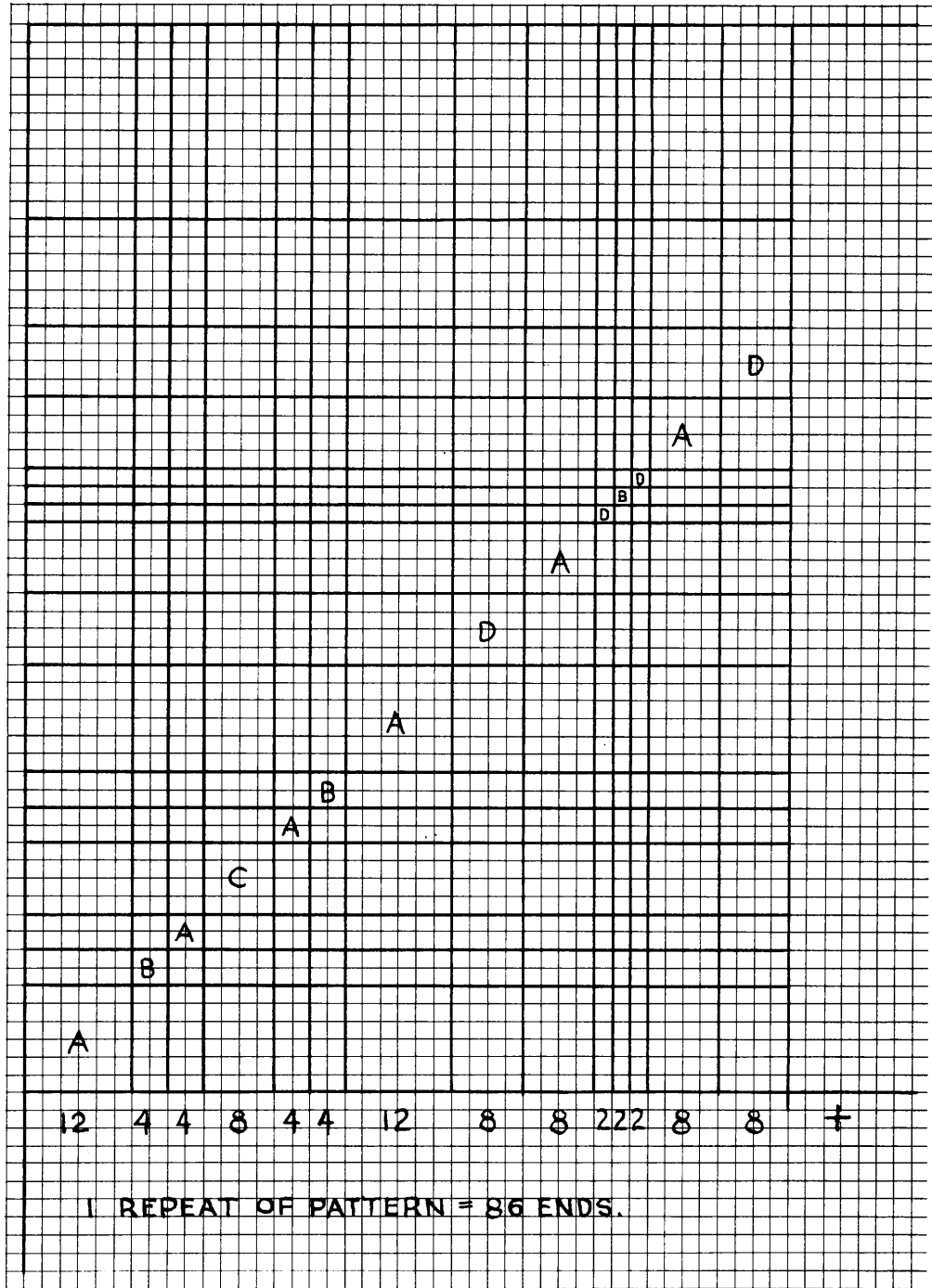


# PRACTICAL WEAVING SUGGESTIONS

VOL. 4-61





# DESIGN YOUR OWN PLAIDS

**Muriel F. Barnes**

Plaids can be an exciting adventure for the handweaver. In designing a plaid (not necessarily a tartan), the weaver is confronted with a wide variety in color arrangements of her own choosing. In addition, and equally challenging, is the weave, and here there is an enormous selection of ways of designing for individual taste and use.

