SWATCH PAGE

THE TRIANGULAR SHAWL IN BRONSON LACE AND PLAIN WEAVE

by Joy Rosner

The triangular shawl is a graceful and beautiful shaped-on-the loom garment which is not only now most fashionable, but has for many generations been a favorite warm costume. The scarf may be lacy and ethereal as our sample or it may be heavy and blanket-like.

The weave chosen as the pattern weave is Bronson lace which is a balanced (50/50) one-shuttle weave with every other thread threaded on the same harness—in our draft this is on harness 2—as in what Davison calls Swedish lace but in Atwater, Black, and Tidball is on harness 1. One tabby is on harness 2 in our draft, the other harnesses threadled together are the other tabby. Harness 1 carries the tie-down thread between blocks making it possible to repeat any of the blocks a desired number of times. There are six threads per block. The blocks are treadled as drawn in.

Let us look at our sample (which will not as custom, be posted at the Guild, unless it is posted on me walking around the Guild—or through it):

Photo 1 shows a detail of the shawl. What other weave might work in place of the lace weave? Consider making a profile of the draft we used, and replacing it with another weave structure.

Photo 2 shows the entire shawl.

Materials: single ply blue British Tweed was used as the warp-weft. Various companies carry similar yarns. They run approximately 2000 yds/lb. One could also use a double ply yarn which would obviously be sleyed further apart. With mohair or textured yarn, one would obscure the pattern, but get a luscious result nonetheless.

Sett: 12 epi for the tweed. For another yarn, one would sley to achieve a perfectly balanced plain weave area.

A 40" wide, 2 yard long warp was perpared. The two yard warp is sufficient for the warp length fringe and the weft length fringe.

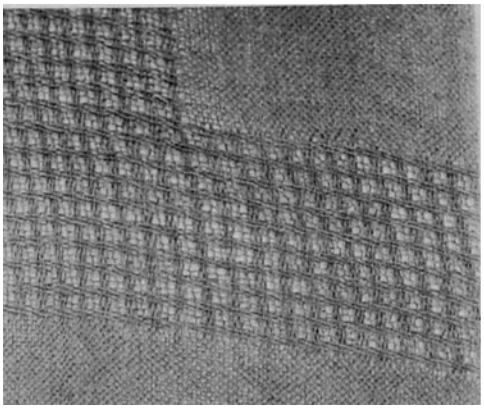


Photo 1. Detail of shawl showing Bronson lace.

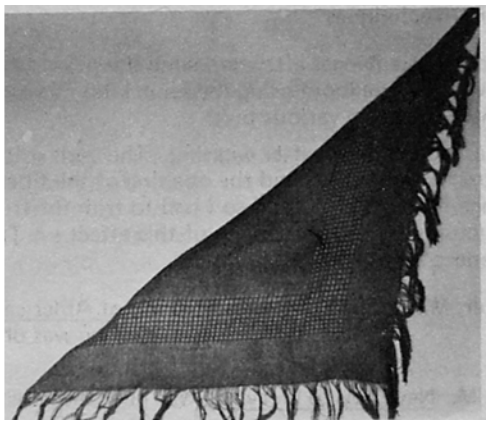
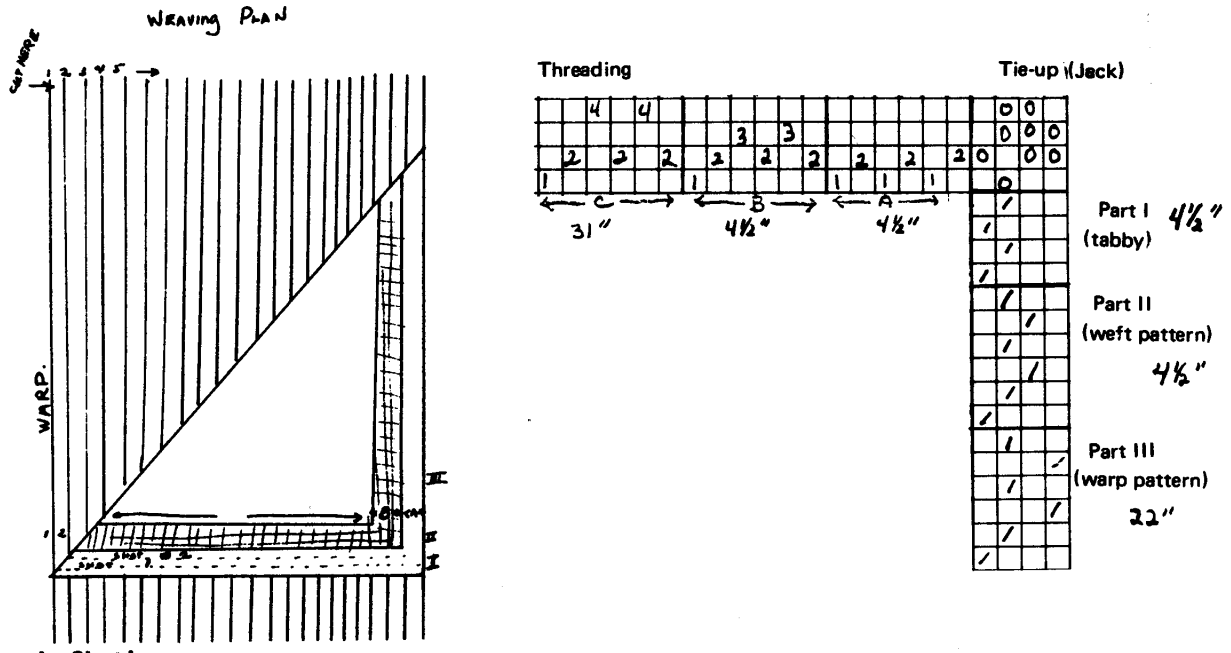


