

Rule Your Quilt

By Angela Huffman | APQS Educator & Dealer

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Garden Trellis Border Designs with Rulers

I love quilts strewn with florals and curly vines. They look so full of life and beauty. A great border design motif that will frame out the curves of floral fabrics is one that is highly structured and reminiscent of a lovely garden trellis. There are a variety of straight line designs from simple to complex that are easy to accomplish using rulers designed for machine quilting.

Using rulers when machine quilting gives you consistent shapes and spaces while being easy to use, too! You'll need a ruler foot installed on your machine. These feet are made for both domestic sewing machines and longarms. They have a high wall surrounding the needle so they can glide along the tall edge found on machine quilting rulers. Do not use your cutting rulers as they can slip under the foot, get crunched by your needle and cause damage to your machine.

If you are using a domestic sewing machine you will move the ruler and the quilt sandwich as one under the needle with your feed dogs down. The speed with which you move your hands and the pressure you place on your foot pedal will determine your stitch length. Increase or decrease the speed your needle fires to change your stitch length. Just move at a steady pace and find the stitch length you like. I recommend going slower than you think initially. Because you are moving the ruler with the fabric sandwich, I highly recommend you use some sort of sticky dot or stay tape on the back of the ruler for stability.

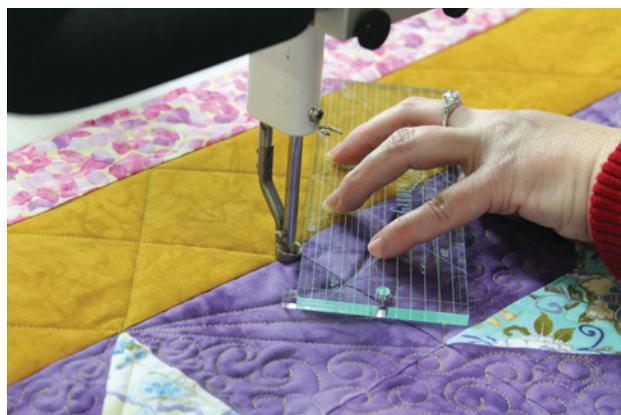
If you are using a longarm quilting machine, you will need a ruler base to provide a little work table under the quilt upon which you'll rest the ruler. Unlike a domestic sewing machine, you will hold the ruler in place with your non-dominant hand and guide the machine down the edge of the ruler using your dominant hand.

Don't push down too hard on the ruler or you will impede the movement of the longarm. Gentle pressure is all that is needed. The stitch regulator in your longarm machine will keep your stitches so all you need to do is focus on your design.



You will need to consider the space the hopping foot adds to the area around the needle when placing your ruler on your fabric. The edge of the foot is $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from the needle so place the ruler $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from where you wish your stitching line to end. This will compensate for the space the foot consumes around the needle.

TIP: Stitch in the ditch first to anchor your space so it remains stable and square.



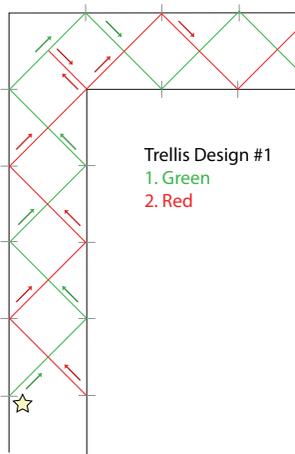
Photos by Kelsey Williams.

Remember:

- Always use a ruler foot on your machine when working with rulers.
- You must use a ruler specifically made for machine quilting, as they are tall enough to butt against the ruler foot.
- Longarm machines also need a ruler base installed.



notice that you no longer travel all the way to the opposite side of the border. Instead, you'll stop at the registration line before heading back to the next tick mark.



Trellis Design #1: The simplest trellis design is a straight line that bounces between registration marks spaced evenly across the border. I've made tick marks every 4" for this example. Start with the star on green line first and head back on the red line second. These diamond spaces are great places to add some free-motion quilting if desired.

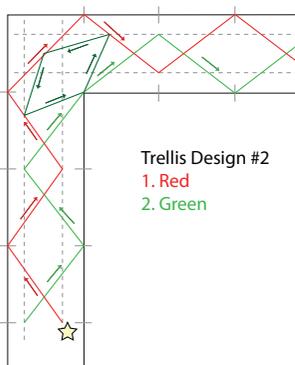


Trellis Design #3: This design builds upon our previous design. Once you've stitched out Trellis Design #2 you'll stitch out a second pair of lines that are a mirror image of the first pair. You'll still be bouncing between your tick marks on the edge of the border and the registration line you marked.

If you've been considering dipping your toes into ruler work on your domestic sewing machine or on a longarm quilting machine, a straight edge machine quilting ruler is a great way to get started. If you'd like to see recommendations on rulers, companion corner designs for these borders and even a worksheet so you can practice it first on paper, please download the free student bundle at <https://bit.ly/2BeUymu>.

The next time you have a garden of fabric and want to add beauty to your quilt top, consider using a garden trellis design in the border. A straight edge machine quilting ruler can add wonderful geometric structure to your quilt and frame out all of your patchwork perfectly!

Angela Huffman is an APQS educator and dealer who is located in Louisville, Kentucky where she operates the APQS Louisville Store and her Quilted Joy quilting studio and machine quilting training center. Contact Angela at angela@apqs.com.



Trellis Design #2: One small change can give a great alternative that looks complicated. In this version there are two registration lines marked horizontally above and below the center line. The travel path is identical to our first design but this time as you travel from one point to the next,