

Strip-pieced Scrappy 9-patches And Snowballs

Delaware Quilts



Strip-piecing is a fast, easy method of assembling patchwork blocks for quilting. Using a rotary cutter and a straight rule, you cut long strips of fabric, sew them together, and cut them again and then sew them into a block, then a quilt. The 9-patch is not a difficult block, and with this technique you can piece it quickly.

It's easiest to make 9-patches in "sets". For each set you need five equal length strips of a solid looking fabric, I'm using white, and four brightly colored strips. Because we are making a scrappy quilt, the more colors the better.

For this project we're going scrappy, but that doesn't mean we still can't do it the easy way. We will still make our sets the same, just mix them up and make them look all scrambled.

For a 12 1/2 inch block (12" finished in your quilt) cut strips 4 1/2 inches wide.

For an 8 1/2 inch block (8" finished in your quilt) cut strips 3 inches wide.

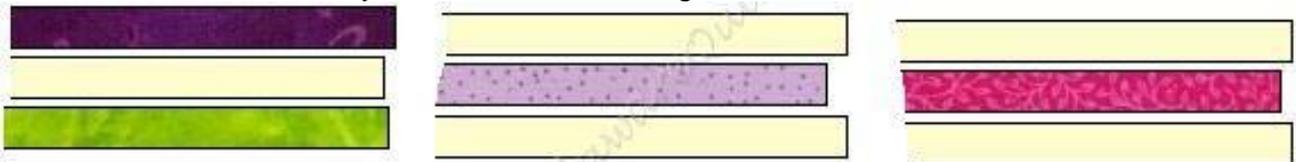
For a 6 1/2 inch block (6" finished in your quilt) cut strips 2 1/2 inches wide.

Because we're going scrappy, you won't want your strips too long. You just want a few of each unit, so multiply the width of your strip by the number you might want. If you want just four of each unit, and then multiply four times whatever your strip width is. 4 times 4 1/2 equals 18. 4 times 3 equals 12. 4 times 2 1/2 equals 10.

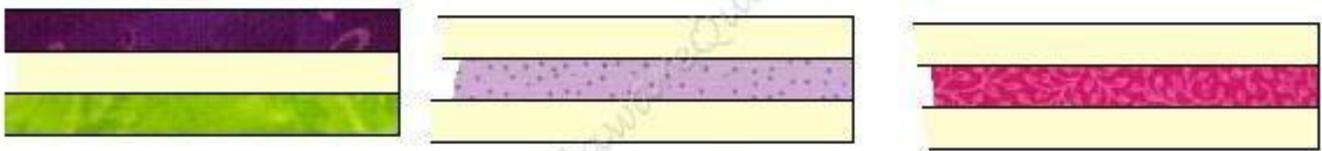
For this project the background (light) will be all same fabric and we'll only be using four color squares in each 9-patch block. Because we are only using four colors per block, we will need twice as many light sets as dark.



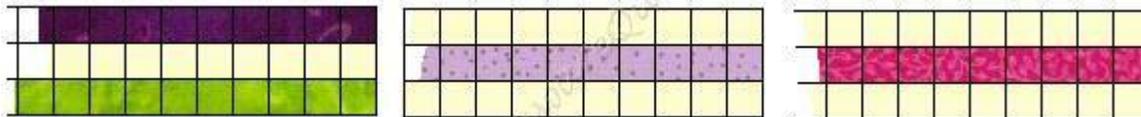
Begin by arranging your strips in alternating rows. You need twice as many sets with the light fabric on the outside as you do ones with the light fabric in the center.



Sew your strips together and then press the seams toward the darker fabric.



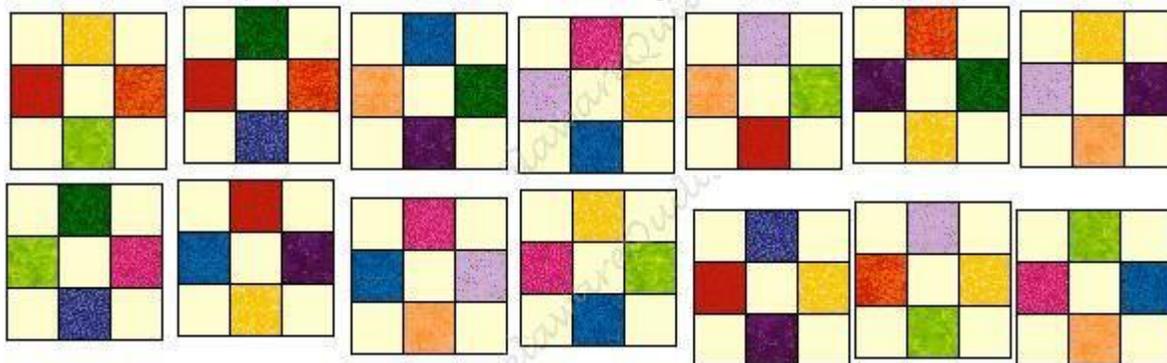
Line up your strips so they are straight and cut "slices" as wide as you originally cut your strips. (If you are making a 12" block with 4 1/2 inch strips, cut your slices 4 1/2 inches wide.)