Photo 2. Overall view of triangular shawl.



Weaving the Shawl

1. Treadle as shown in the treadling diagram—as drawn in.
2. For the first pick, break the warp numbered 1 in the plan as far back on the back of the loom as possible. (You will probably have to get up from your loom and walk around. Later you will just need to lean over to break the warp.) Pull warp no. 1 through the heddles, through the reed and use this warp as the weft shot no. 1 on the first shed.
3. Change sheds. Break warp no. 2, pull it through the heddles and through the reed and use as weft shot no. 2.
4. Continue weaving until the last warp is broken and the shawl is finished.
5. Remember to change treadling order according to plan to yield lace in desired places.

Problems Involved in Weaving

1. One must beat evenly, checking the plain weave area often to be sure it is balanced so as to get the width of the shawl equal to the length. As the warp narrows, it is all too easy to beat much harder than one did at the beginning when the warp was wider. Thus one must gently press the weft into place with the beater. You might consider getting a plastic right triangle from the stationer's as well as counting the weft threads per inch to see if they are equal to the warp threads per inch.
2. A taller person than I (5'½") might find a 40" x 40" shawl too small—so I recommend longer fringes.
3. Because each warp becomes a weft—only one shawl may be warped at a time.

Finishing Techniques

1. One may tie fringes after removing the shawl from the loom, or as I did, hemstitch both horizontally and vertically while the shawl is on the loom using the same kind of yarn. Also consider some of the many wonderful finishing techniques and fringes shown in various texts.
2. I washed my shawl after weaving. The yarn softened considerably and the lace opened to form the lovely pattern. The slight felting which occurs and the opening of the fibers forms a sound, strong textile. I found however that the single ply yarn fringe frayed and tangled so I had to trim the fringe. This tangle occurs because single yarns are mechanically unsymmetrical structures. (For a discussion of this effect see Treloar, L.R.G.)

References

Atwater, M.M. The Shuttle-Craft Book of American Hand-Weaving. Atwater mentions that this lace technique which is widely used now in linen weaving was originally used in English scarfs—thus I used the British wool singles for the sample!

Black, M. New Key to Weaving. She gives a discussion of Bronson lace as does Atwater.

Davison, M. A Handweaver's Pattern Book.

Interweave. Vol. III, Number 1, Fall 1977. This article offers another way to weave a triangular scarf. The author suggests bribing a child to cut the warps at the back of the loom—a competent child.

Laughlin, M.E. "More Than Four." How to extend the Bronson system to Multiharness weaving.

Nunneley, Faithe. Faithe, to whom I owe so much, first told me how to make a triangular shawl in Spring 1969.

Tidball, H. The Weaver's Book. Discussion of the Atwater-Bronson Lace System.

Treloar, L.R.G. Physics Today. Vol. 30, No. 12, Dec. 1977. "Physics of Textiles." "Look what I brought home for you today, dear." One of the fringe benefits of being married to a physicist. (There are many!)

Happy Weaving and Happy Experimenting!