WEAVING TODAY™

# Master Huck Weave:

## 3 Free Huck Lace Weaving Patterns

# Coordinated Fabrics

## for a bathroom

KATHERINE BUENGER

*Wallpaper can be an intriguing starting point for designing coordinating fabrics for a room. Often, the overall pattern will not have so many colors that the task is daunting. In the case of this wallpaper, several shades of blue and one soft gold are all that are needed! After I finished a set of guest towels for the room, a small curtain in one of the blues was an easy next project.*

I am always looking for the *next* weaving project. I knew I'd found one when I walked into my brother and sister-in-law's freshly papered powder room and saw an empty towel bar. I asked for a sample of their wallpaper and, armed with my sample, off to the yarn shop I went. Although I didn't know what weave structure I'd end up using, I chose 8/2 unmercerized cotton as the perfect absorbent fiber for towels.

### Choosing colors and weave structure

For this project, yarn color selection was easy—the wallpaper itself uses just three blues and a gold. Back at home, out came the weaving magazines and books. Before long, my kitchen table was piled high with marked pages! It's easy to see why so many towels are woven in huck. A towel needs to be soft to the touch, absorbent, and sturdy enough to endure repeated washings. A plain-weave base provides durability while warp and weft floats add to absorbency and a soft hand.

For the guest towels, I chose an interesting 8-shaft variation of huck that uses two float groups as two blocks: one block weaves alternating sets of all floats while the other weaves plain weave and then vice versa. I decided to thread each of these "blocks" in a different shade of blue (dark blue, medium blue, light blue, and repeat). I wasn't sure what to do with the gold yarn, but found it worked well as weft stripes in one of the towels.

The towels were such a hit that a huck-lace curtain came next. This time, I chose a 4-shaft huck variation that forms little boxes.

***Katherine Buenger*** *of St. Paul, Minnesota, enjoys all aspects of weaving. As soon as her loom is warped, she is planning the next project.*

### Resources

Strickler, Carol, ed. *A Weaver's Book of 8-Shaft Patterns*. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 1991, p. 205, for the towels.

Tedder, Lynn. "Stuck on Huck." *The Best of Weaver's: Huck Lace*, Madelyn van der Hoogt, ed. Sioux Falls, South Dakota: XRX, 2000, pp. 6–7, treadling *d* for the curtain.

## STEPS FOR WEAVING THE GUEST TOWELS

**Step 1** Wind a warp of 300 ends following Figure 2. Note that each stripe contains 15 ends, an odd number. For the first stripe, use Marine and wind from starting peg to end peg to starting peg 7x (14 ends). Then wind from starting peg to end peg (the 15th end). Start the Vieux Bleu at the end peg (cut the Marine and tie to Vieux Bleu), wind from end peg to starting peg to end peg 7x (14 ends), and then wind back to the starting peg (15th end). Continue this way, starting each color at the opposite peg after seven-and-a-half trips. (These directions are for warping front to back. For complete warping steps, see Resources at handwovenmagazine.com.)

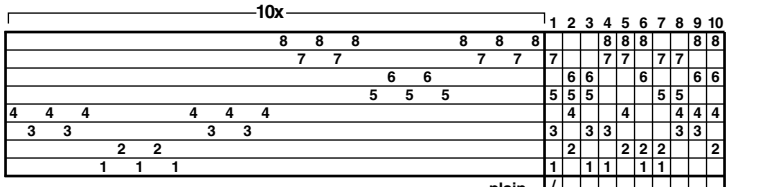
**Step 2** Sley 2/dent in a 10-dent reed, centering for 15". Thread the shafts following Figure 1. Each time you start threading a new color, shift from one set of four shafts to the other set. Beam the warp under firm and even tension and tie onto the front apron rod.

**Step 3** These towels use three different weft color orders. One is woven with a medium blue weft (Vieux Bleu) throughout; the second (Figure 3a) has gold stripes (Vieil Or), and the third (Figure 3b) is woven in dark blue (Marine) with medium blue stripes (Vieux Bleu). Weave these three towels and then for your fourth towel, either design your own weft color order or weave another like one of the first three.