Before designing your plaid, it is best to get a pattern for your project, cut it out of muslin, and machine-baste it together, using the longest stitch on your machine. In this way, you can determine whether the pattern is becoming, and can also plan the size of the plaid. This can be traced onto a part of your muslin, say the jacket front if it is for a suit, and you can see the effect as it will look on you. The pattern instructions will also give the yardage necessary.

The best way to find out what happens to color arrangements for plaids is to make a sample blanket. In fact, this should be a must as it is an excellent way to broaden acquaintance with color as well as arrangement and design. In planning a blanket, it is well to make several color schemes of your idea in the same blanket. In addition, it is possible to rearrange the scheme by tying in other colors, or changing the plan if you find you do not care for it when you begin weaving it. Designers in the textile industry use these methods in their design studios, sometimes changing a design or color arrangement a dozen times before getting the effect they want.

The design for this project was planned as follows: First, I took a piece of cardboard 2" x 8", cut two slots in either end to hold the

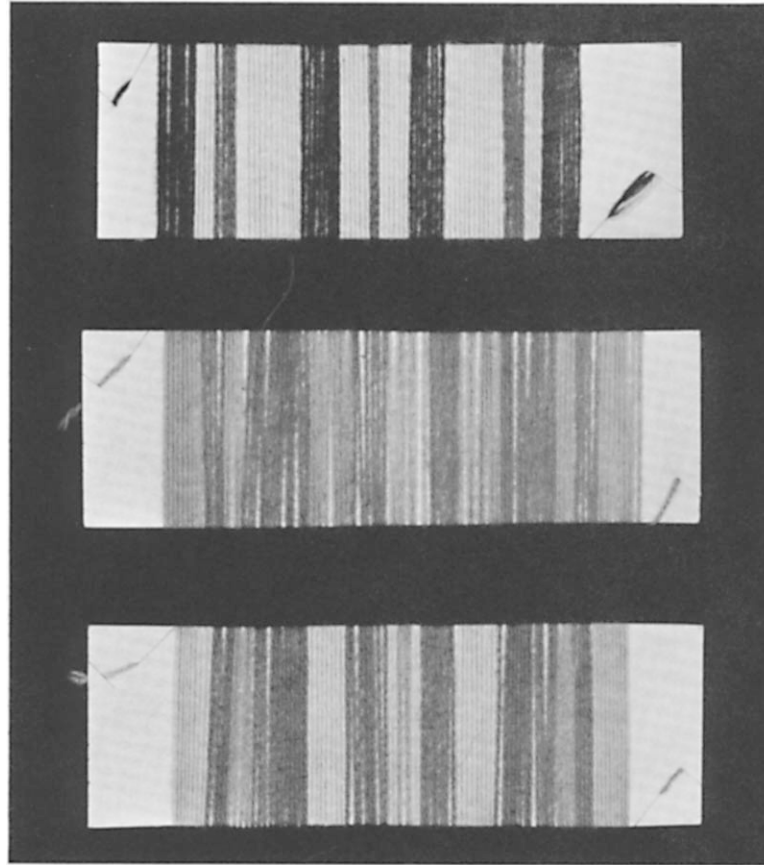
yarn ends in place, and wound the colors in the sequence I wanted for my pattern. Four colors were used, arranged in this manner:

12-A, 4-B, 4-A, 8-C, 4-A, 4-B, 12-A, 8-D, 8-A, 2-B, 2-D, 2-B, 8-A, 8-D. This made one repeat of the pattern consisting of 86 warp ends.

Next step was to determine the sett of the reed. A 10 dent reed was selected, with two ends per dent. I then drew my design on squared paper, 10 squares per inch. See diagram on Page 2. The design was easily laid out from the color arrangement I had made on the cardboard, and showed the exact size of the plaid as it would be when woven. Since I planned to use an equal number of weft picks in the filling, I now had a complete picture of the projected plaid.

