

Cake Decorating Techniques - I

Create with Crimper Work

Brush Embroidery

Joan McDaniel

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Printed in the United States of America by Lightning Source, Inc.

Second Edition.

ISBN 978-1-937862-55-8

Published 2013 by BookCrafters, Parker, Colorado.
SAN-859-6352, BookCrafters@comcast.net

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www.bookcrafters.net and other online bookstores.**



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**Create
with
Crimper Work**

*by
Joan McDaniel*

Published 1981

INTRODUCTION

A covering of rolled fondant gives a wonderfully smooth, satin like finish to a cake which offers a perfect base for delicate lacework, finely molded flowers and fine embroidery. Decorative designs can be made using crimp work, a technique using tweezer like crimpers to pinch or crimp the fondant into raised patterns.

The variety of patterns is endless but these pages are an attempt to whet your appetite with both formal and “fun” designs and to encourage you to be creative and make your own imaginative designs with this fascinating technique.

Fondant may also be used to create other decorations like frills, and I have included the lovely South African Garrett frill to illustrate this, with some ideas on how to use it.

Finally, as a postscript, I have added the South African method of making the wired dogrose, seen on many Australian and South African cakes.

ROLLED FONDANT

Rolled fondant is traditionally an Australian method of covering cakes that has now almost replaced the royal icing coating in popularity in South Africa. In both countries, following the English influence, the cake used is a rich, dark fruitcake. Between the cake and the fondant is a layer of marzipan. The Mexicans also use rolled fondant, but on a firm type of cake to carry the weight of the fondant and to allow for the heavier handling. Carrot cake, light fruit cake and cakes similar to pound cakes are all satisfactory.

There are many different fondant recipes. Each has its own merits, but this is my favorite. It dries rapidly, allowing little time for smoothing and polishing, and as a result it has a matt, velvety finish, not a shine, which I prefer.

RECIPE

1/4 cup water
1 Tablespoon gelatine
3 Tablespoons liquid glucose
1 Tablespoon glycerine
1-1/2 -2 lbs Confectioner's sugar
Flavoring of your choice

METHOD

Place half the confectioner's sugar in a bowl and make a well in the center.

In a small saucepan dissolve the gelatine in the water, warming it slightly over a LOW heat- stirring constantly. Do not overheat or boil the mixture.

Remove from heat, add the glycerine and glucose. Stir well to combine, returning briefly to the heat to melt the glucose. Colour and flavoring should be added at this stage.

Pour the warm liquid into the sugar, mixing with a wooden spoon. Slowly add further sugar until the mixture becomes difficult to mix by hand.

Turn out onto a board or tabletop on a thick layer of confectioner's sugar. Knead lightly, adding more icing sugar if necessary, until smooth, pliable and without stickiness.

It can be used immediately but is better when rested for about an hour. Cover the fondant in plastic or in an airtight container to prevent drying.

APPLICATION

Brush the cake or dummy lightly with egg white, piping gel or apricot glaze.

If the fondant has "rested," knead again to warm and soften it before using.

Roll out the fondant on an oiled plastic sheet or between two thick sheets of plastic, until large enough to cover the cake (at least one inch larger than the cake) and approximately 1/4 inch thick.

Pick up the fondant on a rolling pin and place over the cake smoothing with the hands. Work fast as this fondant dries rapidly and you have only a short time to smooth it.

Trim off the excess with a sharp knife.

Dry for at least twenty four hours before decorating except when crimping or inserting ribbon.

This recipe will cover a 9 inch cake but can be halved or doubled as required. The fondant will keep in an airtight container for several weeks in a cool place. It may be stored in the refrigerator if kept for a longer period. (It should then be returned to room temperature before using) After storage the fondant must be kneaded well and may require a little water to bring it back to consistency.

The recipe will require adjusting in certain climates. Where it is very dry, add a little more water or glycerine. Alternatively a little Crisco (1-2 tablespoons) may be added just before application. The latter will give a slightly different, more shiny finish and help to prevent the fondant from drying as fast; giving you longer to work or crimp it.

CRIMPER WORK









Crimper work or clipper work is of Australian origin, and has been used mainly for side ornamentation on fondant covered cakes.

It can be used on its own or with ribbon bands, inserted ribbon, freehand piping, embroidery etc. - the ideas are virtually unlimited. However, it has possibilities beyond formal designs, and I have illustrated some of these towards the end.

