

## **4-H KNITTING GUIDELINES**

Following are suggestions and helpful guidelines for the knitting project. They are not hard and fast rules, but rather some guidelines for providing learning experience in knitting.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL MEMBERS**

- \* Clean hands and clean needles must be constantly stressed.
- \* Correct tension must be stressed from the beginning.
- \* Size 8 (10 inch) needles and knitting worsted weight yarn, are recommended for beginners.
- \* White, black and navy yarn are not recommended until knitter is advanced. White shows the dirt too quickly and black and navy are hard for beginners to spot mistakes.
- \* A leader may want to give a mini-exam to older members in first year of knitting and who have some previous knitting to determine their ability to: cast on, rib, knit, purl, tension, gauge. The leader could then better help the member to choose a project in line with his/her capabilities.
- \* Learn how to combine needles, yarn, stitches, tension and gauge.
- \* Learn how to select all materials needed and a pattern.

At the county style revue and fair, the knitter enters according to his/her age. (Young, 9-11 yrs.; Junior, 12-14 yrs.; Senior, 15-19 yrs. old). From the judging sheets or during the judging, the judges will receive information on the age of the 4-H'er and number of years in the project. It should be assumed the project or 4-H'er will be considered on this individual basis. Only wearing apparel can be exhibited at the style revue, but non-wearing apparel knitting projects can be exhibited at the fair. Articles made with a knitting machine are exhibited in a separate class, regardless of age.

### **EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES**

Listed below are guidelines for techniques that could be learned at the various levels of experience. It doesn't mean that the 4-H'er has to learn all of the techniques during that time period since it depends on the individual and how much they can handle. Each 4-H'er should have a new learning experience with each project. It is important not to let the 4-H'er get overwhelmed with their project. Knitting skills, techniques or methods should be taught and advanced from year to year.

The new 4-H'er who has no knitting experience will need to start at the beginning level and learn the basics in order to build on those skills. Perhaps the older 4-H'er who has good coordination could combine more than one year into his/her project or complete two stages in one year. This should be a determination to be made between the 4-H'er, leader and parent.

### **FIRST & SECOND YEAR:**

For the first project, stress simplicity. Make sure the member has a good grasp of the basics.

Learn use of basic knitting tools.

Learn simple knitting terms and abbreviations.

Learn how to wind yarn (if necessary).

Learn casting on.

Learn how to knit.

Learn how to purl.

Learn binding off.

Learn how to use correct tension to gauge correctly.

Learn ribbing.

Learn stockinette stitch.

Learn how to join new strand of yarn.

Learn how to increase and decrease.

Learn to recognize and correct mistakes.

Learn how to sew seams - overcast and woven.

Learn correct way to wash and care for knitted garments.

A few possible first year projects are: scarf, slippers, or hat. Second year ideas include: mittens, sleeveless shell, vest, or stocking cap.

### **THIRD & FOURTH YEAR:**

Learn how to read more complicated patterns.

Learn use of stitch holders, tape measure and markers.

Learn how to do knitted-in buttonholes.

Learn how to set in sleeves.

Learn how to backstitch, crochet and graft seams.

Learn how to do pattern stitches.

Learn use of circular needles.

Learn how to launder and block garment.

A few ideas for third year include: long-sleeve pullover sweater, stockinette, cardigan with knit in buttonholes, mittens with pattern stitch and matching cap or hat; skirt or poncho.

Fourth year ideas include a patterned cardigan or pullover, or a patterned cape.

New skills should be learned each year.

### **FIFTH YEAR & ADVANCED:**

Work with more complicated patterns.

Learn how to interchange colors.

Learn use of different types and weights of yarns.

Learn how to make machine sewn buttonholes.

Learn pattern drafting.

Learn how to do knitted in hem.

Learn how to combine knitting with fabric.

Project ideas include: suit, skirt, dress, sweater-patterned and/or interchanged colors, or coat.

Learn new skills each year.

**GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FROM FAIR JUDGES:**

- The first appearance of the garment is important (How the garment looks).
- Tail ends must be woven in.
- No knots. If there is a knot in the yarn, cut it out and make a single loop around, weaving in the ends in opposite directions. It is usually best to start new skeins at the beginning of a row whenever possible.
- Seams should be neat, not too bulky, and sewn together properly.
- No twisted stitches.
- Even stitches, uniformity of tension.
- More advanced projects as knitter gets older.
- When using more than one color in a pattern stitch, yarn should be carried along loosely so that pattern will not pucker. Loops on inside should not span more than 3 stitches at a time.
- Blocking: Do not press too heavily. Over blocking ruins the pattern.
- If garment has to be washed, be sure it is dry before bringing it in for judging. It will be marked down if it is still damp.
- If practice squares are made, they will not be judged as a exhibit.
- There should not be any holes in tip of mittens or at base of thumb. Also, toes of slippers should be pulled up tightly, without leaving any holes.
- Inside should look as neat as the outside.