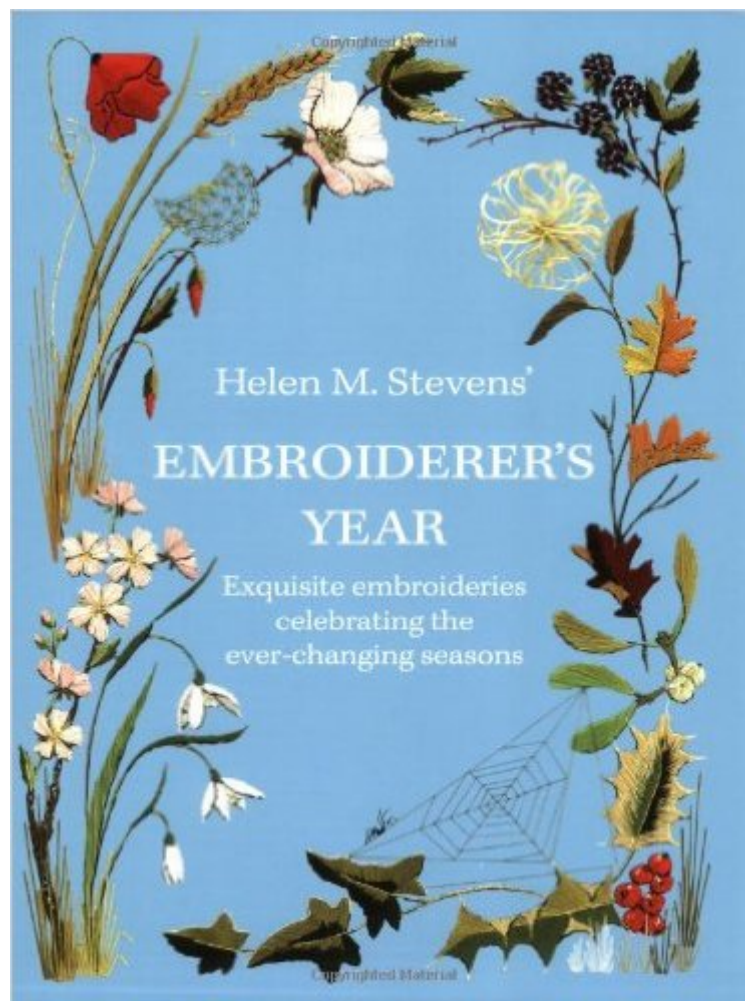


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# Helen M. Stevens' Embroiderer's Year: Exquisite Embroideries Celebrating The Ever-Changing Seasons



## Synopsis

Helen M. Stevens celebrates the use of embroidery to mark traditions and anniversaries throughout the year. Each month is explored through traditional celebrations such as Christmas and Easter, Thanksgiving and the Fourth of July, as well as through the changing scenes in nature. The author shares her special talents demonstrating to readers how to observe the natural world and translate it into exquisite embroidery. This book includes detailed diagrams and instructions for all the techniques and stitches.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I am always fascinated with Helen's works. This one particular. I should say her technique is not that complicated and subtle compared to Chinese SuZhou embroidery's. But her ways of interpreting country creatures like flowers, plants, birds, animals are so vivid that they seem to come to life. Her stitches are just like impressionists' stroke, which capture the every essential piece of natural beauty. I love her landscape works especially. I regret not seeing so many landscape works in this book, but her two works of the same scene in late spring and early winter already ensnare my heart and I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves embroidery and nature.

I was so loving this book until I realised it is basically a gallery of her work and with not a pattern in sight. Well worth drooling over but not a 'how to' book unless you want to use a magnifying glass on each photo to work out how each is stitched and no projects to complete yourself. Will keep it for the facinating artwork.

2009 is the 28th anniversary of the year that Helen M. Stevens gave up her 'day job' and devoted her life to the art of silk embroidery. This book explores a year of this artist's life via gorgeous silk paintings, most of them taken from nature, although one particularly striking design was copied from a Viking gravestone: it features an eight-legged stallion with its phallus tied in a knot (embroidery at the level to which this author takes it, is not for sissies or dilettantes). Stevens reminds me of my favorite watercolorist, Charles Burchfield in her use of natural themes that are suffused with inner light. Her silken oak leaves, squirrels and spiderwebs conjure up visions of the seasons. Snowdrops and winter aconites emerge during a January thaw, clear quartz crystals scattered like ice under their leaves. A mouse examines February violets, and Brimstone butterflies flutter near a daffodil. When speaking of the daffodil, the artist states: "as with all floral embroidery, finding the 'core' or 'growing point' of the bloom is all important in creating a successful interpretation." If you look closely at her flowers, butterflies, and creatures you can see the core of each, spun with different shades of silk as a musician spins variations of sound from an original theme. This book also includes entire landscapes as well as small vignettes from each month of the year. The accompanying text discusses embroidery techniques, as well as the symbolism of the creatures that she chose to represent the seasons of an English year. September, for instance "is the time when Herne the Hunter appears to the unwary lost in autumnal woodland" and can be symbolized by a stag. October features a dormouse sleeping in a nest of oak leaves, "with a touch of metallic gold and silver [to suggest] the frosts to come." This author has a website at [helenmstevens.co.uk](http://helenmstevens.co.uk) where you can view more samples of her work, and buy embroidery supplies or sign up for classes. "Embroiderer's Year" will join the art books on our shelves, rather than mingle with the craft volumes.

I'm just starting to learn embroidery and this is the first book I read about embroidery. I bought this book because I was amazed by the embroidery works featured in it. This book turned out to be very well-written. The author gives historical context behind the plants, animals, and objects that she turned into works of art along with instructions on the techniques used. I learn a lot from this book, and I particularly enjoy the description and explanation given on the embroidery's plants and animals subject. I might note that this book isn't an instructional book, and it doesn't have any patterns you can copy to replicate the works pictured in the book. This book is more of a dissection of the author's works, who designed her own pattern, and thus should be used more as a reference instead of an instruction. It's still very useful for embroidery designers though as it gives you

knowledge in what to look out for when you're designing your own pattern. More experienced embroiderers would be able to replicate the author's works or design their own pattern, inspired by this book. The last few pages of the book does explain some basic embroidery techniques but the pictorial explanation is few.

This book is fabulous! The pictures of her work is absolutely exquisite! Her discussion of how to observe nature as it truly is and how to achieve an accurate "picture" is great. I love the book!

Very informative could not wait to practise it. Lots of pattern to apply to my material for my shawl. I definitely will have one of a kind light weight shawl. Love it.

Love it its wonderful. Will be using the ideas within this book right away. Thanks for sending it on time. Good condition as well.

Very beautifull book. Very nice book. Many ideas to make embroidery.

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