Application of crimper work must be on a newly covered cake, before the fondant dries. Therefore it is a good idea to prepare patterns for marking the cake before you cover it, so that you can mark and crimp immediately after covering. Make patterns with paper or card board and pinprick or gently scratch lines with a pin.

Holding the crimper at right angles to the cake surface and inch open, press it into the fondant and pinch gently until approximately 1/8 inch open. Before lifting the crimper from the cake, release pressure slightly, allowing the crimper to reopen to 1/4 inch and then lift out. It is very important to release pressure before removing the crimper, otherwise you may pull out the pressed icing. If the crimper sticks to the fondant, dip it into cornstarch each time before crimping.

There are at least 8 different designs of crimper available-these are illustrated below:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|---|-------------------|---|
| 1. Closed curve |  | 5. Straight |  |
| 2. Open curve |  | 6. Closed scallop |  |
| 3. Closed vee |  | 7. Open sea11op |  |
| 4. Open vee |  | 8. Heart shaped |  |

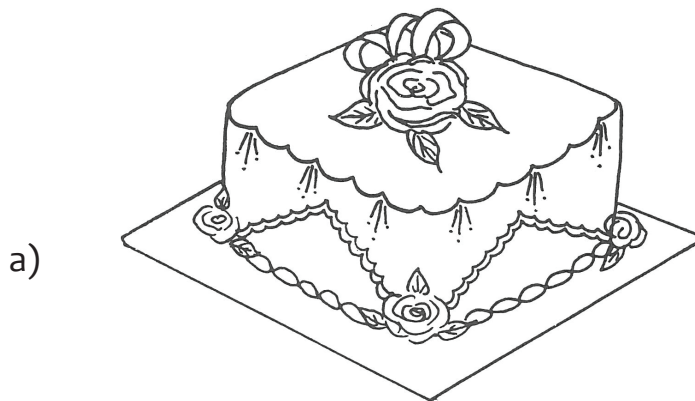
The crimpers used for each design are shown next to the pattern.

Crimp work designs may be used anywhere on the cake surface but be careful not to overdecorate. The patterns here vary from very simple, which can be used as in a) or b) or c) as a side pattern on the top edge of the cake, to more complex, heavier patterns suitable for lower side decoration only.

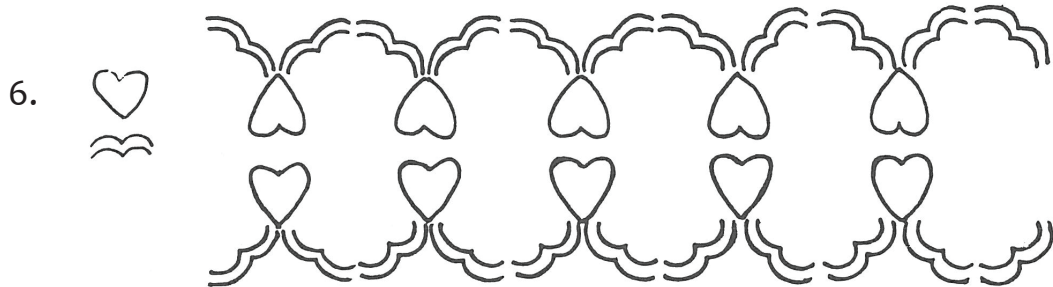
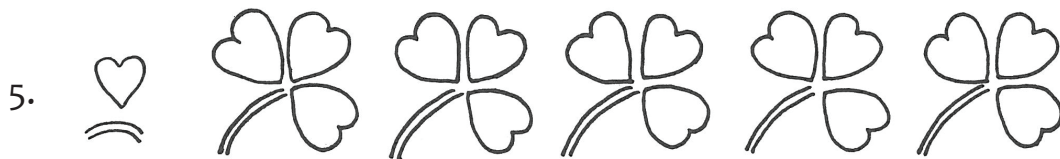
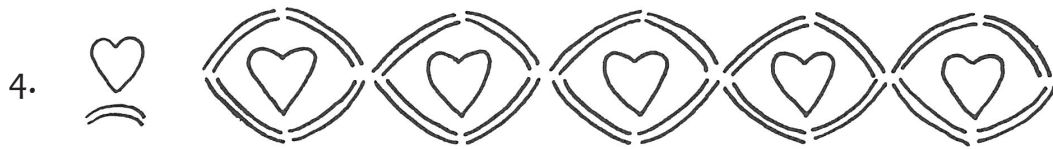
All can be varied by using them in conjunction with:-

i) overpiping	Examples: No.
ii) dropped loops	12, 13, 16, 19, 28, 29, 30
iii) embroidery	7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 23
iv) lacework	26
v) inserted ribbon	10, 11

