

Jean Greenhowe's Squidgy Beanbugs



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JEAN GREENHOWE'S SQUIDGY BEANBUGS

These colourful bean bag characters can be squished and squashed into dozens of different poses. Knit them as comical desk top toys or computer mascots to amuse the grown-ups and they will happily double-up as useful paperweights. They are also good for throw and catch games and learning how to juggle.

Instructions are included for making three sizes from one simple basic pattern, the only variations are in the number of knitted rows. When squashed flat to form a smooth circular shape the bugs measure 5cm [2in], 6cm [2³/₄in] and 7cm [2³/₄in] across the centre.

The plastic granule 'beans' are safely secured within the knitted pieces in a gathered circle of fabric. Only bits of yarn are required and all the bugs can be knitted up very quickly. Who could resist those bobbly tails!

MATERIALS

Knitting yarn: Small oddments of double knitting [USA Astra or Bonus DK: Australia 8 ply].

Knitting needles: A pair of 3mm [No 11, USA 2].

Plastic glue-on wiggle eyes: [Also known as joggle eyes, or moveable eyes in the USA]. Two 5mm diameter for each bug.

Glue: A quick drying adhesive such as all purpose UHU.

PVC beanbag granules: Available from retail craft shops. Only small amounts are needed for each bug. For example, the largest size requires 4 teaspoons – about 14 grams [½ ounce].

Butter muslin: Or any thin soft woven fabric. Only small pieces are required for securing the granules inside the knitted pieces.

NOTES

Abbreviations: K = knit; P = purl; st[s] = stitch[es]; st-st = stocking stitch [K on the right side and P on the wrong side]; tog = together; mm = millimetres; cm = centimetres; in = inch[es].

Special abbreviations:

B & T loosely – means break off yarn leaving a long end, thread it loosely through sts on the knitting needle and leave until later on.

USA glossary

| UK | USA |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| K wise | K ways |
| Cast off | bind off |
| Stocking stitch | stockinette stitch |
| Tension | gauge |

Instructions in round brackets: These are repeated the number of times stated after the closing bracket.

Tension: Using 3mm [No 11, USA 2] knitting needles, the tension for double knitting yarn is 26 sts = 10cm [4in] in width over st-st.

Casting on: The thumb method is recommended.

TOY SAFETY

The items in this pattern are not suitable for babies and very young children. The materials used for the designs in this pattern are – knitting yarn, plastic glue-on wiggle eyes, PVC plastic beanbag granules and muslin. It should be noted that the packaging on plastic glue-on eyes and beanbag granules is labelled '**Warning**, not suitable for children under 3 years of age'. Do not add any other materials such as wire, pipe cleaners, buttons or beads.

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THE BEANBUGS

Main piece

Begin at the base and using colour required cast on 13 sts loosely.

P 1 row.

Next row: Inc K wise into 12 sts, K1 – 25 sts.

Beginning with a P row, continue in st-st and work 3 rows.

Next row: Inc K wise into 24 sts, K1 – 49 sts.

St-st 3 rows for the small size.

St-st 7 rows for the medium size.

St-st 11 rows for the large size.

Next row: K9, (K2tog, K3) twice, K11, (K3, K2tog) twice, K9 – 45 sts.

P 1 row.

Next row: K9, (K2tog, K2) twice, K11, (K2, K2tog) twice, K9 – 41 sts.

P 1 row.

Shape top

1st row: (K2, K2tog) to last st, K1 – 31 sts.

2nd and every following alternate row: P.

3rd row: (K1, K2tog) to last st, K1 – 21 sts.

5th row: (K2tog) to last st, K1 – 11 sts.

B & T loosely.

To make up all sizes

With P side of st-st outside, join the row ends as follows. Starting at the cast on edge, work a back-stitch seam one knitted st within the row ends, ending 2.5cm [1in] below the B & T sts.

Gather round the cast on sts, pull up tightly and fasten off. Turn right side out and note that the row ends seam will be at back of the bug.

To make the fabric beanbags

Notes: If you are making a number of bags, cut the following size squares from thin cardboard. Draw around the edges of the squares onto the fabric, to save having to measure each time.

For the smaller size, cut a 12cm [4¾in] square.

For the medium size, a 14cm [5½in] square.

For the large size, a 15cm [6in] square.

For all the sizes, fold the fabric square in half, bringing two opposite edges together. Now fold again, bringing the short edges together. Using scissors, round off the corners of the square to form a circle. Open up the piece and gather round the circle 1cm [$\frac{3}{8}$ in] within the raw edge. Pull up the gathers slightly, so that the granules can be added.

Put the granules in a bowl, so that when you spoon them into the bag, any strays will drop into the bowl.

For the small size use 2 teaspoons of granules.

For the medium size 3 teaspoons.

For the large size 4 teaspoons.

