



# THIMBLEBERRIES®

by LYNETTE JENSEN

## Sewing with Flannel

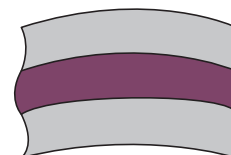
- Always prewash and machine dry flannel. This will prevent severe shrinkage after the quilt is made. Some flannels shrink more than others. For this reason, we have allowed approximately 1/4 yard extra for each fabric under the fabric requirements. Treat the more heavily napped side of solid flannels as the right side of the fabric.
- Because flannel stretches more than other cotton calicos and because the nap makes them thicker, the quilt design should be simple. Let the fabric and color make the design statement.
- Consider combining regular cotton calicos with flannels. The different textures complement each other nicely.
- Use a 10 to 12 stitches per inch setting on your machine. A 1/4-inch seam allowance is also recommended for flannel piecing.
- When sewing triangle-pieced squares together, take extra care not to stretch the diagonal seam. Trim off the point from the seam allowances to eliminate bulk.
- Press gently to prevent stretching pieces out of shape.
- Check block measurements as you progress. "Square up" the blocks as needed. Flannel will shift and it is easy to end up with blocks that are misshapen. If you trim and measure as you go, you are more likely to have accurate blocks.
- If you notice a piece of flannel is stretching more than the others, place it on the bottom when stitching on the machine. The natural action of the feed dogs will help prevent it from stretching.
- Before stitching pieces, strips, or borders together, pin often to prevent fabric from stretching and moving. When stitching longer pieces together, divide the pieces into quarters and pin. Divide into even smaller sections to get more control.
- Use a lightweight batting to prevent the quilt from becoming too heavy.
- Cutting accurate triangles can be intimidating, but a clear plastic ruler, rotary cutter, and cutting mat are all that are needed to make perfect triangles. The cutting instructions often direct you to cut strips, then squares, and then triangles.

### Sewing Layered Strips Together

When you are instructed to layer strips, right sides together, and sew, you need to take some precautions. Gently lay a strip on top of another carefully lining up the raw edges. Pressing the strips together will hold them together nicely and a few pins here and there will also help. Be careful not to stretch the strips as you sew them together.

### Hints & Helps for Pressing Strip Sets

When sewing strips of fabric together for strip sets, it is important to press the seam allowances nice and flat, usually to the dark fabric. Be careful not to stretch as you press, causing a "rainbow effect." This will affect the accuracy and shape of the pieces cut from the strip set. I like to press on the wrong side first and with the strips perpendicular to the ironing board. Then I flip the piece over and press on the right side to prevent little pleats from forming at the seams. Layering the strip set lengthwise on the ironing board seems to encourage the rainbow effect, as shown in diagram.



Avoid this rainbow effect