Make a variety of strip sets remembering that you need twice as many sets with the light fabric on the outside as you do ones with the light fabric in the center. Cut them all up and then mix up your light sets in one container, and the dark sets in another. Now pull two light sets and a dark and sew them together.



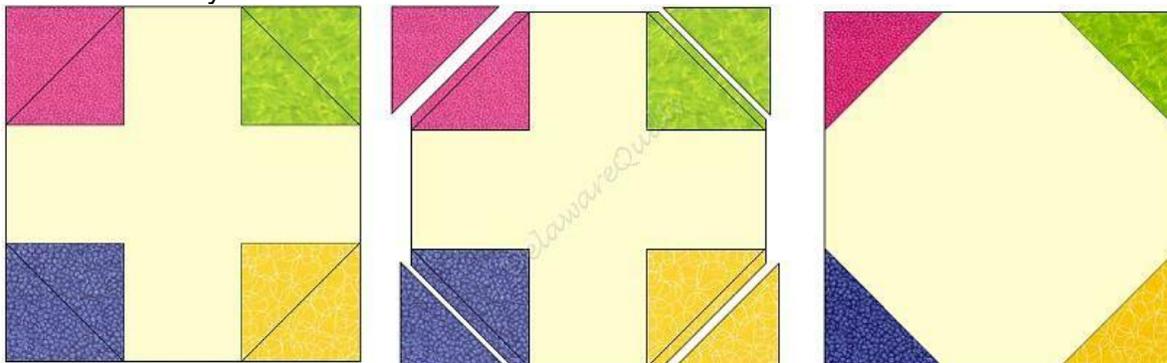
Continue on until you have sewn all the sets together into scrappy 9-patch blocks.



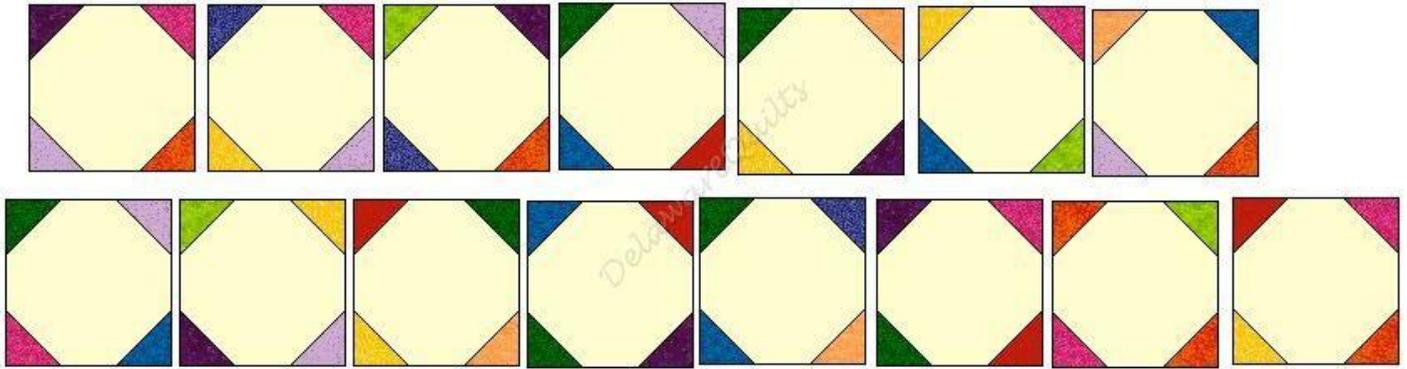
Now to use up those scrappy 9-patches we'll make some snowball blocks to set them off. Whichever size 9-patches you made, you will want to make the same size snowballs using the same background fabric. (If your 9-patches measure 12 1/2 inches now, then you will want to cut 12 1/2 inch squares for your snowball blocks.

And the same applies to the different color corner units for the snowballs. If your 9-patches are 12 1/2 inches cut corner squares 4 1/2 inches. If your 9-patches are 8 1/2 inches cut corner squares 3 inches. If your 9-patches are 6 1/2 inches cut corner squares 2 1/2 inches. If you had any leftover color squares when making your 9-patches this is a good way to use them.

Take the background square and place a different color square with right sides together in each corner. Sew diagonally from corner to corner as shown. (It might be helpful to mark your diagonal line.) Trim the excess leaving a 1/4 inch seam allowance. Press to the background. Continue around until your snow ball block is finished.



Make a whole bunch of scrappy snowballs, depending on how big you want your quilt to be.



All that is left is putting the snowballs and scrappy 9-patches together. Alternate snowballs and 9-patches and then add borders as desired.