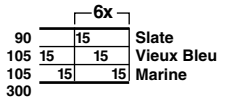
Weave a few picks of plain weave in scrap yarn to spread the warp. Begin and end each towel in plain weave for ½" with sewing thread and 2" with 8/2 cotton and work a row of ladder hemstitching; see Figure 4. Weave the first towel body using Vieux Bleu 8/2 following the treadling in Figure 1. Weave the second and third towels in the same way following Figure 1 and the weft color orders in Figure 3a–b. Maintain an even beat of 20 picks per inch throughout, measuring carefully. In the colored stripes, begin and end each color by taking weft tails around an edge thread and back into the shed about 1"; trim. Separate towels with 2 picks of a contrasting color.

**Step 4** Remove the fabric from the loom and machine zigzag along both sides of all contrasting marker threads. Cut towels apart between marker threads. Turn up each sewing-thread section and then turn fold up to ladder hemstitching; remove spacers and sew hems by hand. Machine wash towels in warm water, gentle cycle. Machine dry, low; press with the iron on a cotton setting while towels are still partly damp.

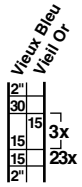
**1. Draft for towels**



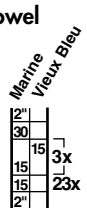

**2. Warp color order**



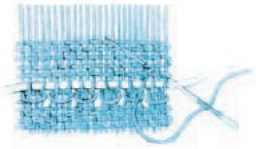

**3a. Weft color order blue and gold towel**




**3b. Weft color order dark blue towel**




**4. Ladder hemstitching**



Hemstitch a row in the usual way (see page 94), including 4 warp threads and 2 weft rows in each stitch. Place a spacer (2 strands 5/2 cotton or heavy string) in a plain-weave shed, weave 2 picks, and hemstitch again including the same 4 warp threads and the 2 new weft rows in each stitch.

## PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

### Weave structure for towels
Huck lace treadling variation.

### Equipment
8-shaft loom, 15" weaving width; 10-dent reed; 3 shuttles.

### Yarns
Warp: 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb), Marine and Vieux Bleu 420 yd (2 oz) each, Slate 360 yd (1¾ oz).
Weft: 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb). Allow 250 total yd each towel. For center towel on page 28: Vieux Bleu 250 yd (1⅛ oz); for left towel: Vieux Bleu, 229 yd (1 1/16 oz); Vieil Or (gold) 21 yd (1/16 oz); for right towel; Vieux Bleu, 229 yd (1 1/16 oz); Marine 21 yd (1/16 oz); blue sewing thread for hems, 50 yd for four towels.

### Yarn sources
8/2 unmercerized cotton is available from Maurice Brassard et Fils.

### Warp order and length
300 ends 4 yd long following Figure 2 (allows 8" for take-up, 28" for loom waste); add 30" for each additional towel.

### Warp and weft spacing
Warp: 20 epi (2/dent in a 10-dent reed). Width in the reed: 15".
Weft: 20 ppi. Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): 108" (27" per towel including hem sections).

### Finished dimensions
After washing, amounts produce four hemmed towels 12" × 18¼" each.

# Pottery-Inspired Placemats

## in huck lace

ROSANNE WHITE

*Adding turquoise (a sacred color for the Navajo) to the black, white, and dark red of Native American pottery creates a powerful and timeless color palette. I've been exploring its use in huck lace fabrics. One of my Hopi-inspired towels was a winner in* Handwoven*'s Twenty-first-Century Towel contest.*

As my husband and I danced in our living room one evening, he was thinking about the steps and the music, but I was thinking about weaving! I looked over his shoulder as he swept me around and my eyes lit on a Hopi pot sitting on the mantle. What wonderful colors! I had planned my next weaving project before the song ended.

Using a color wheel to produce a palette for weaving doesn't work for me. Instead, I try to notice pleasing color combinations in nature or in other art. Certain combinations produce an excitement and energy in me that make me think of weaving possibilities. I love Native American pots and never tire of looking at them. Seeing them as inspiration coincided with my exploration of huck lace.

The materials and weaving instructions given here can be used for towels as well as placemats. For the fabric in Photo b, see *Handwoven*'s *Winning Towels*, the newest eProject collection!

