



Top Tips for Successful Ribbon Embroidery

WORDS BY **MARIANNE ROBERTS**

As a result of your feedback, this issue of *Australian Country Craft and Decorating* has two lovely ribbon embroidery projects. So, we thought we'd look at the top tips for

ribbon embroidery from Helen Dafter, an embroiderer of renown and an expert in the art. You can create many lovely effects with this perennially-popular craft and we share Helen's secrets for success.

1. RIBBON STORAGE

Being tidy and well-organised with precious silk ribbons is very important. They can easily become tangled and damaged. The best way to store them is to wind them on circle-shaped objects, such as a cotton reel or a cardboard paper-towel cylinder. If a flat, cardboard embroidery thread card is used, the ribbon will have a crease at regular intervals and will need pressing before it's used.

2. CHOOSE YOUR NEEDLES WISELY

It's critical to choose the correct needle for successful ribbon embroidery work. A chenille needle is essential, as it has a large diameter shaft, sharp point and a large eye, all of which protect the ribbon as it is drawn through the fabric. The larger shaft forces the fibres of the fabric apart, allowing the easy passage of the silk ribbon through the fabric. The sharp point pierces the ribbon causing a minimum amount of damage, particularly when working ribbon stitch, a stitch that's unique to ribbon embroidery.

The needle size is governed by the width of the ribbon being worked, and it will determine how the stitch 'sits' in the space made by the needle shaft. For example, if a large needle is used with a narrow embroidery ribbon, the stitch may not sit neatly on the fabric surface.