The illustrations are for guidance only and do not give you a true picture of how they will look on a cake. Try them for yourself on a sample of rolled fondant and practice, practice, practice before attempting to crimp on a cake ... there is no second chance!



a) Crimp work on sides, using the closed scallop and pattern 18 at the top edge.



BRUSH EMBROIDERY

Introduction

Brush Embroidery is an Australian technique in which designs are piped on the cake and then smoothed with a damp paintbrush to give a semblance of embroidery. It is an ideal method for duplicating the lace of a bride's dress on a wedding cake and looks exquisite white on white. However, it shows up more effectively where there is a contrast between cake colour and “embroidery,” e.g., white on a coloured background or on glass. Lace and embroidery patterns provide a wealth of beautiful designs to choose from.

Originally brush embroidery was done using plain royal icing, which is satisfactory if you work fast, completing one small section at a time. The disadvantage is that it dries very quickly, often leaving a ridge just inside the outline instead of a smooth surface. Also the amount of liquid required for smooth brushwork may lead to water marking. A more satisfactory mixture is royal-gel, i.e., royal to which a little piping gel has been added (tsp. of piping gel to 1 cup of royal icing). This dries more slowly, allowing extra time for smoothing the icing. The proportions may be adjusted according to humidity and temperature, but care must be taken not to add too much gel. Over-soft royal will result in loss of dimension and blurring of fine lines.

Design Transfer

a. Pencil Transfer. The method I prefer is pencil transfer, using tracing paper. A medium-hard pencil (No. 2) is best for clear, unsmudged lines; one that is too hard (No. 1) will smudge and give a heavy dark line.

Place the tracing paper over the pattern (Fig. 1) and trace only the outer and main lines of the design. Do not trace any inside lines or details that can be done freehand (Fig. 2). For a mirror image of the design, turn the tracing paper over, lay it on the cake or plaque (pencil side down) and retrace over

the design. Do not trace any inside lines or details that can be done freehand (Fig. 2). For a mirror image of the design, turn the tracing paper over, lay it on the cake or plaque (pencil side down) and retrace over the design in pencil. The original tracing will thus be transferred to the cake. If you do not want a reversed image, trace the design on both sides of the tracing paper and transfer the second tracing lines onto the cake. Pencil transfer can be used with success on either a soft surface (such as fondant) or a hard surface (such as a pastillage plaque).

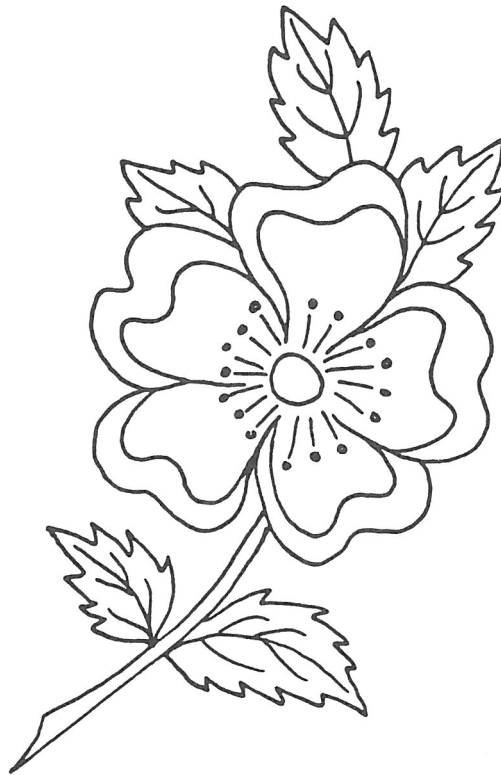


Fig. 1 Complete pattern for brush embroidery example



Fig. 34 Orchid Corsage



Fig. 35 Waterlily Scene



Fig. 36. Free-Standing Brush Embroidery examples
(Rose lattice and butterfly)