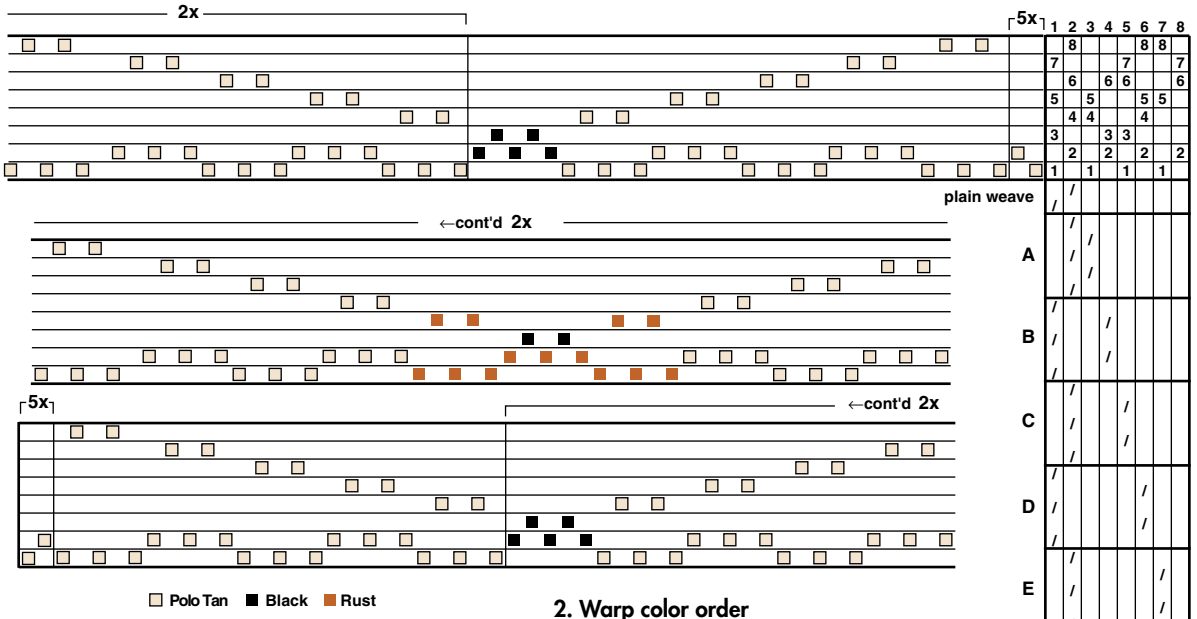
***Rosanne White** of San Antonio, Texas, has been weaving for six years. She is still thrilled to say: "I am a weaver."*

**a. Black is used instead of turquoise as the main weft for these placemats.**

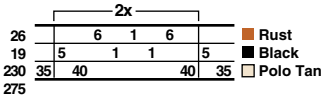
**b. Huck lace towels using natural, rust, and black in warp and weft are contest winners.**

# STEPS FOR WEAVING THE PLACEMATS

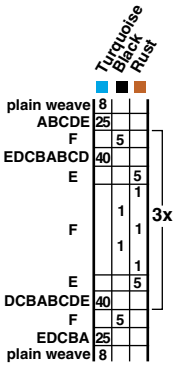
### 1. Draft for placemats




### 2. Warp color order




### 3. Weft color and treadling block order




To weave the towels: substitute a 5-pick treadling sequence from Figure 1 for each block letter in Figure 3, using the colors given in Figure 3. For example, weave 8 picks plain weave and then weave 5 picks Block A (turquoise), 4 picks Block B (turquoise), etc.

**Step 1** Wind a warp of 275 ends 3½ yd long following the warp color order in Figure 2. Hold 2 ends together, keeping a finger between them to prevent twisting. These instructions are for front-to-back warping; for complete warping steps, see Resources at handwoven magazine.com. Cut and tie at color changes (where Rust and Black occur together, first wind 6 ends of Rust, tie Black to one of the Rust strands and make one trip from starting peg to end peg to starting peg with both colors, and then cut off Black and retie to Rust).

**Step 2** Sley 2/dent in a 10-dent reed, thread following Figure 1, beam the warp under even tension, and tie onto the front apron rod.

**Step 3** Begin and end each placemat with 1½" plain weave using turquoise sewing thread as weft for hems. The sewing thread does not shrink as much with washing as 8/2 cotton, so weave it more densely and let it pull in a little more than for the rest of the mat. Weave the bodies of each placemat following Figures 1 and 3 (substitute one treadling unit from Figure 1 for each block letter—A, B, C, D, E, or F— in Figure 3, using the color indicated in Figure 3. Where Rust alternates with Black: Do not cut the Rust weft. Leave a 2–3" Black tail when you insert the first Black pick. Weave the center Rust pick. For the second Black pick, put the Black weft tail in the shed first, then weave with Black and cut the Black weft where it overlaps the tail. Separate mats with 2 picks of a contrasting color.

