

Beeswax hat

By Amy van de Laar

Bees are exceptionally clever creatures. Honeybees use their beeswax to create strong and highly efficient honeycomb structures, which they use for accommodation, food storage, and a place to raise their larvae. The 'Beeswax hat' celebrates the beauty of this structure.

The Beeswax hat's honeycomb texture is made up of simple mini-cables, which can be knit without a cable needle. I've included instructions for my favourite twist method, which I find intuitive and easy to remember, but you can use any method you prefer.



Materials

- Approximately 150 yards of DK or worsted-weight yarn. I used nearly two-thirds of one 100g skein of Vintage Purls Max (a heavy-DK-weight merino/nylon sock yarn).
If substituting yarn, I recommend choosing a bouncy merino or other woollen-spun yarn with lots of 'body', so the cables are plump and well-defined.
- 4mm (US size 6) circular needles (or needle size that gives you the right gauge), in a good length for hats.
- The same size dpns for the crown decreases (or a long circular needle if using magic loop).
- A cable needle if you wish (hints for non-cable-needle methods are included).
- A stitch marker, and a needle for weaving in ends.

Sizing

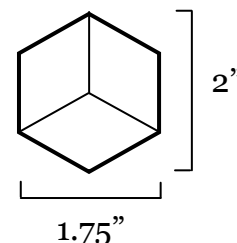
This hat is very stretchy, and will fit most adults with a 20" or larger head circumference. My hat is 17.5" in circumference (unstretched), and 9" long from brim to crown.

To resize, cast on 24 fewer (or additional) stitches for a 3.5" change in circumference. For a smaller change, adjust your gauge. You can easily change the length of the hat by knitting more or fewer rows of ribbing.

Gauge

21 stitches = 4" in stockingette stitch.

If you wish to swatch the honeycomb pattern, cast on 28 sts (24 for the pattern plus 2 edge stitches each side), and follow the 'Honeycomb' chart or written instructions. Each hexagon should measure about 1.75" wide and 2" high.



Tips and Tricks

Mini-cables: My favourite method for working 2-stitch cables or twists is the ‘slip and switch’ method. I find it intuitive because the motions are similar to k2tog and ssk decreases, and they lean the same ways!

- C2R (right-leaning mini-cable): slip 2 sts as if to k2tog, slip them back to left needle as if to purl, then knit each stitch through the back loop.
- C2L (left-leaning mini-cable): slip 2 sts as if to ssk, slip them back to left needle as if to ssk, then knit each stitch.

For a good photo tutorial and a video, see ‘Twisted Stitches’ by Lee Meredith - <http://www.leethalknits.com/tutorials/twisted.html>

If you prefer the ‘direct’ method (with or without a cable needle):

- C2R (right-leaning mini-cable): slip 1 st to cable needle (or pinch it between your fingers) and hold it in *back*, k1, then k the held stitch.
- C2L (left-leaning mini-cable): slip 1 st to cable needle (or pinch it between your fingers) and hold it in *front*, k1, then k the held stitch.

For an overview of methods, see ‘4 ways to mini-cable’ at Knitty.com - <http://knitty.com/ISSUEfallo6/FEATminicables.html>

Charted Pattern (written pattern follows)

Cast on 120 sts using the longtail method, or your preferred method for hats.
Place marker, and join to work in the round.

Work in 2x1 rib for 10 rounds (or until approximately 1.5” from cast-on edge):

Ribbing round: k1, p1, *k2, p1* (repeat until 1 st remains), k1.

Now work the ‘Transition from ribbing’ chart on page 3.

Then work the ‘Honeycomb chart’ (p.4), taking care to move the marker at the start of rounds 16 and 21 as indicated.

Finally, work the ‘Crown decreases’ chart (p.4). At end of the ‘Crown decreases’ chart, remove marker, slip 1 purlwise to *right* needle, and replace marker.

Now work the final decreases:

Round 10: *p4, k2tog* (repeat from * to * around).

Round 11: *p3, k2tog* (repeat from * to * around).

