

Blackcurrant Drop Earrings Pattern

by
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Thread

Thread is a personal choice. There are lots of brands. My current favourite is 10lb woven fishing line (no, not the brand you're thinking of) and I also like loom thread, but you can use pretty much anything. If you're buying fishing line, stick to 0.14mm or thinner or you'll have a lot of trouble threading the needle plus if you're using size 11 seeds you won't be able to fit through the beads enough times, and don't go below 7lb strength.

Work with a single thread, not doubled. It's much easier to get the tension right and you'll get a lot fewer tangles.

If you need to add extra thread as you work, leave the ends long enough to weave them in later after you've finished. It's tempting to keep them short to save thread but that just makes them harder to work with and you're probably only saving a penny or so anyway. You can always save any decent sized pieces for doing earrings with.

If your thread starts to fray at any point, don't carry on. Fasten it off and start again with a new thread. Throw the old piece away even if most of it seems undamaged.

Needle

Use the smallest beading needle you can thread, and don't worry if it bends as it definitely will. If it gets too bad you can straighten it up gently with pliers, but very often the curve will actually help anyway and make it easier to access out-of-the-way beads. Don't use an ordinary sewing needle even though they are stronger; the eye is wider than the rest of the needle and it will prevent it going through your beads.

Beeswax

I like beeswax if I'm using thread but never use it with fishing line, though it can be handy to wax the very end of fishing line to make it easier to get through the needle. Beeswax looks like a bar of yellow soap and you run the thread lightly over the bar to pick up a thin layer of wax. Make sure you've got proper beeswax and not the paraffin wax sold in plastic circular cases (which is sometimes labelled beeswax even when it's not). Buy it online from a honey supplier, it'll be about £2 plus postage and lasts for absolutely ages because you use barely any.

Weaving in the thread ends

In general I don't like knots. They're too easy to come undone and they also take up valuable space inside the beads. I like to weave through the work as much as possible, and make sure some sections are going round in rough circles so it doesn't pull back through if the finished piece gets snagged. Then when I am pulling the thread through the very last bead and it is almost all of the way through, I usually put a tiny blob of glue or clear nail varnish onto the last few millimetres of thread so that it disappears into the bead once I pull it through. Apply glue with a cocktail stick, a cotton bud or a matchstick. But if you prefer to knot your thread, go right ahead - it's your work.

Beads

The colours used here in the diagrams are just for clarity and are not intended to represent the bead colours used.

You can also use smaller seeds instead of the size 8's as long as they have large holes. You do need to ensure they definitely have large holes though as the holes will fill up with thread very quickly and you'll just end up breaking them trying to get your needle through.

When using small beads such as seeds, you don't actually pick them up with your fingers. Leave them lying on your work surface and use just the needle to pick them up, pushing the point of the needle down into the hole without touching them yourself.

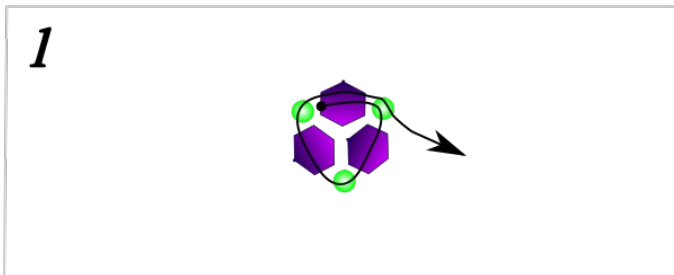


Earring Pattern

Use firm tension all the way through, except for the drop. Each earring uses less than a metre of thread.

Supplies:

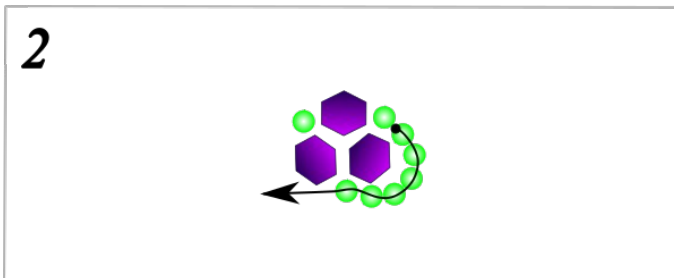
Two 8mm beads
Two 6mm beads
Twelve 4mm bicones
Size 8 seeds
Two or four jump rings
Two earring hooks



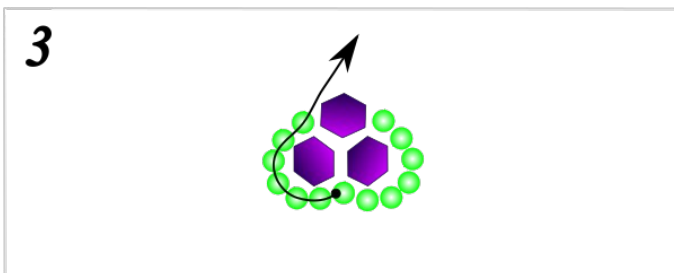
(1) Pick up three bicones and three size 8 seed beads alternately, beginning with a bicone

(2) Go through all six beads again so that the beads snug up together to make a circle. For clarity this is not shown in the diagram

(3) Go forward through the next bicone and seed.

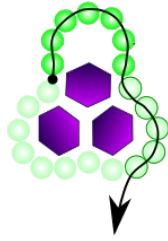


(4) Pick up five size 8 seeds, miss the next bicone in the circle and go through the next seed to form a loop around the edge of the bicone.



(5) Repeat the previous step once more.

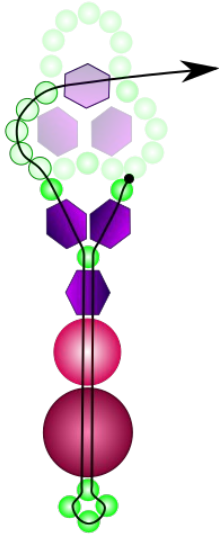
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(6) Pick up seven size 8 seeds, miss the next bicone in the circle and go through the next seed to form a loop around the edge of the top bicone. This will form the loop that you'll attach the earring hook to.

(7) Go forward through the next four seeds.

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(8) Pick up a seed, a bicone, a seed, a bicone, a 6mm bead, an 8mm bead and four seeds.

(9) Miss the last three seeds and pass back up in the opposite direction through the first seed you picked up, then back up through the rest of the beads, but stopping after the second seed bead you picked up.

(10) Pick up a bicone and a seed, pass through the second seed of the next seed bead loop, and work through the rest of this loop. Keep the tension loose for the drop section so it will drape nicely and not be too stiff.

(11) Go through the seed and bicone from the first circle.

(12) Go round this entire thread path again from step 1 to reinforce it, then round the centre circle of bicones and seeds again.

(13) Weave both thread ends securely into your work and fasten off.

(14) Use a jump ring to attach the top edge loop to an earring hook. Depending on the direction of the loop on the hook you may need to link two jump rings together here so that the earring still faces forward.



Pattern 9

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