**Step 4** Cut the fabric from the loom and machine stitch both ends of each mat. Cut apart between contrasting-color picks. Turn up sewing-thread sections on ends, turn again, and sew hems by hand. Machine wash, warm, and lay flat or hang on a line to dry. Iron the placemats on a cotton setting before they are completely dry.

## PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

### Weave structure for placemats
Huck lace.

### Equipment
8-shaft loom, 14" weaving width; 10-dent reed; 4 shuttles (or 2 shuttles, 4 bobbins).

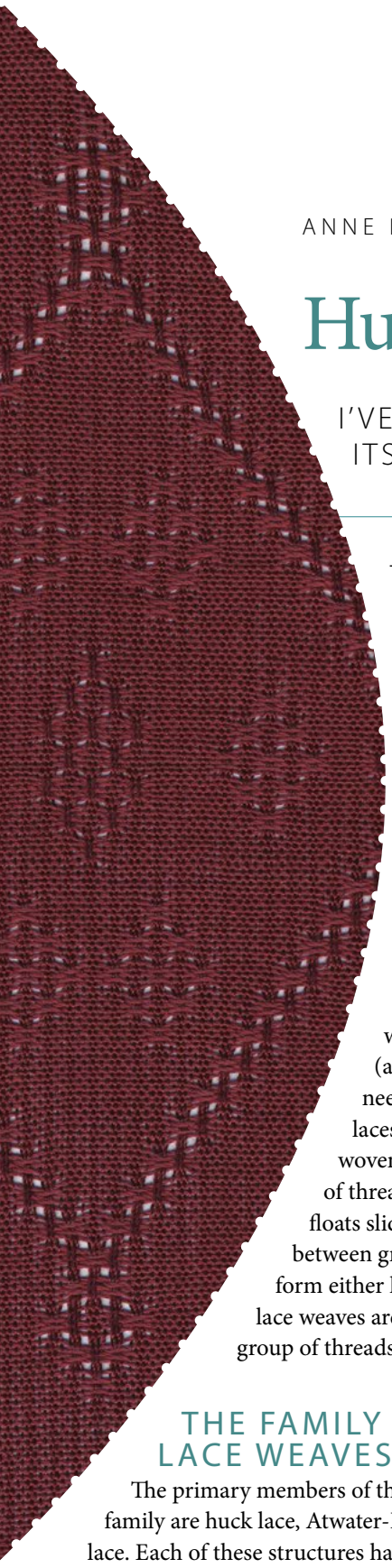
### Yarns
Warp: 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb), Polo Tan, 805 yd (3⅞ oz); Rust, 91 yd (½ oz); and Black, 67 yd (⅓ oz).
Weft: 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb), Dark Turquoise, 515 yd (2½ oz); Rust, 66 yd (⅓ oz); and Black, 44 yd (¼ oz); turquoise sewing thread for hems, 140 yd.

### Yarn sources
8/2 unmercerized cotton in Polo Tan, Dark Turquoise, Black, and Rust by UKI is available from most weaving retailers.

### Warp order and length
275 ends 3½ yd long following the warp color order in Figure 2 (allows 6" for take-up and 32" for loom waste). Add 24" to warp length for each additional placemat.

### Warp and weft spacing
Warp: 20 epi (2/dent in a 10-dent reed). Width in the reed: 13¾".
Weft: 20 ppi. Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): 88" (22" per mat: 18" for pattern, 4" for hem and plain-weave edge sections each).

### Finished dimensions
After washing, amounts produce four hemmed placemats 11½" × 15" each.



ANNE DIXON

# Huck lace: a love affair

I'VE BEEN WEAVING HUCK LACE FOR YEARS. I NEVER TIRE OF ITS POTENTIAL FOR CREATIVE DESIGN!

The ways that huck drafts can be varied and the range of fibers, yarn sizes, and colors that can be used for huck fabrics make this a weave structure you can spend a lifetime exploring.

Here are some dictionary definitions for huck: "Huckaback: stout linen fabric with rough surface for towels, etc." And: "A huckster is a peddler or hawker, circa 1200." So did the huckster originally sell huck?

