

FREE PATTERNS IN CHENILLE

This article is a continuation of the two previous ones on Chenille, and Patterns in Chenille (MW 19/5 and 20/3). The reader is advised to study very carefully the former before going into this one.

The problem of free design in chenille rugs is hardly a problem at all if one has enough patience to make his chenille weft with only very few strands at a time. Theoretically, if we made only one strand (which of course would be rather wasteful of yarn and time) we could make any design no matter how complicated. Fig. 1 shows how this is done.

1 ----- 2 -m-----m----- 3 -m-----mm----- 4 -----m-----m----- 5 -----mm-----m----- 6 -----mm-----mm----- 7 -----mm-----mm----- 8 -----mm-----mm----- 9 -----mm-----mm----- 10 -----m-----m----- 11 -----m-----mm----- 12 -----m-----mm----- etc.	2 4 6 8 10 12	Chenille weft: 1-st pick - 16" of white; 2-nd: 2" white, 1" black, 4" white, 1" black, 8" white; 3-rd: 3" w, 1" b, 2" w, 3" b, 7" w; 4-th: 4" w, 5" b, 2" w, 1" b, 4" w; 5-th: 3" w, 5" b, 3" w, 1" b, 4" w; 6-th: 2" w, 5" b, 3" w, 2" b, 4" w; 7-th: 1" w, 5" b, 3" w, 3" b, 2" w, 1" b, 1" w; and so on.
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Fig.1

The weft could be woven in one continuous strip, but it would have to be a very long one indeed. For instance to make a rug 24 by 36 inches with 4 picks of chenille per inch, we would have to make the first warp 96 yards long!

This example is here only to prove the point. In practice we do not need to prepare each pick of weft separately. First of all because modern patterns are seldom as involved as that, and second - because we have a shortcut. This shortcut is the method of interlocking two colours in the first weft (when making the chenille weft) as in Locked Wefts.

Before going any further the reader unfamiliar with Locked Wefts should look up this method (MW 4/7).

What it amounts to is that we can weave any pattern as long as it has only two areas of colour in one line. Thus if we can divide our chenille rug into horizontal sections which would fulfil this requirement, we have solved the problem. Let us take as an example a black diamond on white background (fig.2). This simple pattern could not be woven by any method described so far. But if we divide the figure into two sections, there is no more difficulty. This is how we proceed:

Our rug is 15 by 15 inches, and we shall have 4 picks of chenille weft per inch, or 60 picks in all. We shall divide the rug into two sections along the line A - B. The first section from

C-D to A-B will have 30 picks; each pick 15 inches long. If the pile is 1/2" long on each side of the rug, the distance between the groups of warp in the first weaving will be one inch.

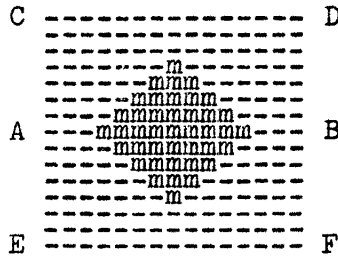


Fig.2

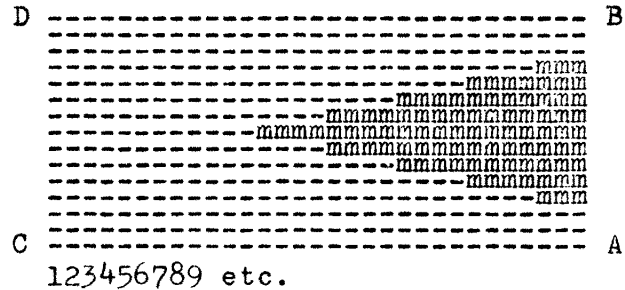


Fig.3

This makes our first warp 31" wide with 32 groups of warp (the two outside groups to be rejected). In the first weaving this section will look as in fig.3. It will be 31" wide, and 15" long. The numbers indicate the picks of chenille weft after cutting.

To weave we use the white yarn on the bobbin rack on the left, and two shuttles on the right: one with black, and one with doubled white. We start with 3" of plain white. Then we throw the shuttle with black yarn from the right, catch the white from the rack and pull it so that the two colours will cross at about 3" from the LH edge. This we do for one inch. Then we weave another inch this time crossing the colours 7 inches from the edge. Then another inch with the interlocking point 11" from the edge. The next inch will have 15" of black on the right, and the next - 19". Then we start coming back: 15, 11, 7, and 3 inches of black - one inch of each. And we finish with 3" of plain white.

This takes care of the first section. Now we fill 2 or 3" with any yarn at all, and start the second section which is identical with the first.

When both sections are finished we can cut them off and start the second weaving. We insert into the second warp (after the usual preliminaries) the strip of chenille cut from the first section at the left (No.1 fig.3), then No.2, 3, 4, etc. When we finish the first section we reverse the process by starting on the right in the second section, and moving to the left.

Here more than ever we should avoid cutting all the chenille weft at once. It is only too easy to miss one pick and find too late that it does not fit any more. When we cut as we go along there is no danger of such a mistake.

It is actually advisable to make such a small rug as an exercise, before we attempt larger projects.

In the next step let us take 3 colours (fig.4): black (m), red (o), and white (-). The rug will be 29 by 39 inches. The pattern is completely free. Our first task is to divide it into a smallest possible number of sections in which only two colours

appear in the vertical direction. What is more, the sections should be of about the same size. This latter condition is not absolutely necessary but a large difference in size means that we shall waste a lot of yarn, because all sections must be of the same size in the first weaving, and any section smaller than the rest will be made by rejecting some of the chenille weft.

