



Métis beadwork would include all stages of a flower's growth (seed, leaf, bud, fruit/flower) and all components would be connected by stems or tendrils and include 'mouse tracks' (this is two or three beads running down the sides of the stem). The Métis would also include a spirit bead in their work. This is a bead intentionally put out of place to remind us that there is no such thing as perfection. In larger beaded pieces, such as a fire bag, the beadwork would be completed in an X shape. With the main flower being at the center with vines and smaller buds, leaves/fruit in the X shape. Flowers would often be tipped with a contrasting color on petal and leaf tips. Colors would typically be changed every two rows.

North Island Métis (NIMA) publishes a monthly newsletter.

Go to NIMA's website (www.nimetis.com/newsletters) to read current and past newsletters.

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NORTH ISLAND MÉTIS

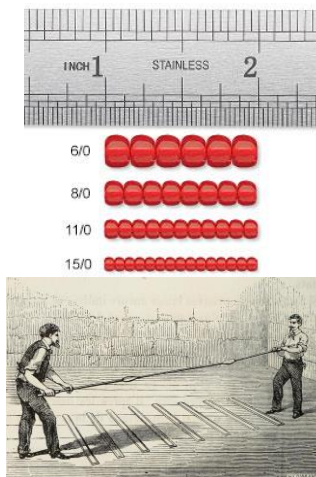
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**NORTH ISLAND
MÉTIS**

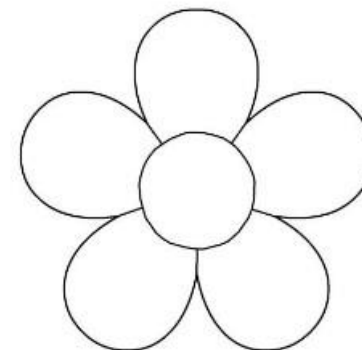
**Métis
Beadwork**





The Flower Beadwork People

Beadwork was inspired by the plants that grew along the rivers where the Métis lived and consisted of bright and vibrant colors.



Seed Beads

Glass beads were first brought into Canada in the early 1800's, however it wasn't until the 1840's, when steel needles were introduced, that beads became popular with the Métis women.

Seed beads were created by blowing glass and pulling it into 150' lengths. After cooling the glass lengths were broken into the desired size beads. The beads were then mixed with sand and ash and heated to remove sharp edges.

In the mid 1800's there were only 15-20 different colors and not all colors would be available to Métis women. Translucent and color-lined beads were not available until the 1870's. By 1885 gold and silver beads became available.

Today, there are hundreds of different colors of beads available.

Beads are available in a range of sizes from size 6 to size 22, however size 15 & 20 were most common. Today size 10 & 11 are the most used.

What would have been beaded?

Métis women would have done beadwork on anything that they had access to. Mittens, mitasses, tobacco bags, fire bags, gun cases, tuppies, moccasins, hats, vests, coats, tea cozies, scissor or knife cases and many other items!

Women would have beaded items for loved ones, as well as beaded items to trade or sell to bring in a little bit of extra cash for their families.



Getting Started

- Thick felt
- Paper
- Pen
- Beads of desired size/color
- Nymo thread
- Appropriate size needle

You can use this Prairie Rose (five-petal flower) as a template to trace onto another piece of paper to get started.

Check out our YouTube page for a step-by-step tutorial - @northislandmetis