Loom-controlled lace weaves, of which huck is one (as opposed to bobbin lace, needle lace, or hand-manipulated laces, such as Spanish lace), are woven interlacements. Small groups of threads that include warp or weft floats slide together, forming lacy holes between groups. Because the groups can form either lace (floats) or plain-weave, lace weaves are block weaves, and each small group of threads is a block.

## THE FAMILY OF LACE WEAVES

The primary members of the loom-controlled lace-weave family are huck lace, Atwater-Bronson lace, and Swedish lace. Each of these structures has its own specific interlacement, although they have certain features in common.

Wherever there is a warp-float group of threads on one face of the cloth, there is a weft-float group on the other side—and vice versa. Each of these lace weaves incorporates plain weave as part of the structure and as part of the design: Threads within each block interlace in plain-weave order to stabilize the floats; each block can produce either plain weave or lace; plain weave can be threaded independently of the lace groups.

## HUCK BASICS

Huck lace uses an odd number of threads in each block in both threading and treadling. The number is usually five, but 3-thread and 7-thread blocks can be used as well. With more than seven threads, the floats may be too long unless the threads are very fine.

The odd number is important—because of it, the threads in each group behave symmetrically, making possible the little textural circles that are characteristic of huck and only huck (see Photo b, page 11). Because of this, adjacent blocks must begin and end on a different shaft (shaft 1 in one block, shaft 2 in the next) to avoid doubled threads. Therefore, in huck, each block of five, three, or seven threads is actually a "half-unit" and must always alternate with a half-unit beginning and ending on the opposite shaft.

Although huck can be threaded many different ways, the threading in Figures 1 and 2, pages 10 and 11, ensure that plain weave is formed by odd shafts alternating with even shafts. The threads on shafts 3 and above determine whether the block weaves lace (floats) or plain weave; they are often called the

Warp and weft of the white scarf on page 9 are 30/2 Tencel; weft in the pale green scarf is 60/2 silk; warp and weft in the burgundy scarf (detail at left ) is 30/2 Tencel; the sett is 35 ends per inch; the 16-block designs require eighteen shafts.

pattern threads and their shafts, the pattern shafts. To extend the threading to more shafts, just remember that shaft 2 always alternates with an odd pattern shaft; shaft 1 always with an even pattern shaft (2-O-2-O-2; 1-E-1-E-1).

As a result of this, almost two-thirds of the total warp threads in a huck draft are threaded on shafts 1 and 2. You'll need to make sure that you have enough heddles on these shafts before you thread a huck draft.

## WEAVING HUCK

Huck is usually woven with a single shuttle using a weft of the same thickness, fiber type, and color as the warp (color is more often varied than fiber type or yarn thickness).

The treadling order for each block is similar to the threading. For 5-thread huck, for example, each group of picks is treadled: plain weave, pattern, plain weave, pattern, plain weave. So that two weft threads are not woven consecutively in the same shed, these five picks can be thought of as treadling half-units, one beginning with the even plain-weave shed, and the other with the odd plain-weave shed.

Plain weave can be woven in all blocks by alternating even shafts with odd shafts in the treadling. Lace happens in a block when a shaft is added to or removed from one of the plain-weave sheds: Warp floats occur when pattern shafts are raised in a group when they would be down for plain weave. Weft floats occur when pattern shafts are left down when they would be up for plain weave. These alterations occur in what are considered the "pattern picks," the second and fourth picks in the block of five (the same way the second and fourth ends in a group of five determine pattern in the threading). Examine Figure 1 closely.

If we think of 2-3-2-3-2 as Block A and 1-4-1-4-1 as Block B, there are seven possible structural combinations on a 4-shaft loom.

1. A and B both plain weave
2. A warp float, B plain weave
3. A weft float, B plain weave
4. A plain weave, B warp float
5. A plain weave, B weft float
6. A warp float, B weft float
7. A weft float, B warp float

Any area threaded alternately on shafts 1 and 2 always weaves plain weave. With eight shafts or more, design options increase geometrically, making a table or dobby loom desirable for exploring the possibilities. (My first foray into designing an 8-shaft huck lace required forty-seven different pattern sheds!)