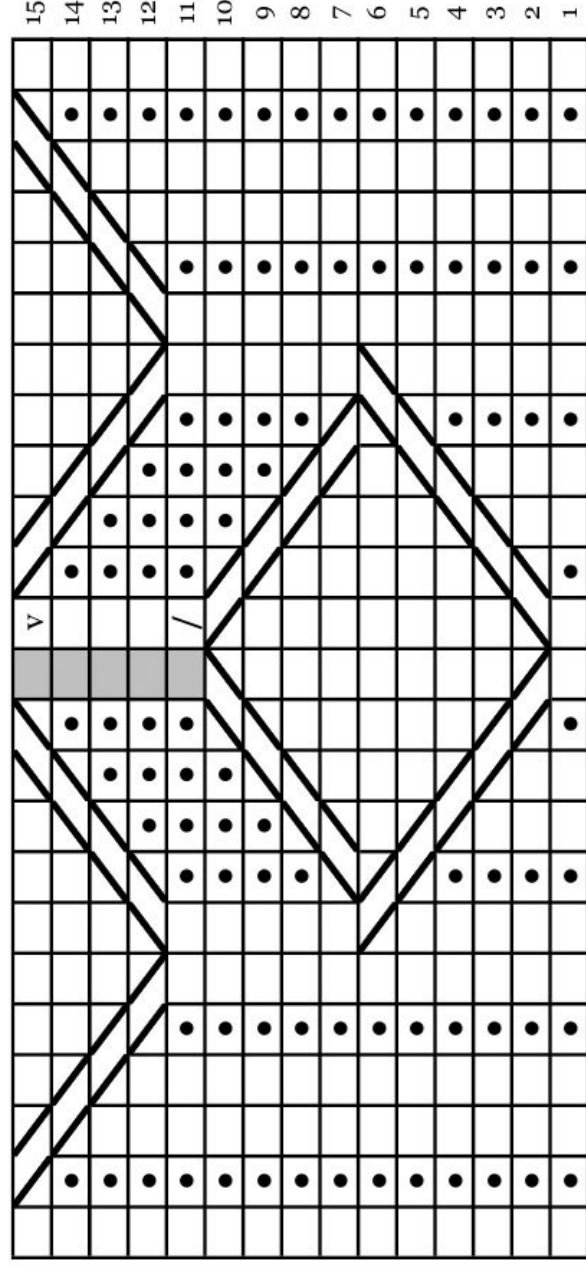
Round 12: *p2, k2tog* (repeat from * to * around).

Round 13: *p1, k2tog* (repeat from * to * around).

Round 14: k2tog around.

Cut yarn, leaving a tail. Draw it through the remaining 10 sts and pull tight. Weave in the ends, and block lightly to even up the stitches without flattening the honeycomb texture.

Transition from ribbing:



Key:



(knit)



(purl)



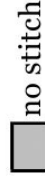
(right-leaning mini-cable)



(left-leaning mini-cable)



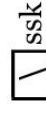
(knit 2 stitches together to decrease)



no stitch



(knit into front + back to increase)



(slip 2 knitwise one-at-a-time, then knit them together to decrease)

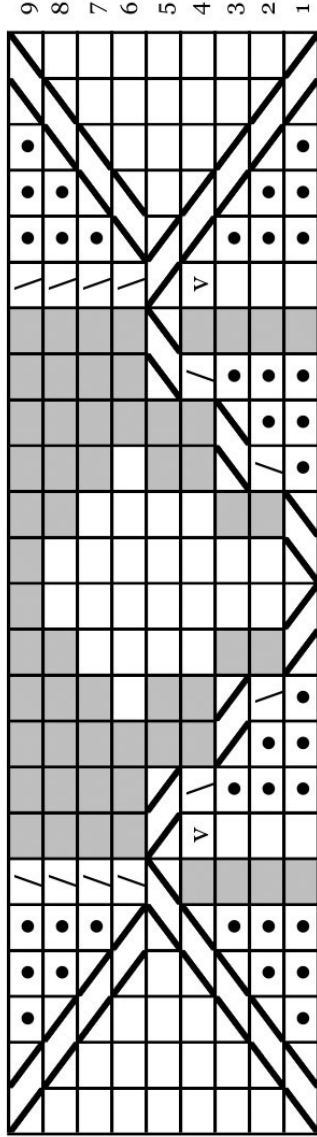
Chart Tips:

- Charts are read right-to-left on all rows
- C2R (right-leaning mini-cable): slip 2 sts as if to k2tog, slip them back to left needle as if to purl, then knit each st through the back loop. Alternatively, slip 1 st to cable needle (or pinch between your fingers) and hold it in back, k1, k held st.
- C2L (left-leaning mini-cable): slip 2 sts as if to ssk, slip them back to left needle as if to ssk, knit each st. Alternatively, slip 1 st to cable needle (or pinch between your fingers) and hold it in front, k1, k held st.

