Personalizing Embroidery with Text

From monogramming and quilt labels to special projects that commemorate milestones such as births and weddings, personalized embroidery is popular for new and experienced crafters alike. And with good reason -- there's nothing quite like finishing off a lovingly handcrafted project with a special name, date, or message. Read on to learn how to add text to any embroidery design using embroidery alphabets!


Types of Embroidered Text

- **Alphabets** consist of individual embroidery designs for each letter, number, or punctuation mark. Embroidery Library offers a variety of alphabet embroidery designs, from small and simple to big and bold. Quality tends to be higher since each design is individually created; resizing is not recommended. To use alphabet embroidery designs, you'll need to combine them using embroidery software -- this example uses Embird.
- **Fonts** for embroidery are just like fonts on your computer -- you can type text with them using your keyboard. .BX format fonts are created specifically for embroidery. Software such as Embird Font Engine can also be used to created text based on any font. Embroidery machines and software sometimes come with their own built-in fonts.

How to Add Text to Embroidery

To start, choose an embroidery design to personalize with text. This demonstration uses the Northwoods Quilt Label - Lg. You'll also want to choose an alphabet. This label uses the 1/2 inch high Schoolbook Alphabet. Make sure the sizes of your designs will provide room for all the text you want to include.

Any embroidery software with the ability to merge designs can be used to add text to embroidery designs. We're using Embird. Your steps might be slightly different than what's below, based on what software program or version you're using, but the overall idea is the same.

Open the design in Embird. Click "Editor" at the top of the screen to go into editor mode. The colors in the design may look strange - don't worry about that.
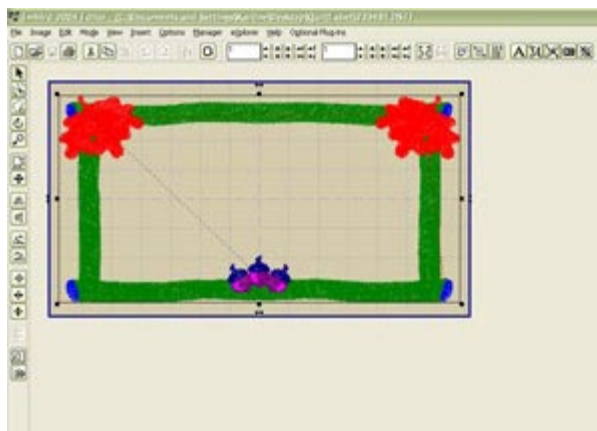
For some design formats, the label design may come up sideways. If this happens, you'll want to rotate it. To do this in Embird, go to the "Edit" menu, then to "Rotate," and then select "Rotate Left." The embroidery field in the background won't line up with the design -- that's OK, because we're going to rotate it back later.

If your label comes up horizontally in the first place, you don't need to do anything.
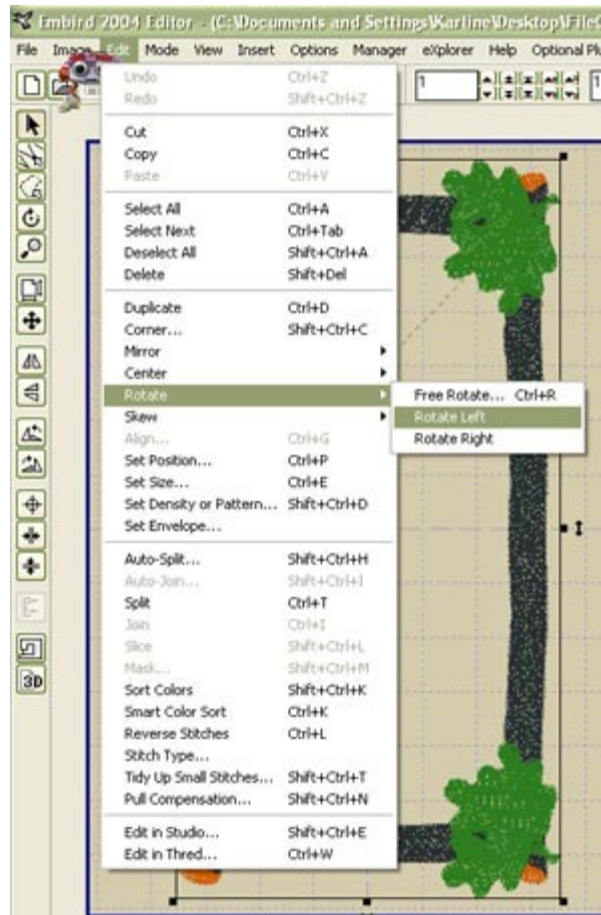
It's time to add letters to your design. Click the "File" menu at the top of the screen, then "Merge." Select the letter you want to insert. (Make sure the "Preview" box is checked so that you can see which letter you're choosing.) Click OK to open the letter design.