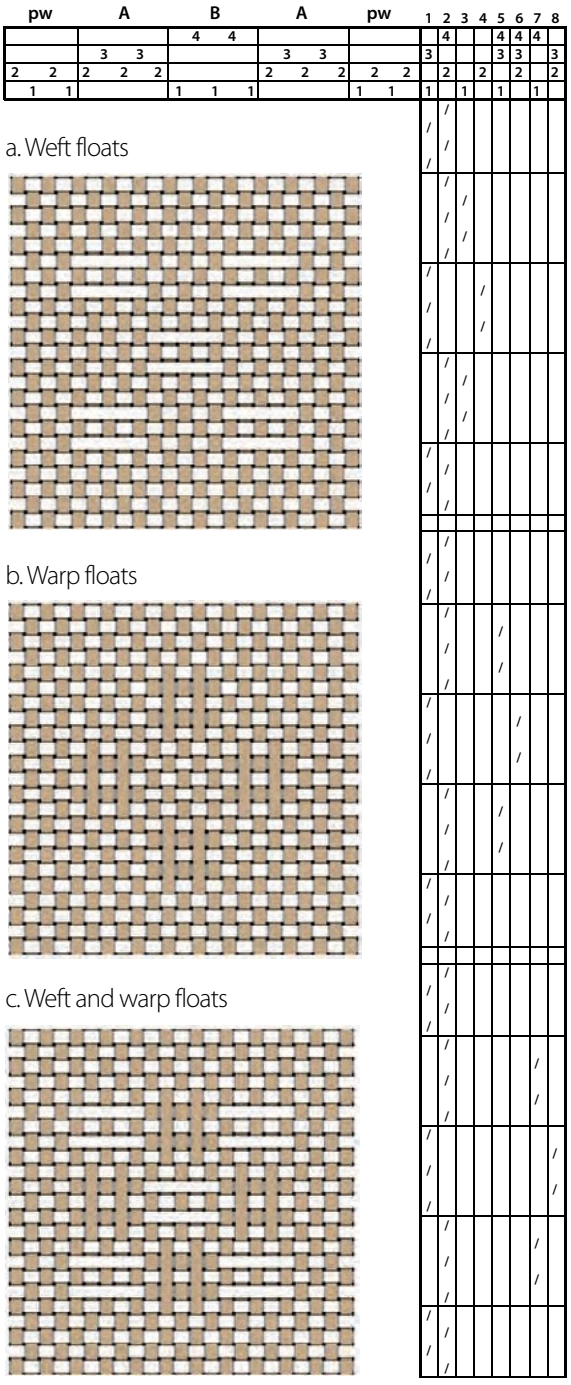
## YARN TYPES

Traditionally, huck was woven in fine natural linen. However, many other types of yarn can be used and in a range of thicknesses. Medium-weight wool, for instance, is very successful because, even though the floats can be relatively long, fulling can stabilize them. Linen, cotton, silk, rayon, and Tencel all allow the threads to migrate easily, creating lacy holes. If you have a favorite yarn—try it in a sample to see how it works.

## COLOR

Natural colors, including white or cream, and pale pastels are the most effective in showing contrast between warp and weft floats. They also provide the most contrast with the shadows created by the lacy holes. Traditionally, the warp and weft are the same color, although different colors can be used for each. Tones or shades of the same hue or colors that are close in value are probably best, but pleasant surprises can also happen with other combinations.

