

Halidrys Cowl

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“Oh! Call us not weeds, but flowers of the sea...”

-Mary M. Howard, *Ocean Flowers and Their Teachings* (1846)

This warm and cozy tubular cowl draws inspiration from natural herstory. *Halidrys Siliquosa*, commonly known as Sea Oak or more colloquially as Tree of the Sea, is one of dozens of dried algae specimens included by botanist Mary M. Howard (1804-1893) in her marine herbarium *Ocean Flowers and Their Teachings* (published 1846) and inspired this all-over colourwork pattern.

Details

Size

Width: 8.25"/21 cm

Circumference: 30"/76 cm

Suggested Yarn

Any worsted weight yarn in two strongly contrasting colour, approx. 220 yards each (440 yards total)

Sample yarn:

Knit Picks Wool of the Andes Tweed in Dill Heather (MC) and Sequoia Heather (CC)

Suggested Needles

US 7 (4.5 mm), 16" (40 cm) circulars

Notions

Seven stitch markers (one unique for BOR), tapestry needle, scissors, waste yarn, crochet hook (for provisional cast on), extra set of needles

Gauge

20 st x 18 rows = 4", knit in the round and blocked

Abbreviations

BOR: Beginning of round

CC: Contrast colour

MC: Main colour

Directions

Using waste yarn, cast on 84 stitches using a provisional cast-on.

Place BOR marker and join MC for working in the round. Knit 1 round in MC. Join CC and begin Chart A, placing a marker every 12 stitches to designate pattern repeats. Continue until cowl measures 15" (38 cm) from cast-on.

Optional: Knit 1 round in MC. Switch to Chart B and knit Row 1.

Continue as established until cowl measures 30" (76 cm) or desired length from cast-on. Cut MC. Knit 1 row in CC. Leaving a long tail (approx. 60", or 4x the total circumference of the provisional cast on), cut CC.

Finishing

Transfer live stitches to waste yarn. Wet block.

Tip: weaving in as many ends as possible before blocking will make finishing easier!

After the cowl has dried, move the live stitches back to the needles. Then, unpick the cast-on and place live stitches on a spare needle.

Adding a Twist (optional)

If you would like to add a twist to your cowl (optional), select one end, and transfer half of the stitches (42) from the left needle to the right needle by slipping purlwise. Then twist the fabric 180 degrees, so that needles are pointing in the same direction.

Final Steps

Whether you add a twist or not, complete the cowl by grating the ends together: using Kitchener stitch, join the cowl into a tube. Weave in all remaining ends.

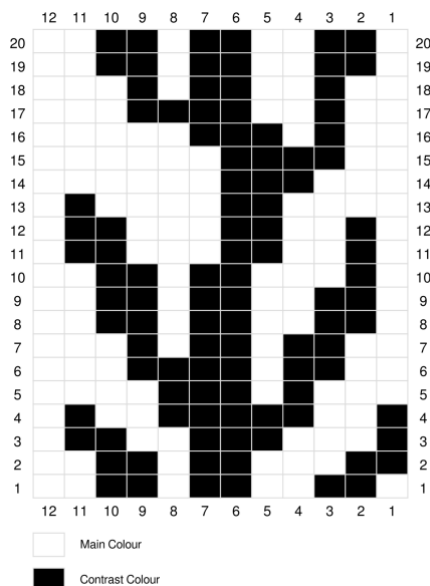


Chart A: Halidrys Pattern

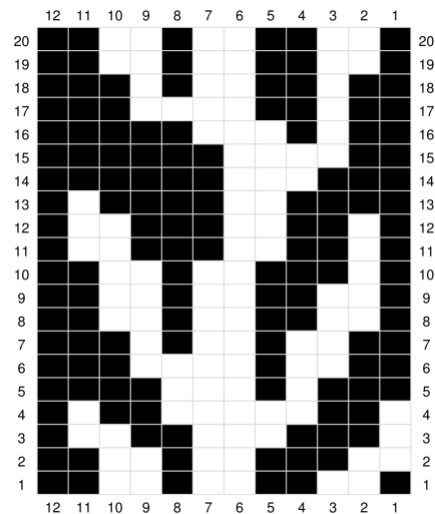


Chart B: Inverse Halidrys Pattern

Halidrys Cowl

Inspiration

In the nineteenth century, women across the world participated in natural science in the creation of *herbaria* (singular: herbarium), collections of preserved plant specimens. McGill librarian Lauren Williams, curator of the Blacker Wood Natural History collection, has recently focused on increasing the numbers of herbaria and other historical botanical works held in McGill's Rare Books and Special Collections. One such work is that of Mary Matilda Howard (1804-1893).



Howard published her first herbarium, *Wild Flowers and Their Teachings*, in 1845, which included 36 dried floral specimens. The next year, Howard published *Ocean Flowers and Their Teachings* with 38 dried specimens of algae. The all-over colourwork pattern of this cowl is inspired by one of these specimen, *Halidrys Siliquosa* (pictured at left), commonly known as Sea Oak or as Howard more colloquially calls it, 'Tree in the Sea'. McGill Library's copy of *Ocean Flowers* has been digitized and is freely available online: <https://tinyurl.com/tvrxufaf>

Each sample in Howard's herbaria are accompanied by quotations, poems, and descriptions of the ocean flowers drawn from literature. According to scholar Dr. Tina Gianquitto, this was a common practice amongst women botanists in the nineteenth century, and women sometimes passed their hand-created herbaria to relatives or friends, creating botanical-inspired conversations amongst women.

For more natural herstory inspiration, watch a recording of Dr. Gianquitto's April 2023 lecture "What a nuisance sex is!: Women Plant Collectors in the 19th Century" (<https://youtu.be/XuObNEcnEMM>) and view Heather Rogers' (McGill MIST, MA) online exhibition "Digitizing Botanical Herstory" about Dorothy Newton Swales, known as McGill's "mother of botany" (<https://digitizingbotanicalherstory.com/>).

In lieu of payment for this pattern, please consider making a gift to McGill Library's Rare Books and Special Collections.

With special thanks to Jacquelyn Sundberg, Outreach Librarian, McGill ROAAr (Rare & Special Collections, Osler, Art, and Archives).