

Crocheted Recycled “Plarn” Basket/Gift Bag



Notes:

“Plarn” (plastic + yarn) is the name crafters have given to repurposed shopping bags, cut into strips, joined, and used as a cord for crochet, knitting or weaving projects. This pattern includes a description of how to make a ball of plarn strips, tips for working with it in crochet, and instructions for making the style basket you see in the photo. There are photos of making your plarn and videos showing how to join the strips and how to work with them in crochet.

This particular project is as easy as pie for anyone who can work a chain stitch and a single crochet. It is adorable, and looks like a coiled-style basket if worked in a fairly small hook (for such bulky “yarn”). I used a size J hook and strips of shopping bag which were approx. 1 ½” wide. The Kroger bags I used gave it a nice, warm, tan and blue speckle which I find very attractive, and the tight single crochet stitch gives it that nubby basket look.

This project will be a bit stretchy and not too cooperative in shaping, but if you put a stiff circle of cardboard in the bottom of the little basket, at least for a while, it will take on the cylindrical shape.

Abbreviations in this pattern:

Ch chain

Sc single crochet

Sl st slip stitch

Cutting and Looping: Making your Plarn from Shopping Bags

The first thing you will need to do is loop together continuous lengths of shopping bags to create your ball of working plarn. Here's my method:

Lay out a single shopping bag on your working space, smoothing out all wrinkles and tucking the pleats inward and completely flat. Carefully cut off the bottom seam and, parallel with that cut, make another cut to remove the handles of the bag. If you wish, at this point you may fold over your bag several times to reduce the amount of cutting to follow. In this photo, I'm simply cutting across one layer to reduce jagged edges.

Following the lines of those cuts, cut out strips of the bag approx. 1 ½ " wide for most uses. (You can make them narrower, but will find that they will tear very easily). You will end up with loops of plastic.

Open up the loops, and laying one down on a table, pick up the next loop which will be joined to it, and starting behind the loop on the table, place the new loop through the old loop, then turn it back around and loop it through itself (see photos and video).

http://picasaweb.google.com/114014580264000126010/Plarn?authkey=Gv1sRgCJz34uWr_MD26QE#5519170515920311074



You can roll up the resulting linked loops into a ball and use it for these great projects! It's kind of like working with strips of rag, but really much easier to work with, as the plastic is slick and your hook goes through the stitches easily. It's also pleasantly stretchy, which can seem

frustrating at times, but I find, overall, is a plus.

Crocheting your Plarn Basket/Gift Bag

Start with a ball of approximately 10-15 bags' worth of linked loops (the number will depend on the size and tightness of your stitches, but you can easily add more while your project is in progress).

Base of Basket:

Ch 3, join to form a small ring.

Ch 1, Sc 5 times in ring, and as you approach your beginning sc, continue in a spiral, working on top of those beginning stitches (instead of making distinct rounds, you will be working in a continuous spiral, and counting your rounds will possibly necessitate marking your beginning point with a pin or ribbon). As you start working on top of initial scs, work 2 sc in every sc for 6 stitches; after this point work 2 sc in every other sc, until you have made a circle of the desired diameter for your basket's base. (Example is approx. 3"). Do not cut strand. Note: working in plarn will force you to work around many small knots,



and you'll have to develop judgement about how to work them into the piece. They seem to fall into place just fine, just keep trying! Some tiny bits will stick out from your work, sometimes annoyingly, and you can pull them to the inside of your piece at the end.

You will be forming walls on this round base, ending with a cylindrical shape.

Walls of Cylinder: You will not be attaching this part of the basket separately, but will be working it right on to the base.

Work 1 sc in every sc of edge of round base. Be careful to count accurately. As you approach your beginning point, continue on top of initial scs (again working in a spiral upward to form your basket).



As you continue to work upward, not increasing the number of your stitches, the walls will seem to curve inward drastically because of the stretch in the plarn, but as you work , it will even out and you will be able to shape it with your hands. When your basket reaches your desired size, smooth out the final few stitches by transitioning to one or two tighter sc's, then one or two chain stitches, then a tight knot to finish off. Cut off your plarn and weave the loose end into the stitches of the rim.

In the photo below, you can see this little basket with a chain handle added to make it into a tiny gift basket, one anyone will be thrilled to receive!

Simply attach your plarn to any stitch along the top edge, chain to your desired handle length, and attach to opposite side.

Finally, to finish your piece, Trim off any bits of knots from where loops are joined if they are very small. For larger bits that stick out from your work, pull them through to the inside of your work with a small crochet hook.



It feels so good to make and give these little pieces, because you're making something new from something old and problematic. Enjoy and make your own designs, it's addicting!

Email me if you have any questions about these instructions, kennedyartstudio@bellsouth.net

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