Denim Tote

You can use a combination of denim fabrics, either from purchased yardage or upcycled garments, to create this tote. Use your crafting machine to create the "pattern" for the placement of the tree trunk and branches, as well as cutting the leaf shapes. Sew the tote using your sewing machine. The finished size of the bag (not counting the handles) is approximately 15" (38cm) wide by 16½" (42cm) tall.
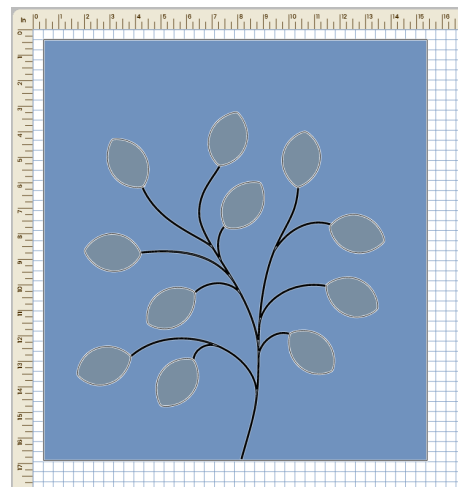
What you need

- Medium-Weight Denim in Mid and Dark Shades (for main tote)
- Lightweight Denim (for lining)
- Navy Rattail Cording
- 1" Webbing (approximately 2½ yards)
- Paper-Backed Fusible Webbing
- Fabric Grip Mat 24" x 24"
- Fabric Washable Pen
- Rotary Blade
- Brayer

- Sewing Machine

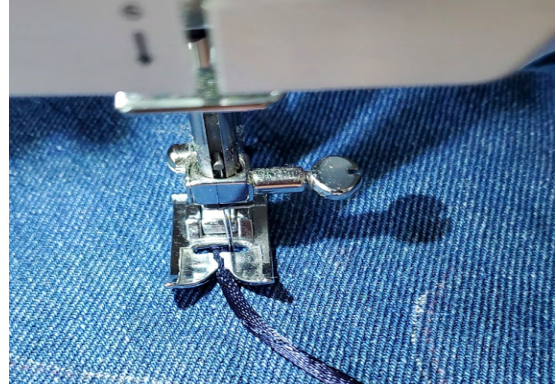- Thread

- Four 1" D-Rings

- Hand Sewing Needle

Directions

1. For the Leaves: The medium-colored denim will have a lighter color on its wrong side, which you will actually use as the "right" side for making the leaves. Apply the fusible webbing to the *right* side of the medium denim.

2. Open the project in Canvas. For the Bag Front: Place a 20" x 20" (50cm x 50cm) piece of medium-colored denim right side up onto the Fabric Grip Mat. Use a Brayer to smooth out any wrinkles or bubbles in the fabric. Follow the steps to draw the "tree branches" onto the fabric and cut the bag front.

3. Place the medium colored denim (with the fusible webbing applied), with lighter colored fabric side facing you, onto the Fabric Grip Mat. Use a Brayer to smooth out any wrinkles or bubbles in fabric. Follow the steps to cut your leaves on your crafting machine. Select 'Rearrange to reduce waste'. Set the leaves aside for now.

4. Cut one more piece of the medium-colored denim for the tote back. It should measure 15" x 16½" (38cm x 42cm) as well. Set aside for now.

5. For the Base and Lining: From the dark denim, cut two 5" x 16½" (12.7cm x 42cm) strips. From the lightweight denim, cut two pieces 19½" x 16½" (49.5cm x 42cm).

6. Set the sewing machine for a zig zag stitch. Starting with the smaller "offshoots", stitch the rattail cording to the tote front using a zigzag stitch that is just slightly wider than the cording, and a stitch length setting approximately 3.0mm.

7. Stitch the main stems and trunk on the tote front, covering the ends of the offshoots.

8. Remove the paper backing from the leaves. Place the leaves on the tote front, over the offshoot ends. Use your sewing machine to stitch the leaves in place with a straight stitch.

9. With right sides together and raw edges aligned, pin the dark denim panel (5" x 16.5" piece) to the tote front lower edge. Stitch in place. Press the seams down toward the tote lower edge, and topstitch the seam allowance in place.

10. Repeat Step 9 to attach the dark denim lower panel to the tote back.

11. Pin the tote front and back together with right sides facing, making sure to match the seams of the lower panels. Stitch along the two sides and lower edge using a ½" (12mm) seam allowance.

12. Fold the corner so that the side and lower seams meet. Stitch across the corner, 1" (25mm) in from the point. Repeat for the remaining corner.

13. Place the tote lining rectangles together with right sides facing. Stitch along the two sides and lower edge using a ½" (12mm) seam allowance, leaving a 3" (7.6cm) opening unstitched in one side edge.

14. Fold the corner so that the side and lower seams meet. Stitch across the corner, 1" (25mm) in from the point. Repeat for the remaining corner.

15. Cut four 3" (7.6cm) sections from the webbing. Wrap one webbing section through one D-ring. Repeat for the remaining rings.

16. Position each folded webbing section 2" (5cm) from the tote side edge, aligning the raw edges with the tote upper edge. Baste in place.

17. Place the tote exterior inside the tote lining with right sides together. Stitch around the bag opening perimeter with a ½" (12mm) seam allowance.

18. Turn the tote right side out through the lining opening. Hand sew the opening closed.

19. Cut two 28" (71cm) strips from the remaining webbing. Pass each end through a D-ring, fold under the raw edge, and stitch in place. Repeat to attach the remaining strap ends.