Once you've opened the letter design, drag it to approximately where you want it to be - you can fine-tune the placement later.
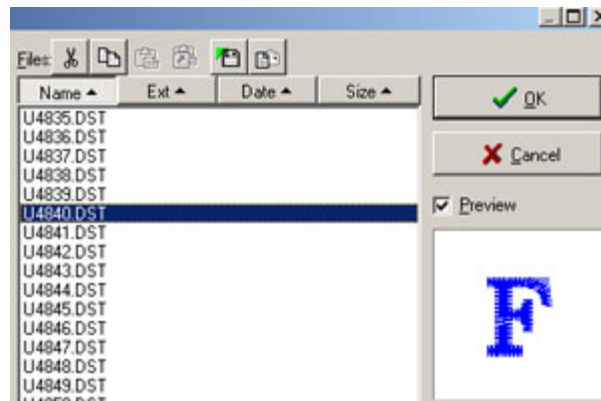
Repeat the process to get all the letters you want.

Drag each letter design into place. You can use the grid lines

on the screen to help you line up the letters evenly. It may help to zoom in so the label is bigger on your screen.

When you're satisfied with the arrangement, click File --> Save As and save your newly created label with a filename that you'll recognize.

Click "Manager" at the top to go into Manager mode, then click "Editor" to go back into Editor mode. You're now looking at your quilt label as one combined design. If needed, rotate the design back to its original orientation. Center the design on both axes, then save.

There's one more step: putting all the letters on the same color stop.

The colored squares each represent one color stop on the design, and since each letter was originally a separate embroidery design, each has its own color stop. We're going to put them all together so your machine doesn't stop between each letter.
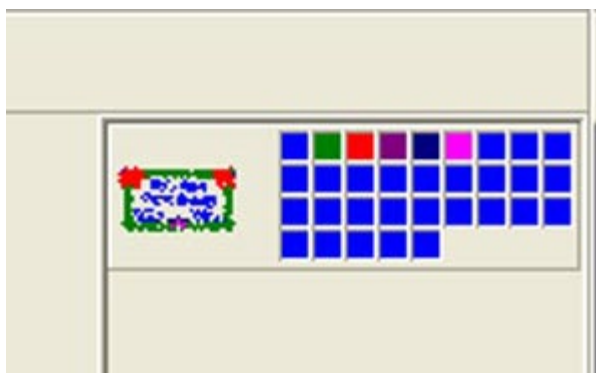
Figure out which square represents the first letter (it's probably the first of many squares that are the same color). Right-click on the first letter square, then click "Split Before Color" from the menu that pops up. You should now see something like the picture at right.

Right-click on the tiny image of

the lettering layer, and click "Reduce Colors." In the menu that appears, set it to reduce colors to 1, and click OK.
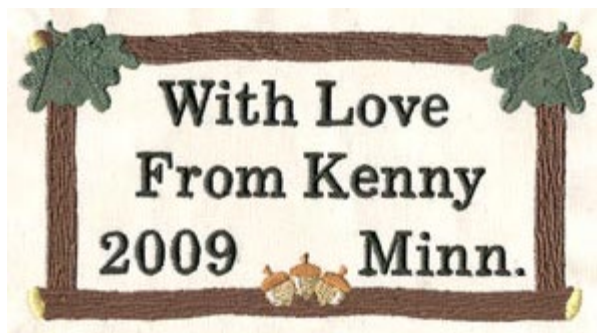
Reduce Colors

Reduce number of colors to: 1

✓ OK   ✗ Cancel

Save the design. It's done!

Stitch out your design, and incorporate it into your crafty creations!

For more personalization ideas, see:

- Monogramming with Embroidery

- Monograms in Wreaths

- Text Frame Flourishes

- Wedding and Anniversary Monograms

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Quilt Label Personalization Ideas

Quilt labels are a beautiful way to add special meaning to a quilt or tell its story to future generations. Stitched onto the back of a quilt or incorporated into a block, these finishing touches offer a personal, heartfelt dimension.

Here's some information you might include on a quilt label:

- Quilt maker's name
- Date the quilt was finished
- Place the quilt was made
- Recipient's name
- The story behind the quilt, or occasion for which it was made
- A meaningful message or
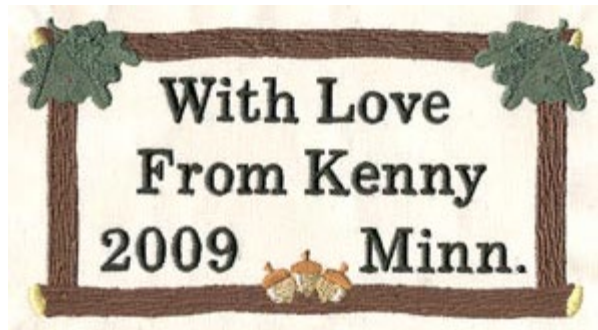
inscription
- Name of the quilt
- Name of blocks or pattern used
- Care instructions
- Phone number and address
- Anything else you like!

There are lots ways to write on a quilt label - machine embroidery, hand embroidery, permanent fabric markers, and computer-printed fabric, to name a few. This guide will show you how to combine quilt label designs and alphabets to create your own one-of-a-kind label.

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