The weaver can trace the plaid design on her muslin by using this chart, and make any alterations as to size and/or area at this time. The next step is the choice of colors. Lily Mills Weaving Wool, Art. 110, comes in 40 lovely colors which can be combined into an infinite variety of patterns. An excellent idea would be to get a set of these colors on two-ounce spools, keeping them on hand as a sort of palette for your samples. Instead of hunting through odds and ends of left-overs (many of which you may not be able to replace either in color or size) you will have your Lily Palette at your finger tips. Place the two-ounce spools on your spool rack, take a 2" x 8" card, cut two slots in either end (to hold yarn ends) and arrange your colors as outlined above. Of course, you will use your own color arrangement.

**MATERIALS: Lily Art. 110 Weaving Wool—for Warp and Weft**



I planned the blanket in three color schemes, all in the one design.

**SCHEME No. 1**

**Color**

A—Baby Blue  
B—Rose Pink  
C—Dark Purple  
D—Rust

**SCHEME No. 2**

**Color**

A—Slate Gray  
B—Dark Brown  
C—Ming Gold  
D—Cardinal

**SCHEME No. 3**

**Color**

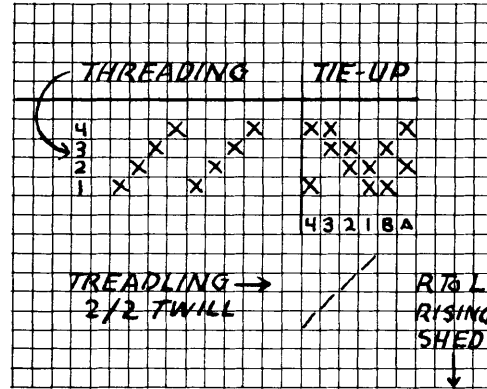
A—Ming Gold  
B—Light Green  
C—Green Gold  
D—Gray

A three yard warp was made, the design repeated twice, with twelve additional threads of the third repeat. This gave me an idea of the over-plaid, and was followed for each color scheme. I planned to tie in other color schemes, and in all I had nine true patterns with two crossings of each as the weaving progressed. All nine patterns, with respective crossings, are shown in color on the front cover. A straight threading draft was used throughout. Although these samples were woven on an eight harness loom, all of those woven on the first four color schemes can be done on any four harness loom, although the tie-ups given are for rising shed looms only.

The purpose of this project is to show how a single design can be developed, how the arrangement of color and type of weave can change its appearance, and to lead the weaver on to the excitement of experiment. A description of the weaving follows:

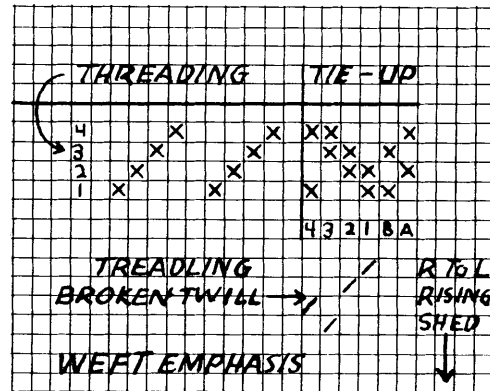
### Sample No. 1

SAMPLE No. 1 is a 2/2 twill, shown in diagram, in standard tie-up for rising shed loom. The number of weft picks is exactly the same as in the warp throughout the entire blanket. However, the picks per inch are a little less than 20, as a 50/50 weave in a plaid seems to give it a "squashed" look and detracts from its appearance.



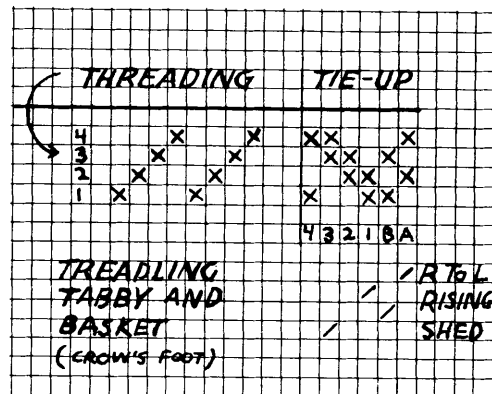
### Sample No. 2

SAMPLE No. 2 is a broken 2/2 twill, treadling shown in diagram. Observe that already the colors, while still clear, have experienced a subtle change. This is due to increased weave interest.