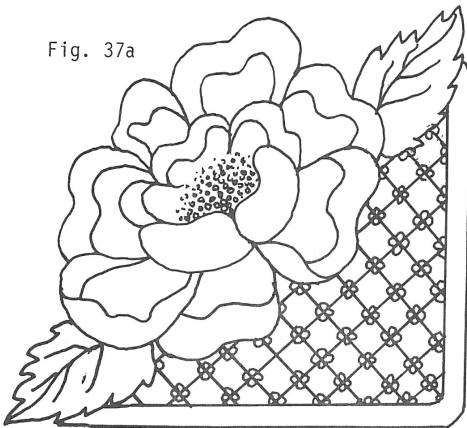


Fig. 37a

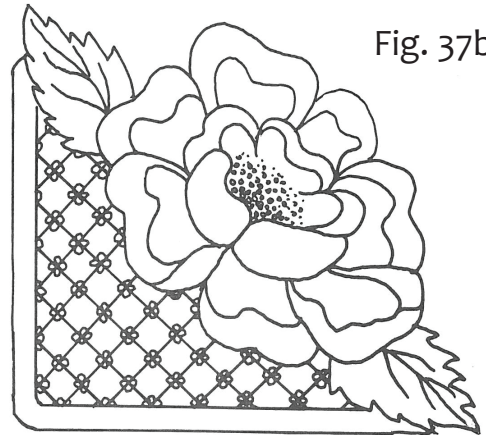


Fig. 37b

Rose
Lattice
Pattern

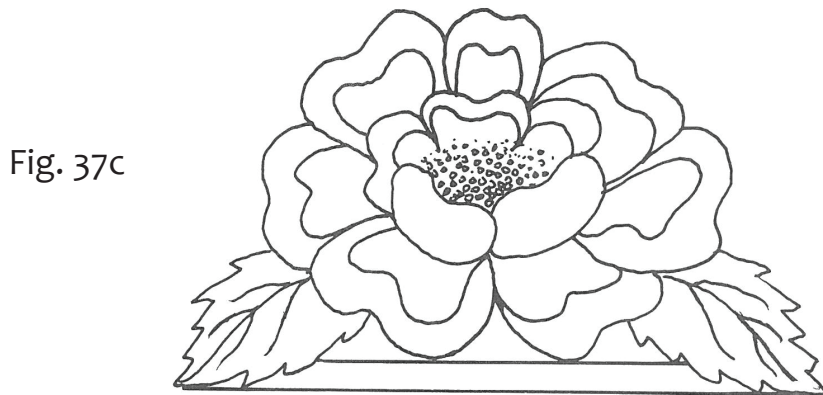


Fig. 37c

ADDENDUM

FREE STANDING BRUSH EMBROIDERY

As described prior to this point, Brush Embroidery is applied by painting directly onto cakes or plaques. Designs can be very delicate and transparent (Fig. 14), or if applied more heavily, resemble guipure lace (Fig. 15).

However, a new aspect of the Brush Embroidery technique, free standing, is being developed and has tremendous scope for new, beautiful and combination designs. Using instructions similar to those given for sugar filigree pieces (*Cake Decorating Techniques II - Lace and Filigree.*) and attached later so as to stand away from the cake (e.g., Fig. 36). From here on, for brevity, this technique will be referred to as F.S.B.E. (Free Standing Brush Embroidery). In order to enhance and strengthen designs, filigree may be used in combination with F.S.B.E. A third technique, Run Sugar, can also be incorporated. See samples (Fig. 36) and patterns (Figs. 37a, b, and c).

Important Points to Note When Doing F.S.B.E.

1. An increased proportion of piping gel is needed for extra strength and flexibility in the “royal gel” icing.

Royal Gel Icing for F.S.B.E.

1 cup royal icing
1 teaspoon piping gel

Royal Icing (Recipe 1)

1 egg white
1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
Approximately 6-8 ounces powdered sugar

Place the egg white in a small bowl. Add the sugar a tablespoon at a time, giving each addition a good mixing. When the consistency reaches that of a heavy syrup, add the cream of tartar and continue adding sugar but now only a teaspoon at a time, giving each addition plenty of thorough hand mixing until the mixture holds a peak on the back of the spoon. The icing should be smooth and glossy, not of a rough sugary texture. Keep covered with a cloth at all times. This is the most satisfactory recipe and method, but may also be made in the mixer.