Note: the round-numbers in the written pattern correspond to the charts, so you can check between them if you wish.



Crown decreases:



Honeycomb chart:

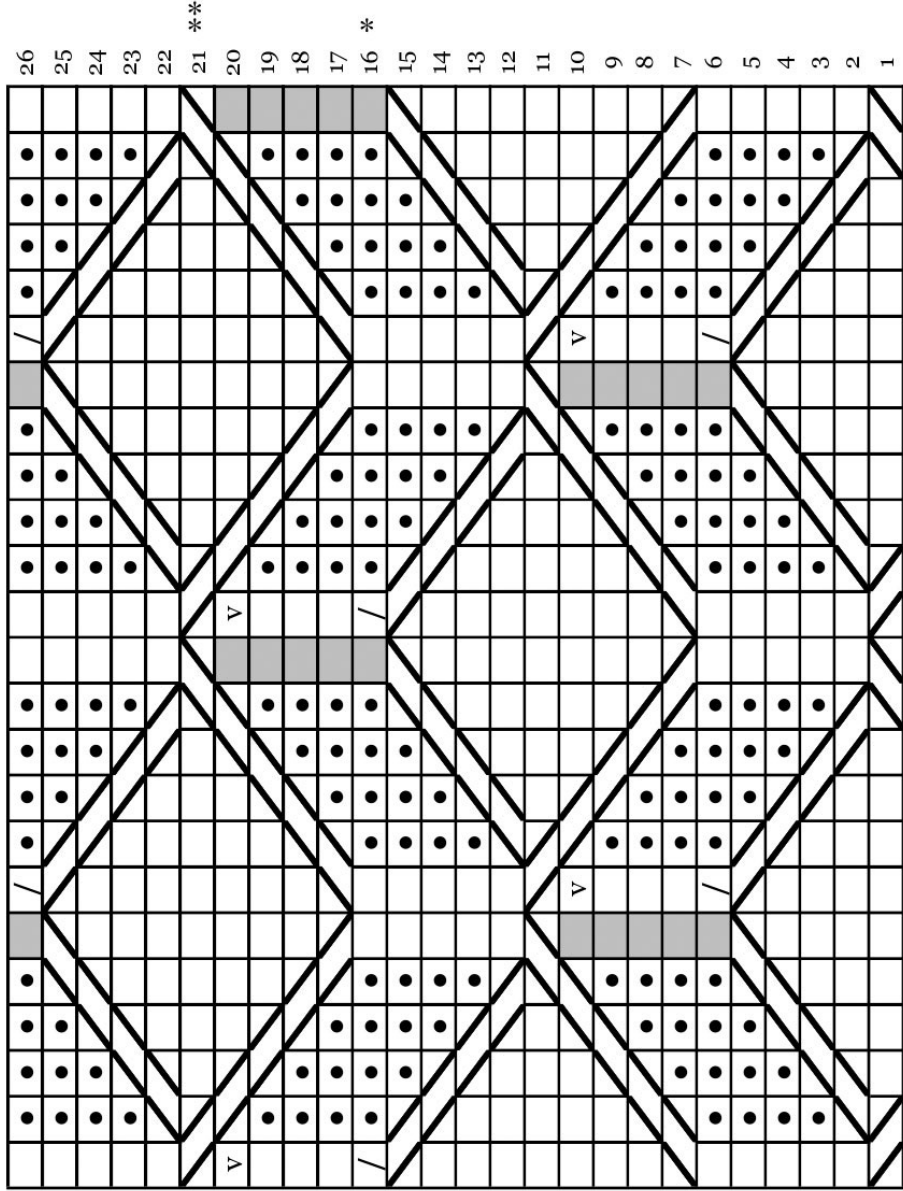


Chart Tips:

- Charts are read right-to-left on all rows.
- C2R (right-leaning mini-cable): slip 2 sts as if to k2tog, slip them back to left needle as if to purl, then knit each st through the back loop. Alternatively, slip 1 st to cable needle (or pinch between your fingers) and hold it in back, k1, k held st.
- C2L (left-leaning mini-cable): slip 2 sts as if to ssk, slip them back to left needle as if to ssk, knit each st. Alternatively, slip 1 st to cable needle (or pinch between your fingers) and hold it in front, k1, k held st.

