Bits and Bobs Pattern

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The two photographed versions are made with a wool/camel mix yarn (pale version) and black welsh mountain wool (dark version). Wool for both versions, can be purchased from www.sheepfold.co.uk

The boxes can be stiffened with PVA glue once felted, though this may make the inside a bit rough to the touch.

The exact size of your finished boxes will depend on wool and felting temperatures used, but an indication is given below.

You will need:

- 300g aran weight pure wool (not machine washable or superwash varieties)
- 1 pair 5.5 mm straight needles
- 1 pair of 5.0 mm double ended needles
- wool needle to sew side seams and finish ends of yarn
- PVA glue (optional)

Approx finished size:

Before felting: sides 15 cm (19 cm, 25 cm), height 14cm (15 cm, 17 cm)
After felting: sides 12 cm (15 cm, 18 cm), height 8 cm (9 cm, 10 cm)

Instructions given for small (medium, large) below:

Using the aran wool and 5.5 mm straight needles, cast on 24 (30, 36) stitches. Work 24 (28, 32) rows in stocking stitch (first row knit, second row purl). Knit 48 (60, 72) rows to form garter stitch base. Work 24 (28, 32) rows in stocking stitch. Cast off all stitches.

With right side facing, pick up and knit 24 (30, 36) stitches across one of the side edges of the garter stitch base. Turn work and purl one row. Work 22 (26, 30) more rows in stocking stitch. Cast off all stitches.

Repeat on second side of garter stitch base.

Slipstitch the four side seams from the top edges to the garter stitch base.

To create the upper edge:
Using the aran wool and 5.0 mm double ended needles, cast on 3 stitches. With right side facing and starting at one of the four corners, pick up and knit, onto the same double ended needle, the first of the cast off stitches. You will now have 4 stitches on your double ended needle.

Slide the stitches to the opposite end of the needle. Take the wool behind the stitches and knit 2 st, k2tog through the back of the loops then pick up and knit into the next stitch from the cast off edge. Repeat this *attached I-cord* along the four edges of the box, missing out one of the cast off stitches in the middle of each edge, making sure that you always knit the first stitch tightly.

When the attached I-cord goes all the way round the top of the box and you reach the start of the I-cord, graft the stitches on your needle to those at the start of the I-cord.

Felting:
Finish off all ends of wool. Felt your boxes in the washing machine by placing each in a separate zippered mesh bag or pillowcase in your machine, with a couple of towels or pairs of jeans to give the necessary agitation. Add a small amount of washing powder, but no fabric conditioner. For these boxes I used 2 washes on a 60° cycle with the time saving option and 500 spin cycle. A low level spin, if an available option on your machine, reduces the risk of crumpling your boxes. When felted to the desired level, pull to shape flat sides and leave to dry. If you wish, place straight edged objects inside and/or around the boxes while they dry to give more precise flat edges.

Stiffening your boxes:
If you want a more rigid box, coat the inside of the boxes with PVA glue making sure that this stops shortly before the top edge as this affects the final appearance. While drying, place books or other straight edged items around the boxes to give a more defined shape. Two coats are ideal. Please note that application of PVA glue gives a shiny appearance to the wool.

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to purchase pure wool to make these boxes or wonderful knit and felt kits visit www.sheepfold.co.uk