Super Strong Royal Icing (Recipe 2)

2/3 cup lukewarm water
1/4 cup deluxe meringue powder
MIX UNTIL FOAMY ...
ADD ON LOW/MEDIUM SPEED:
1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 lb. powdered sugar and 1 1/2 tablespoons of gum arabic
(that has been thoroughly mixed together before adding it in the recipe)

Recipe 1 does not re-whip as well as recipe 2 using meringue powder so should be used within a short time.

2. Use cellophane, not waxed paper, on which to pipe. Heavy gauge plastic may also be used but sometimes is not as satisfactory. Do not grease either surface.

3. A No. 3 soft, tapered (red sable) paintbrush is recommended for most brushwork. Small designs (e.g., small F.S.B.E. lace pieces) and detail such as veination lines may require different size and shaped brushes.

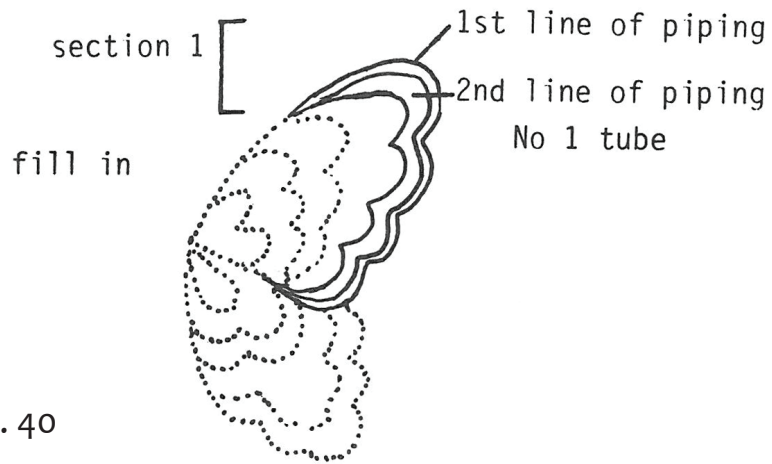


Fig. 40

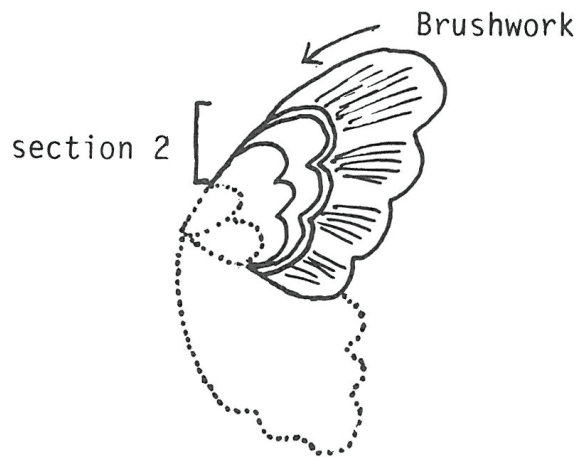
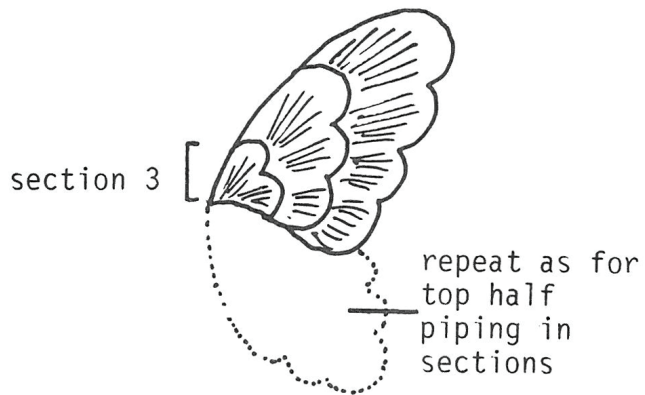