* Row 16 of 'Honeycomb chart': remove marker, slip 1 purlwise to *right* needle, replace marker.

** Row 21 of 'Honeycomb chart': remove marker, slip 1 purlwise to *left* needle, replace marker.

Key:



(knit)



(purl)



(right-leaning mini-cable)



(left-leaning mini-cable)



(knit 2 stitches together to decrease)



no stitch



kfb

(knit into front + back to increase)



ssk

(slip 2 knitwise one-at-a-time, then knit them together to decrease)

Written Pattern

Note: the round-numbers in the written pattern correspond to the charts, so you can check between them if you wish.

Cast on 120 sts using the longtail method, or your preferred method for hats.
Place marker, and join to work in the round.

Work in 2x1 rib for 10 rounds (or until approximately 1.5" from cast-on edge):

Ribbing round: k1, p1, *k2, p1* (repeat until 1 st remains), k1.

Now work the 'Transition from ribbing' instructions. Refer to the 'Cable Tips' box below if you need a reminder of the methods for C2R and C2L. If you wish to use lifelines, I recommend placing them in rounds without cables e.g. round 11 of the 'Transition'.

Transition from ribbing:

Round 1: k1, p1, *k2, p1* (repeat until 1 st remains), k1.

Round 2: *k1, p1, [k2, p1]x2, k2, C2R, C2L, [k2, p1]x3, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 3: *k1, p1, [k2, p1]x2, k1, C2R, k2, C2L, k1, p1, [k2, p1]x2, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 4: *k1, p1, [k2, p1]x2, C2R, k4, C2L, p1, [k2, p1]x2, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 5: *k1, p1, k2, p1, k2, C2R, k6, C2L, [k2, p1]x2, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 6: *k1, p1, k2, p1, k1, C2R, k8, C2L, k1, p1, k2, p1, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 7: *k1, p1, k2, p1, k2, C2L, k6, C2R, [k2, p1]x2, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 8: *k1, p1, [k2, p1]x2, C2L, k4, C2R, p1, [k2, p1]x2, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 9: *k1, p1, k2, p1, k2, p2, C2L, k2, C2R, p2, [k2, p1]x2, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 10: *k1, p1, k2, p1, k2, p3, C2L, C2R, p3, [k2, p1]x2, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 11: *k1, p1, k2, p1, k2, p4, k2tog, p4, [k2, p1]x2, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 12: *k1, p1, k2, C2R, C2L, p3, k1, p3, C2R, C2L, k2, p1, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 13: *k1, p1, k1, C2R, k2, C2L, p2, k1, p2, C2R, k2, C2L, k1, p1, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 14: *k1, p1, C2R, k4, C2L, p1, k1, p1, C2R, k4, C2L, p1, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 15: *k1, C2R, k6, C2L, kfb, C2R, k6, C2L, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Cable Tips:

- C2R (right-leaning mini-cable): slip 2 sts as if to k2tog, slip them back to left needle as if to purl, then knit each st through the back loop. Alternatively, slip 1 st to cable needle (or pinch between your fingers) and hold it in back, k1, k held st.
- C2L (left-leaning mini-cable): slip 2 sts as if to ssk, slip them back to left needle as if to ssk, knit each st. Alternatively, slip 1 st to cable needle (or pinch between your fingers) and hold it in front, k1, k held st.

Now work the 'Honeycomb pattern' instructions, taking care to move the marker at the start of rounds 16 and 21 as indicated. If you wish to use lifelines, I recommend placing them in rounds without cables e.g. rounds 6, 16, or 26 of the 'Honeycomb pattern'.

Honeycomb pattern:

Round 1: *C2R, k8, C2L* repeat from * to * around.

