

October 2008 Newsletter

Textiles 101 – Flannel

Flannel – Flannel is a type of fabric dating back to about the 1600's in Wales, but there is speculation that it appeared earlier. It is a fabric that was originally woven from only wool (wool flannel), but since is woven in wool, cotton, silk, and synthetic fibers.

Flannel can be woven in two different weaves – twill and plain weave, plain weave being the most common. The weave is commonly hidden by the nap or pile of the flannel fabric. Plain cotton flannel can be napped on one side or both. Napping is process which draws out the end of the woven fibers and creates additional softness in the fabric. Some manufacturers “brush” only one side of the flannel and if the fabric is a yarn dyed weave, it will make the fabric reversible.

True flannel gains its softness from the loosely spun yarns from which it is woven. Flannel is commonly made for quilting from cotton. The tighter the weave, the better the quality you can expect.

Using flannel for pajama bottoms has become quite common. But notably flannel is not fire resistance and will burn easily. If you are using flannel for sleepwear, please be mindful and purchase flame resistant fabric as a necessary precaution. Heirloom Patch does not currently stock flame resistant flannel. As a quilt shop, we have purchased quilt specific fabrics – including non protective flannel. Flame resistant flannel can be often purchased at your local discount fabric stores.

Quilting 101

I love to stack my fabrics for a particular quilt on a shelf or table. This gives me an opportunity to look at the fabrics and visualize what the finished product will look like. It helps me to see if I have too much of one fabric or another - and if that will create an over dominance of that color.

Red fabric is one of my favorite. I have been taught that all of your reds do not need to match. A variation of reds in a quilt gives a unique look and visual quality that one shade alone cannot do.