Fig. 41

Fig. 42



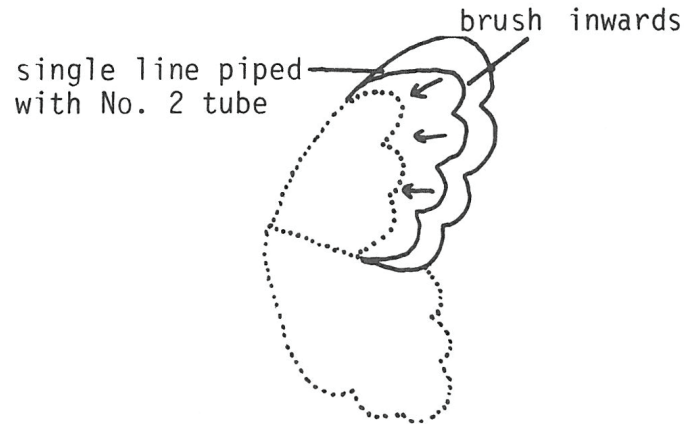


Fig. 43

9. Pipe the filigree with soft consistency royal icing (recipe 1) not royal gel.

10. Fill the run sugar areas with very soft consistency royal icing, not royal gel.

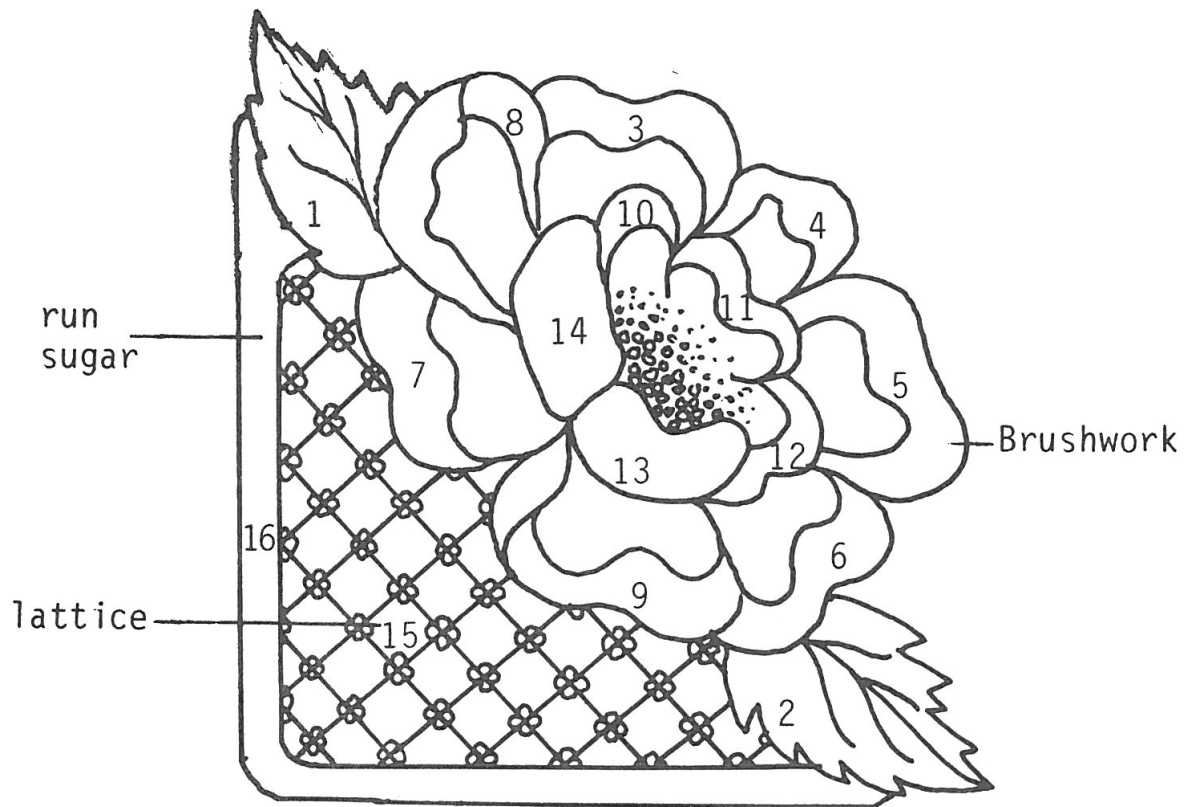
11. Curves and shapes can be used to provide interesting-shaped piece
Cake Decorating Techniques II - Lace and Filigree.

12. Colouring - All desired colour shading must be completed by one of the following methods before releasing the F.S.B.E. pieces.

- i) Use several tubes and bags with different icing colours brushing and blending them together.
- ii) Pipe in white and brush with pastels.
- iii) Pipe in white and highlight with lustre colours.