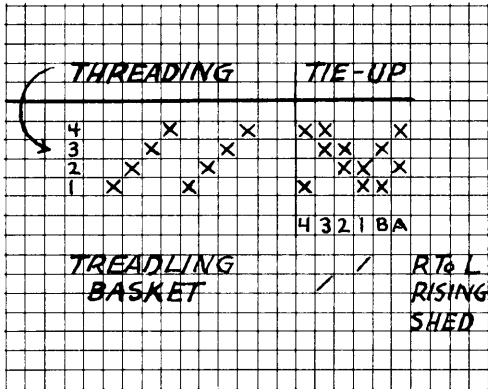


### Sample No. 3

SAMPLE No. 3, Ming Gold color scheme, is woven in tabby and basket, also called crow's foot. It has a vertical appearance, where the broken twill has a horizontal effect. Treadling shown in diagram.

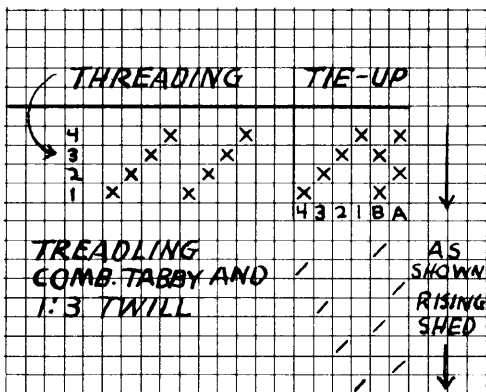


### Sample No. 4



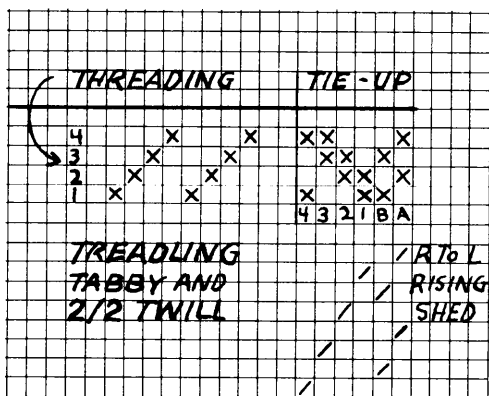
SAMPLE No. 4, also on the Ming Gold color scheme, is basket weave. However, Color D was changed to Baby Blue and Color B to Aqua. This shows how a slight change in color scheme produces a modification in intensity in your design. Treading shown in diagram.

### Sample No. 5



SAMPLE No. 5 is a twill variation showing additional interest in weave and color. This is on Color Scheme No. 2. Color C is now Tan, Color B Medium Brown, Color A Light Blue and Color D Rust. Our plaid is still there but has definitely lost its original look. This sample shows how a change in color can affect the structural appearance, although exactly the same number of picks is used in the weft. Treading shown in diagram. It is a combination of tabby and 1:3 twill.

### Sample No. 6



SAMPLE No. 6 was tied over Color Scheme No. 1 in the following colors: A—Baby Blue, B—Aqua, Color C—Dark Blue, Color D—Blue Gray. A in the weft is Light Blue. The weave is tabby alternating with 2/2 twill, giving a more vertical effect to the twill. Treading shown on diagram. The reverse side of this sample is also very interesting.

**Three additional color schemes were tied over the warp as follows:**

**SCHEME No. 7**

- Color  
 A—Medium Brown  
 B—Black  
 C—Dark Brown  
 D—Beige

**SCHEME No. 8**

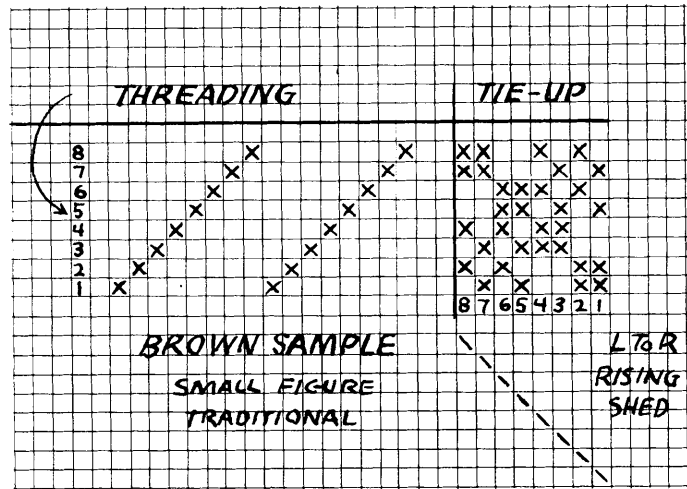
- Color  
 A—Red  
 B—Rose Pink  
 C—Wine  
 D—Cardinal

