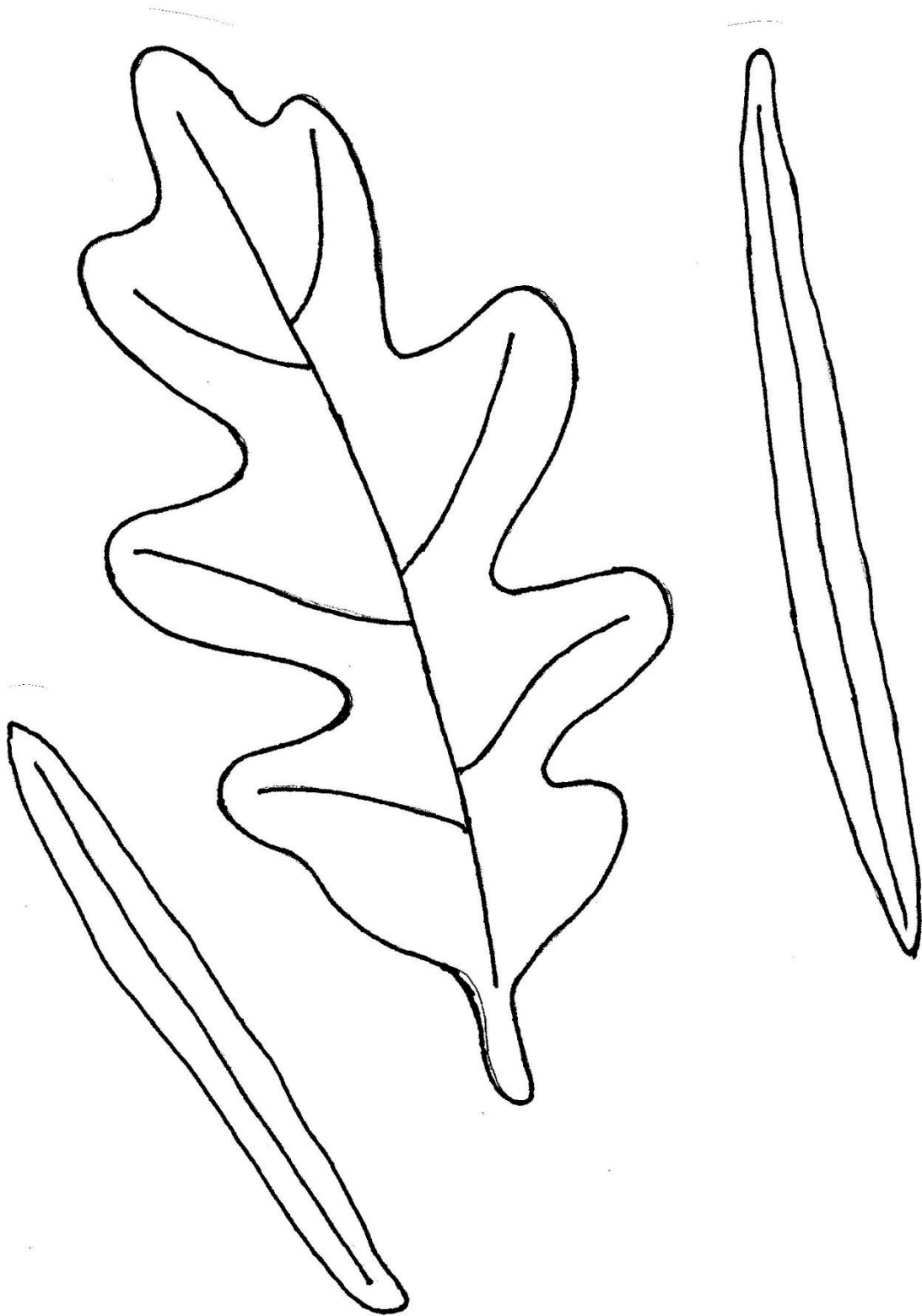
Leaf fabrics: Choose fabrics for your leaves that are tightly woven, not too ravelly, and in pieces a bit larger than the leaf shapes you will be using. Press them well.