Round 2: *k1, C2L, k6, C2R, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 3: *k1, p1, C2L, k4, C2R, p1, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 4: *k1, p2, C2L, k2, C2R, p2, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 5: *k1, p3, C2L, C2R, p3, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 6: *k1, p4, k2tog, p4, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 7: *C2L, p3, k1, p3, C2R* repeat from * to * around.

Round 8: *k1, C2L, p2, k1, p2, C2R, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 9: *k2, C2L, p1, k1, p1, C2R, k2* repeat from * to * around.

Round 10: *k3, C2L, kfb, C2R, k3* repeat from * to * around.

Round 11: *k4, C2L, C2R, k4* repeat from * to * around.

Round 12: *k3, C2R, k2, C2L, k3* repeat from * to * around.

Round 13: *k2, C2R, p1, k2, p1, C2L, k2* repeat from * to * around.

Round 14: *k1, C2R, p2, k2, p2, C2L, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 15: *C2R, p3, k2, p3, C2L* repeat from * to * around.

Start of round 16: Remove marker, slip 1 purlwise to *right* needle, replace marker.

Round 16: *p4, k2, p4, k2tog* repeat from * to * around.

Round 17: *p3, C2R, C2L, p3, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 18: *p2, C2R, k2, C2L, p2, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 19: *p1, C2R, k4, C2L, p1, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 20: *C2R, k6, C2L, kfb* repeat from * to * around.

Start of round 21: Remove marker, slip 1 purlwise to *left* needle, replace marker.

Rounds 21-26: As rounds 1-6.

Cable Tips:

- C2R (right-leaning mini-cable): slip 2 sts as if to k2tog, slip them back to left needle as if to purl, then knit each st through the back loop. Alternatively, slip 1 st to cable needle (or pinch between your fingers) and hold it in back, k1, k held st.
- C2L (left-leaning mini-cable): slip 2 sts as if to ssk, slip them back to left needle as if to ssk, knit each st. Alternatively, slip 1 st to cable needle (or pinch between your fingers) and hold it in front, k1, k held st.

Cable Tips:

- C2R (right-leaning mini-cable): slip 2 sts as if to k2tog, slip them back to left needle as if to purl, then knit each st through the back loop. Alternatively, slip 1 st to cable needle (or pinch between your fingers) and hold it in back, k1, k held st.
- C2L (left-leaning mini-cable): slip 2 sts as if to ssk, slip them back to left needle as if to ssk, knit each st. Alternatively, slip 1 st to cable needle (or pinch between your fingers) and hold it in front, k1, k held st.

Finally, work the ‘Crown decreases’ instructions.

Crown decreases:

Round 1: *C2L, p3, k1, p3, C2R* repeat from * to * around.

Round 2: *k1, C2L, p2, k1, p2, k2tog, k2, ssk, p2, k1, p2, C2R, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 3: *k2, C2L, p1, k1, p1, C2R, k2, C2L, p1, k1, p1, C2R, k2* repeat from * to * around.

Round 4: *k3, C2L, kfb, k2tog, k4, ssk, kfb, C2R, k3* repeat from * to * around.

Round 5: *k4, C2L, C2R, k4, C2L, C2R, k4* repeat from * to * around.

Round 6: *k3, C2R, ssk, k6, k2tog, C2L, k3* repeat from * to * around.

Round 7: *k2, C2R, p1, ssk, k4, k2tog, p1, C2L, k2* repeat from * to * around.

Round 8: *k1, C2R, p2, ssk, k2, k2tog, p2, C2L, k1* repeat from * to * around.

Round 9: *C2R, p3, ssk, k2tog, p3, C2L* repeat from * to * around.

After round 9, remove marker, slip 1 purlwise to *right* needle, and replace marker.

Now work the final decreases:

Round 10: *p4, k2tog* (repeat from * to * around).

Round 11: *p3, k2tog* (repeat from * to * around).

Round 12: *p2, k2tog* (repeat from * to * around).

Round 13: *p1, k2tog* (repeat from * to * around).

Round 14: k2tog around.

Cut yarn, leaving a tail. Draw it through the remaining 10 sts and pull tight. Weave in the ends, and block lightly to even up the stitches without flattening the honeycomb texture.