**SCHEME No. 9**

- Color  
 A—Emerald Green  
 B—Light Green  
 C—Dark Green  
 D—Blue Green

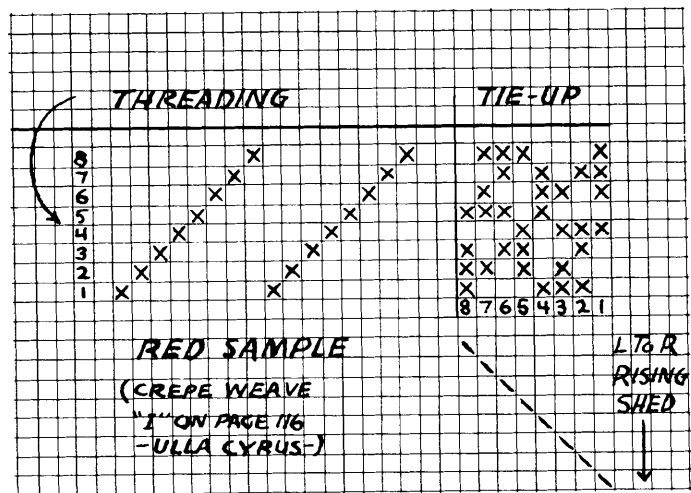
**Sample No. 7**

SAMPLE No. 7 — Here we have schemes in the same color family for our design, and here also, we have weaves which are more interesting in themselves. In this sample the browns are enhanced by the addition of black. The weave is a small figure on eight harnesses. Treading and tie-up shown in diagram.

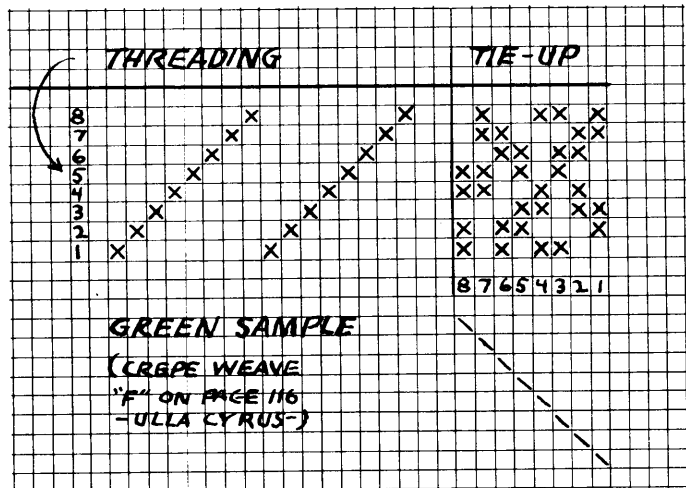


**Sample No. 8**

SAMPLE No. 8, color scheme No. 8, is in a crepe weave. Here the plaid almost disappears, with hardly any sharply defined lines. The weave has a lot of texture and a third dimensional quality. Treading and tie-up shown in diagram.



## Sample No. 9



SAMPLE No. 9 is still another crepe weave. Here the color lines show distinctly. Treadling and tie-up shown on diagram.

The sample blanket is now complete. There are nine original color samples, plus eighteen crossings, some of which are really exciting, and could be used for later projects.

After washing the sample blanket, cut your samples and mount them on heavy bristol board, or mount board, and put them in a folder, or file them. They can be useful as reference material and may start you on a career as a designer.

Summer plaids, woven of Lily Mills Super Sheen, Art. 215, might be a very interesting experiment, too. And the addition of the novelties, Art. 105 and 105-A, added to either the wools or the cotton would certainly create additional textural interest.

Finally, there is no satisfaction to compare with doing your own exploration, seeing your own color schemes and arrangements come into existence on your own loom. You have a great advantage over those who must buy manufactured cloth, designed to sell to many. What you weave is yours alone, and you are not likely to meet anyone wearing what you are wearing.

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