Now begin to pull up the gathers and at the same time turn the raw edge inside the bag, then pull up tightly and fasten off securely.

To insert the fabric bag

Ease the bag inside the knitted piece through the loose B & T sts and gap in the seam, with gathered top of bag uppermost. Close gap in the seam.

To make and insert the fluffy top-knot

Cut five 10cm [4in] lengths of yarn in the colour required. Place the lengths together and tie them in a tight single knot at centre of the lengths.

Pull up the B & T length of yarn, leaving a small hole at centre. Bring all the ends of the yarn together and push the knot inside the B & T sts. Pull up the yarn tightly and fasten off securely, to hold the knot inside the bug.

Now trim the yarn strands to about 1cm [$\frac{3}{8}$ in] in length. Use a comb to tease out the strands for a fluffy effect.



Positions of the wiggle eyes

These are glued on at front of the bugs in the following approximate positions. Place them side-by-side, with one slightly higher than the other if desired, for a comical effect.

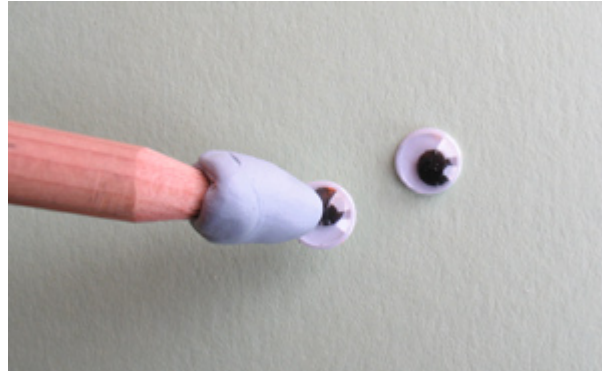
For the small size, 1cm [$\frac{3}{8}$ in] below the B & T sts.

For the medium size, 1.5cm [$\frac{5}{8}$ in] below the B & T sts.

For the large size, 2cm [$\frac{3}{4}$ in] below the B & T sts.

To glue on the eyes

Wiggle eyes are fiddly to handle, but they can be applied easily as follows. You will need a bit of reusable putty adhesive such as Blu Tack [USA: Elmers Tack]. Mould the putty adhesive around the pointed end of a pencil. Pick up the front side of the eye with the adhesive-covered pencil point. Now apply a little glue on the flat side of the eye directly from the tube. Alternatively, put a blob of glue on a piece of paper and dip the flat side of the eye in the glue. Press the eye in position on the knitted piece. Release the eye from the pencil point with your finger-tip. Press the eye firmly in place.



The tails

Use colour to match the main piece. Cast on 30 sts for the small size, 32 sts for the medium size and 34 sts for the large size. Cast off K wise, for all the sizes.

Tie a single tight knot in one end of the tail, then sew the adjacent tail-end of yarn into the knot. Use the other tail-end of yarn to sew tail to centre back seam, just above the second inc row on the base.



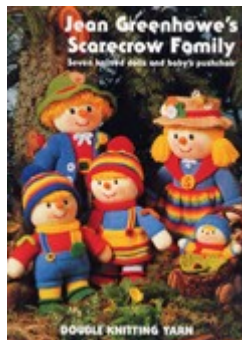
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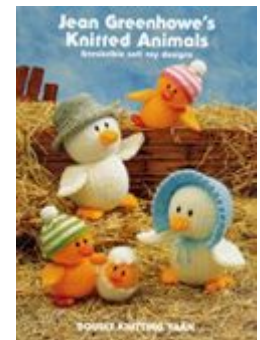
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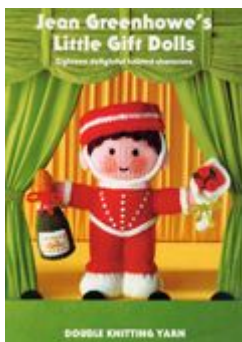
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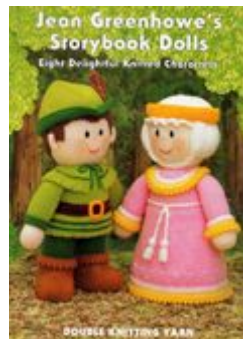
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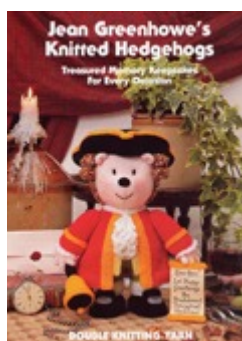
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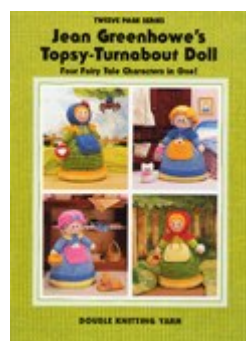
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