Crescent Skull Key with Skull Moths, Thorns, Berries and Pentagrams Corrected Hand Embroidery DMC Master Guide

HAND EMBROIDERY MASTER PATTERN • ADVANCED STITCHING GUIDE

16-COLOR DMC | 8" / 20 cm HOOP | ADVANCED



DESIGN ARCHITECTURE & SPECS

FABRIC BASE
Warm ivory linen or evenweave, drum-taut in an 8 in / 20 cm hoop. Keep the long central key vertical and preserve the clean negative space inside the thorn-and-berry ring.

CORE MOTIFS
Central antique key topped by a crescent with an integrated skull face; four outer skulls at top, left, right and bottom; four large skull-marked moths plus two small dark moths; circular thorn vines; olive leaves; burgundy and plum berries; rust ringed pentagrams and warm dot accents.

NEEDLE GAUGES
Crewel #7-10 for 1-2 strand key, skull, moth, thorn and berry work; milliner #9-10 for compact French knots and tiny dot accents.

STRAND ALLOCATION
1 strand for pentagrams, skull features, moth antennae, thorn tips, key engraving and tiny dots; 2 strands for the key body, skull fills, moth wings, berries and broad leaves. Use 2-3 strands only for selected berry highlights if more dimension is desired.

CORE STITCH DIRECTORY

Stitch Name	Technical Purpose & Execution	Strands
Long-and-short stitch	antique key modeling, crescent skull face, moth wings, bone shading and soft berry transitions	1-2
Satin stitch	compact skull planes, teeth, berry bodies, pentagram medallions and moth markings	1-2
Split stitch	key recesses, skull sutures, crescent ornament, bone seams and crisp internal details	1-2
Backstitch	pentagram outlines, moth antennae, skull features, key teeth and fine thorn contours	1-2
Stem stitch	thorn-vine framework, berry stems and curved wreath branches	1-2
Fishbone stitch	olive leaves around all four skull anchors and berry clusters	1-2
French knots	tiny red-brown dots, berry highlights and small punctuation accents	1-2
Straight stitch	moth wing rays, thorn points, tooth highlights and small celestial-like glints	1-2
Detached chain / lazy daisy	small pointed leaf accents where the wreath needs extra texture	1-2
Couching	optional raised line along the antique key shaft or heavy thorn stems for dimensional emphasis	1-2
Seed stitch	very sparse bone-gray and warm-brown speckling inside the antique metal areas	1-2

DMC FLOSS PALETTE & ELEMENT KEY

DMC Code	Assigned Elements	Primary Stitches	Strands
3371	Deepest moth bodies, eye sockets, key recesses, thorn joints and skull details	Backstitch	1
898	Dark key shadows, moth wing edges, branch shadows and fine insect accents	Long-and-short	1-2
801	Warm moth wings, key shaft shadows and woody thorn stems	Long-and-short	1-2
920	Copper-orange moth wing bands, pentagram rings and warm berry caps	Long-and-short	1-2
918	Deep rust pentagrams, warm dots, moth markings and shaded caps	Backstitch	1
3021	Crescent key outline, antique metal recesses and skull-shadow structure	Split stitch	1
3787	Main antique key, crescent moon modeling and cool neutral contours	Long-and-short	1-2
3782	Key highlights, crescent rim, skull midtones and bone transitions	Long-and-short	1-2
3865	Skull highlights, teeth, brow ridges and brightest bone accents	Satin stitch	1-2
3011	Dark olive thorn leaves, shaded vines and lower foliage	Fishbone stitch	1-2
3012	Main olive leaf masses and thorn-vine stems	Fishbone stitch	1-2
3013	Leaf tips, vine highlights and pale botanical accents	Fishbone stitch	1
814	Deep burgundy berries, shadowed berry clusters and floral bead accents	Satin stitch	1-2
815	Main burgundy berries and berry highlights around the wreath	Satin stitch	1-2
154	Deep plum berries and shadowed purple fruit clusters	Satin stitch	1-2
550	Purple berry highlights and small violet accent fruit	Satin stitch	1

STEP-BY-STEP STITCHING SEQUENCE

Step	Phase & Focus	Deep Execution Instructions & Parameters
01	**Transfer and structural framework**	Transfer the central key axis first, then mark the crescent skull bow, key teeth, four outer skulls, major moths, pentagram rings and the circular thorn-vine path. Establish 3011/3012 stems and the darkest 3371/3021 structural contours in one strand before filling so the wreath remains circular and the key stays perfectly centered.
02	**Main focal element**	Build the key from 3021/3787 shadow planes into 3782 highlights, following the shaft vertically and the crescent in curved arcs. Model the skull face inside the crescent with 3782 and 3865 over 3021 recesses. Add key engraving, teeth and eye-socket definition only after the broad fills are stable.
03	**Secondary large element**	Work the four outer skulls and the large skull moths next. Shade bone from 3021/3787 into 3782/3865, keeping eye and nasal cavities crisp. For moths, radiate 898/801/920 stitches from body to wing edge, then add 3371 outlines, skull-like thorax markings, antennae and orange banding last so they stay sharp.
04	**Foliage / supporting motifs**	Complete the thorn-vine ring with 3011-3013, using stem stitch along the curving branches and fishbone from leaf vein outward. Place 814/815 burgundy berries and 154/550 plum berries in compact satin or long-and-short fills, layering berry clusters over finished stems so fruit reads in front of the foliage.
05	**Small decorative details**	Add the rust 918/920 pentagram rings in one strand, keeping circles even and star points distinct. Finish the two small dark moths, thorn points, berry caps and tiny warm dots only after nearby foliage is secure. Keep these accents lighter than the key, skulls and large moths so the center remains dominant.
06	**Final accents, dimensional details, cleanup, and blocking**	Add 3865 tooth and brow highlights, 3782 metal glints, selective 920 moth highlights and tiny French-knot berry accents. Reinforce only essential 3371 contours. Check hierarchy: crescent skull key first, outer skulls and large moths second, thorn-and-berry wreath third, pentagrams and tiny dots last. Block from the reverse without flattening raised berries or dense skull features.

Master Tension & Quality Control: 1. Keep the key dead vertical and the four outer skulls visually balanced at the cardinal points; slight vine irregularity is fine, but the circular wreath should not drift off center. 2. Reserve 3371 and 3021 for the deepest focal shadows, while 898/801 stay warmer in moths and branches; this separation keeps the key and skull cavities distinct from the surrounding wreath. 3. Use firm but not tight tension on key outlines, skull teeth and pentagrams; moderate tension on satin berries and moth wings; relaxed tension on long-and-short bone and metal shading to avoid ridges. 4. Test the antique gray-brown, olive, burgundy, plum and copper families on the actual ivory fabric because the warm ground can soften bone contrast and intensify red-purple berries.

Final QC: Final piece: the crescent skull key reads first, the four bone skulls and skull-marked moths form the secondary ring, thorny olive foliage and burgundy-plum berries stay continuous and dimensional, and rust pentagrams plus tiny warm dots remain crisp without competing with the central key.