13. When the pieces are dry, release them by turning them over and peeling the cellophane gently off the back as mentioned in *Cake Decorating Techniques - II - Lace and Filigree and Lace and Filigree Patterns*. A palette knife slipped under flat icing pieces can create pressure which tears holes in the thin film of icing, Fig. 38.

Fig. 44 Rose Lattice
(numbered for sequence of piping)



Combinations and adaptations of Filigree, Brush, Embroidery and Run Sugar patterns form a good basis on which to develop new designs for F.S.B.E. Overpiping or double-facing will destroy the transparent, delicate look of this technique. So take care to choose designs which will not be seen from both sides when affixed to the cake. Particularly suitable are either those piped on a curve and repeated on the cake as a base, side or top border; or those made in sections and assembled around the cake rather like a fence or corner (Fig. 37). (Refer to *Cake Decorating Techniques - II - Lace and Filigree and Lace and Filigree Patterns* by Helen Sembra and Joan McDaniel, Fig. 58 and Fig. 82, for examples of single-faced filigree designs, which lend themselves to adaptations for F.S.B.E.)

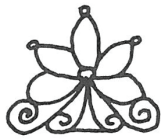


Fig. 45



Fig. 46

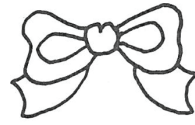


Fig. 47



Fig. 48

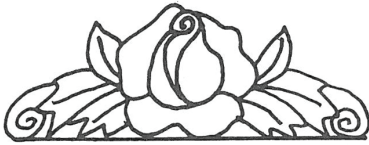


Fig. 49

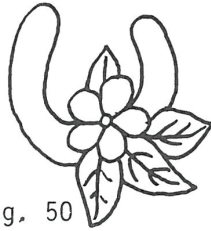


Fig. 50



Fig. 51



Fig. 52

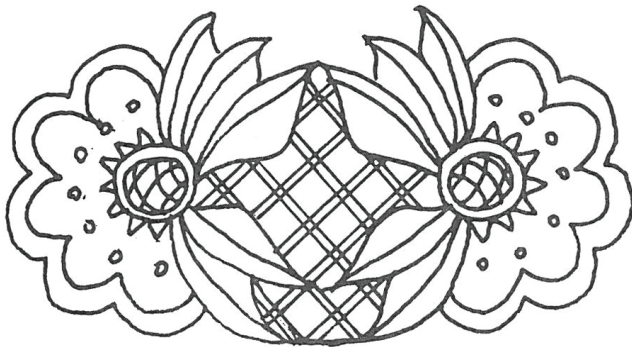


Fig. 53

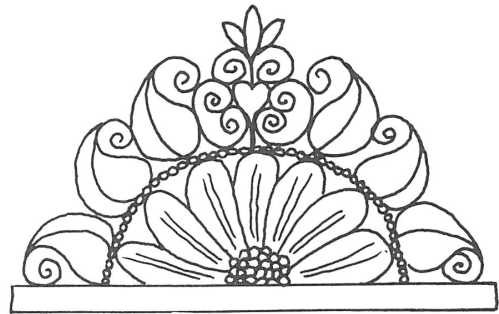


Fig. 54



Fig. 55

About the Author



Joan McDaniel (1944 – 1985)

Joan was born and raised in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), southern Africa, where she was a leading cake decorator and instructor. In 1980 she moved with her family to Littleton, Colorado, and immediately began teaching professional classes in the U.S.A. and Canada. She travelled extensively, teaching, demonstrating and judging and was an alternate Colorado I.C.E.S. representative for two years. Prior to emigrating she took classes from the talented South African decorator, Elaine Garrett. Joan's first love was gumpaste flowers but she specialized in delicate Australian and South African style work and anything miniature. She published four books in specialized aspects of cake decorating, two of which were co-authored by Helen Sembra.

Create With Crimper Work (©1981) and *Brush Embroidery* (©1983) are being combined in this new book published (2013) by BookCrafters, Parker, Colorado.

Joan met Helen Sembra through I.C.E.S. within weeks of arriving in the United States and their friendship grew through their mutual love of cake decorating. Joan's great joy was sharing ideas and in 1983 she pooled her talents with Helen to co-author two books: *Lace & Filigree* (©1983) and *Lace & Filigree Patterns* (©1984). These two books are being newly reprinted together in 2013 under the title: *Cake Decorating Techniques - II – Lace & Filigree and Lace & Filigree Patterns*.

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