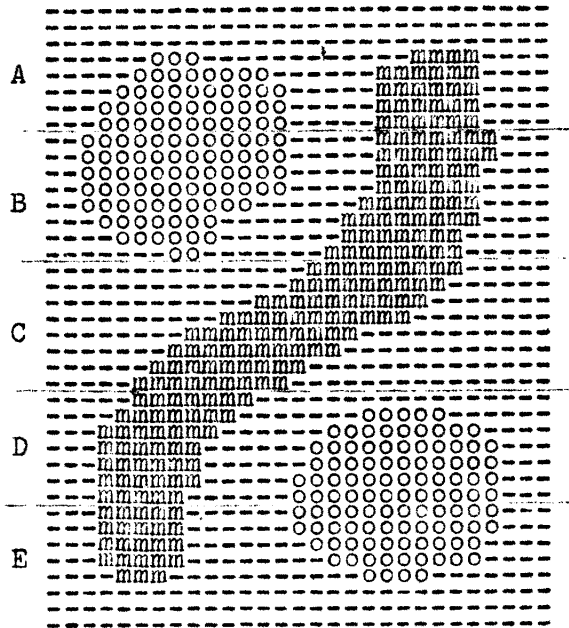


Fig.4

After a few attempts we shall arrive at the division indicated in fig.4. All sections are 8 inches wide, except section D which is only seven. This means a waste of 4 picks of chenille, which is not very bad.

Nothing prevent us from dividing the pattern into a much larger number of sections, but this means also a much longer first warp, and also much longer weaving.

Now for the first warp. There are 8 inches of each section or 32 picks of chenille weft. To make it with a 1/2" pile on each side we need a first warp 33 inches wide with 34 groups of warp one inch apart.

We need all three colours on the bobbin rack, and also three shuttles with the same colours. But it will be better to have six shuttles: 3 with single yarn, and 3 with double yarn. We shall use the double yarn whenever we have only one colour in any section, as for instance at the beginning of section A.

We start with section A reading it from the left. It is safer to make a plan of weaving of each section in form of a table. The first row indicates the number of inches woven, the second the length of colour on the left, and the third - the length of colour on the right.

Section A.

1.	3"	1"	1"	1"	3"	4"	1"	5"	2"	4"	4"
2.	32	8	12	16	20	16	12	32	16	20	32
	w	r	r	r	r	r	w	b	b	w	
3.	24	20	16	12	16	20	16	12			
	w	w	w	w	w	w	w	w			

In practice we do not observe very closely the length of colours, except in geometrical patterns. In most cases we shall try to blend the two adjoining areas so as to produce curved lines.

In the same way we shall "read" the other sections, and make the tables. Later on it won't be necessary to write down the directions in form of tables. With a little practice one can follow directly the pattern drawn on graph-paper, by turning it sideways and crossing out in pencil the chenille already made.

In second weaving we shall also follow the pattern, but it is better to hold it upside down, since our first pick of chenille comes at the bottom of the woven rug.

Although practically every pattern can be subdivided in such a way as to be woven in this technique, it is advisable to design our own patterns. After the size of the rug is decided upon we mark it off on graph paper and divide it into sections (fig.5a).

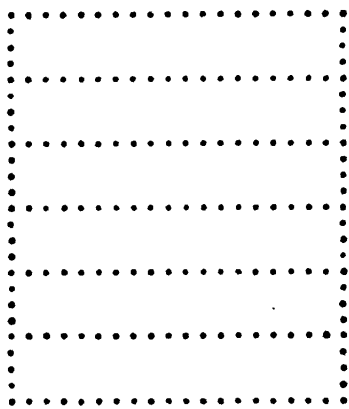


Fig.5 a

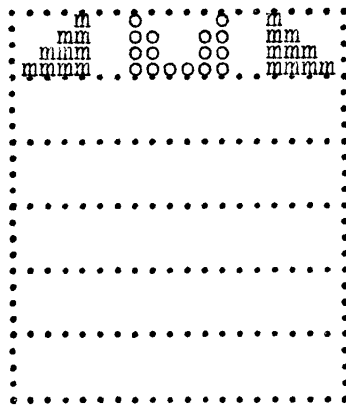


Fig.5 b

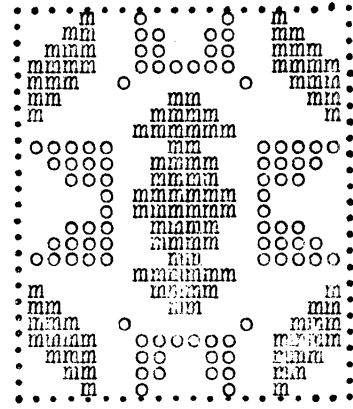


Fig.5 c

Then section after section is filled in as in fig.5 b, until the whole pattern is made (fig.5 c). The only limitation when filling in the pattern is that there must be no more than two colours in the vertical direction in any section. Otherwise we have a complete freedom.

Everything we have said about the Patterns in Chenille applies here. The picks of chenille weft must be very carefully adjusted in the second weaving, particularly so if we try to get very neat design. In all the speed of weaving is about the same as for all pattern rugs in chenille. Counting both the first and the second weaving it takes about 30 hrs for each square yard.

Probably the only trouble we may have with this kind of rugs is, that when they are sent to an exhibition, it is hard to convince the judges that they are woven and not knotted rugs, because the apparent freedom of design is so deceiving.

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