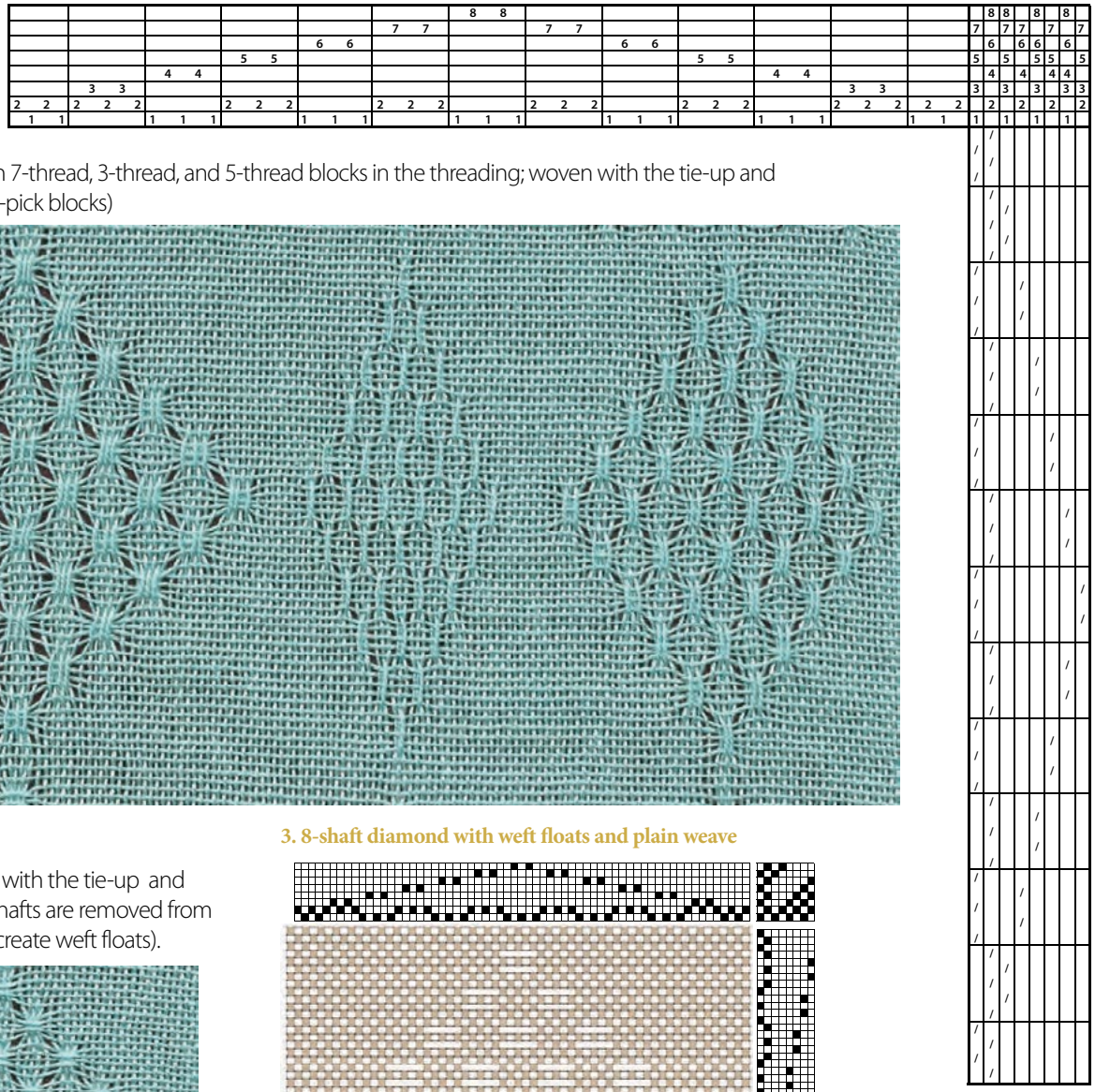
**1. 4-shaft huck draft**



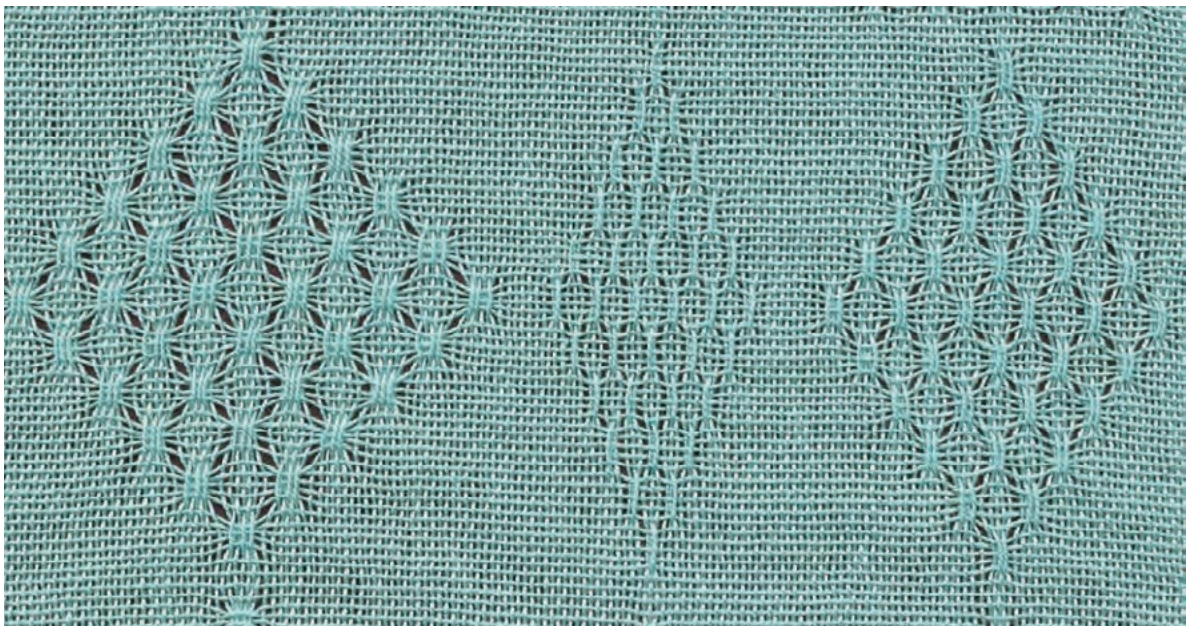

## SETTS

For the threads to move to form lacy holes, the sett should be a bit more open than the usual sett for plain weave in a given yarn. Sections of plain weave in the threading help control your beat (think of it as placing the weft rather than beating). The more floats produced in a given treadling sequence, the more lightly you must "place" the weft to achieve the same picks per inch.

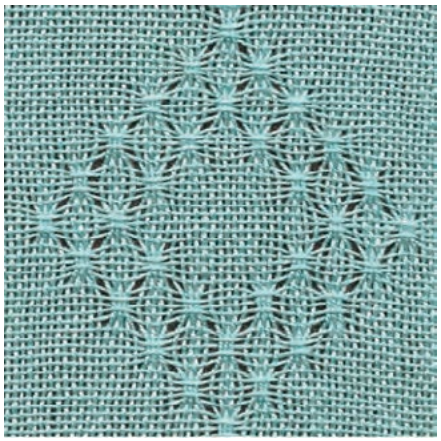
**2. 8-shaft huck draft**



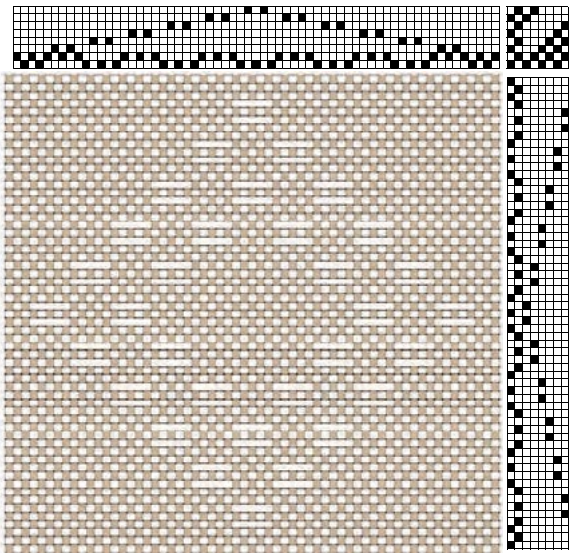

a. Huck diamonds with 7-thread, 3-thread, and 5-thread blocks in the threading; woven with the tie-up and treadling in Figure 2 (5-pick blocks)



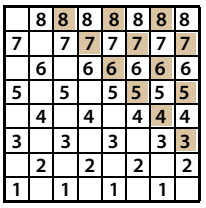
b. The cloth produced with the tie-up and treadling in Figure 3 (shafts are removed from plain-weave sheds to create weft floats).



**3. 8-shaft diamond with weft floats and plain weave**



The drawdowns in this article were prepared in PixeLoom .



**marks pattern shafts added to plain-weave treadle to make warp floats; see Photo a**

## FINISHING

Even while the cloth is on the loom, the threads will start to distort to make lacy areas. After the cloth has been washed, the lace effect will become even more pronounced. Secure the raw edges before washing as normal for the yarn you are using and wash by hand (except for sturdy fabrics such as towels). Roll the fabric in a towel after rinsing to remove excess water. I prefer to press immediately on both sides while the cloth is still damp, using the correct iron temperature for the yarn (hot temperature and a pressing cloth for wool), before air-drying flat. Pressing can then be repeated after the cloth is completely dry.

You will probably develop many adaptations of these techniques. Love your lace—it has such a "wow" factor!

## RESOURCES

Dixon, Anne. *The Handweaver's Pattern Directory.* Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2007. Huck, pp. 165–171; Bronson lace, 180–185, Swedish lace, 186–191.