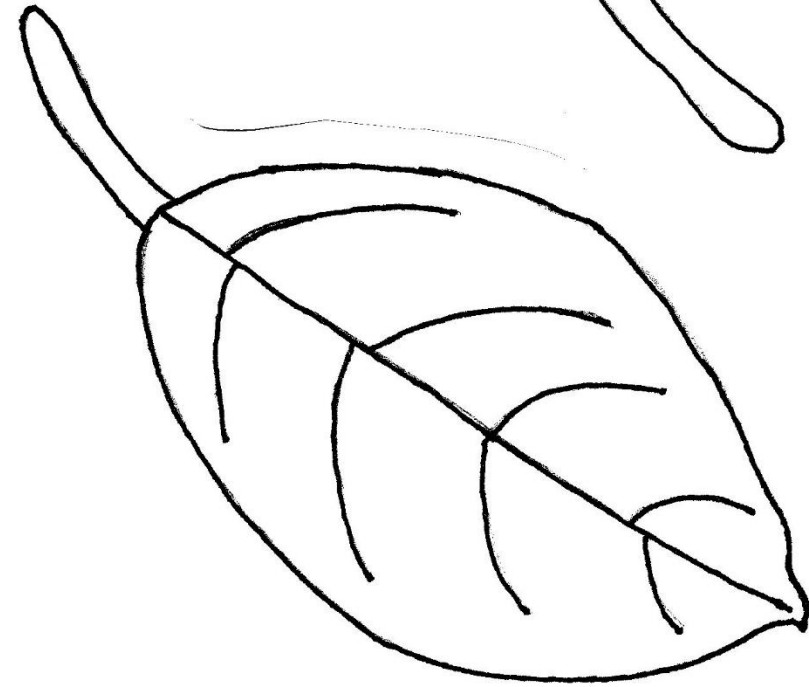
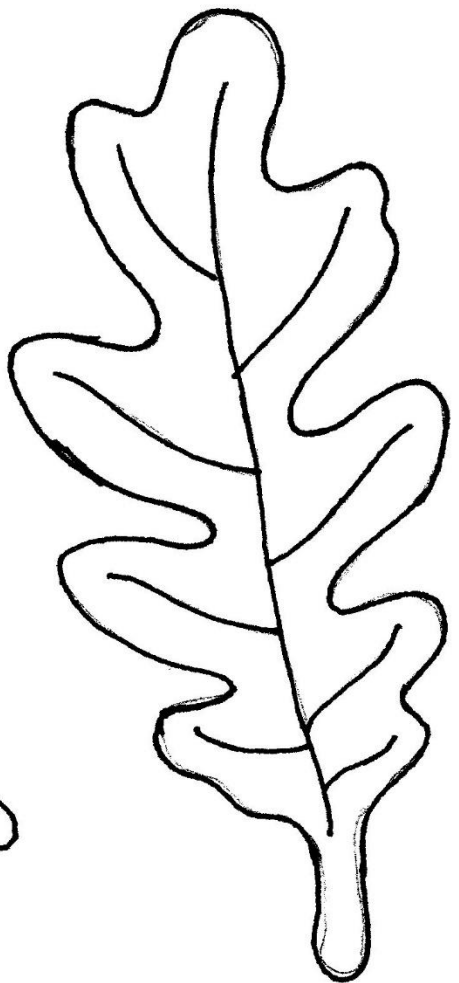
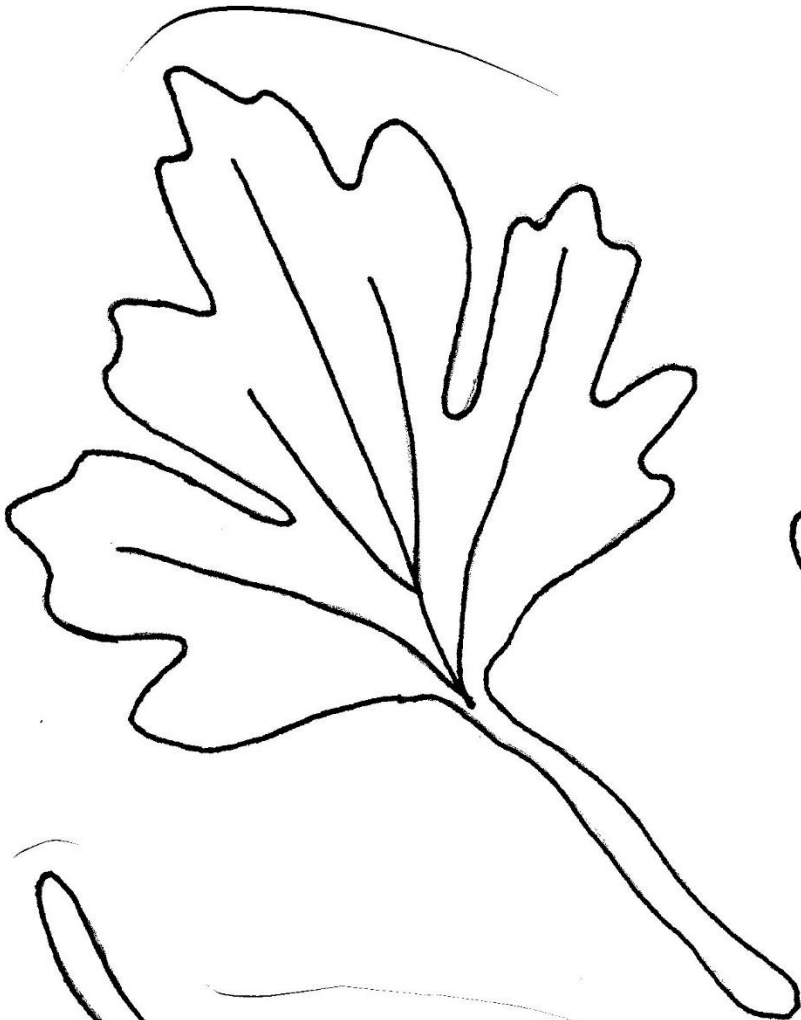
Prepare appliqué pieces:

Nine leaf shapes are included here. For most techniques, you will use a light box or a window pane for tracing the shapes onto fusible web or fabric pieces. If you don't have a light box or handy window pane, an alternative is to print the leaf shapes, glue them to thin cardboard or a manila folder, and cut them out directly on the outer lines to make templates. Place the templates over fusible web or fabric and draw lines along the edges.

If you prefer hand appliqué, for each leaf you choose to make, trace the pattern or template onto the wrong side of the fabric directly on the lines, then cut out the fabric leaf leaving a margin of ¼ inch (or a bit less).

If you prefer raw-edge fusible machine appliqué, trace your chosen leaf pattern or template onto the paper side (or the tighter-adhering paper side) of the fusible web directly on the lines. Cut out the webbing leaving a margin of at least ¼ inch. Remove the paper that is not marked (if there is one) and fuse the webbing to the wrong side of the leaf fabric following the web manufacturer's instructions.







These leaf shapes are based on photos of leaves picked from trees in my yard. Feel free to scan and enlarge or reduce leaf shapes or modify them when you are tracing. For example, the aspen leaf petiole is based on a real leaf, but when I used that shape in my blocks, I sometimes shortened the petiole. If you want to make up your own leaf shape, go for it.

Notice that I didn't cite a block designer or claim the block as my own design. You are the block designer. Your block might have several instances of the same leaf shape and color, or a wide variety of leaf shapes and colors; it's all up to you.

Each leaf shape has marked veins. Before attaching the appliqués to the background, trace (or draw freehand) the veins on the right side with fine chalk or just a faint pencil mark. To complete the appliqués, hand embroider or machine-stitch the veins or draw them with a fabric marker, either before or after attaching them to the background. (You don't need to include every marked vein. You are the artist here.)



Attach appliqué pieces:

For hand appliqués, pin the appliques to the background and stitch them down with an appliqué stitch.

For machine appliqués, remove any remaining paper and fuse the leaves to the background. Stitch the appliqués along the edges using a blanket stitch, satin stitch, or a zigzag stitch a bit narrower and longer than a true satin stitch. Pivot as often as you need (stopping, lifting the pressure foot, and rotating the fabric slightly). For a blanket stitch, always pivot with the needle in the outside position (just off the edge of the appliqué). For a zigzag stitch, pivot in the outside position on outside curves and the inside position on insided curves. Be sure to use a stabilizer on the wrong side. I use freezer paper.



Of course, there are other possible techniques, such as turned edge machine appliqué. Feel free to use whatever technique works for you.

Here is the final block:



Here are a few more examples.



To participate in the drawing, bring your finished blocks to the meeting on November 18, 2024. (If that doesn't work for you, mail your blocks to Kate Allen by November 11.)

Questions? Suggestions for future blocks? Feel free to email me, Jody Gray, at jodyqlt@gmail.com.