Orenburg Snowflake.

Sample shawl knit by Tatiana Tuyakova, Russia.

Lace weight yarns, heavy lace weight yarns or light fingering weight yarn. Gauge: 10cm X 5cm = 22stitches X 14 rows.

The Fichu requires 550-600 meters of yarn .

In fingering weight yarn this pattern will need close to 700 meters (or 150yards=1oz fingering weight yarn).

Needles:

        2mm-3mm (00-1) for lace weight yarns

        2.5mm-3.5mm (00-1) for heavy lace- light fingering weight yarns

Stitch markers (piece of yarn) – optional, but can be useful to mark the middle of the shawl and beginning/end of the teeth.

Soft lace weight or light fingering yarns will be a nice choice for this pattern. The variety of yarns can be used

Authentic Orenburg goat down plied with silk or cotton yarns (lace weight).

Alpaca-silk (silky lace alpaca, classic elite yarns about 28/2 nm)

Alpaca (Misti Alpaca lace solids, lace Canada, cascade yarns alpaca lace)

Camel-silk, angora-silk, yak-silk (Treenway silks, 30/2)
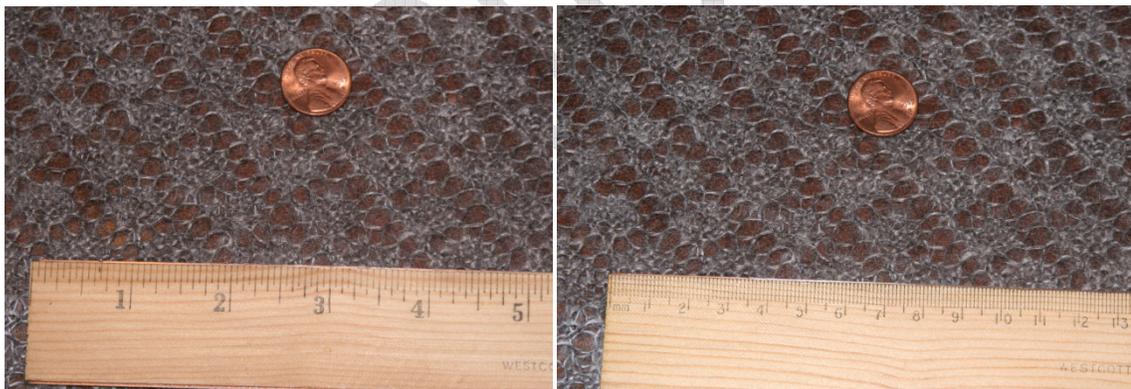
Fine wool yarns (ColourMart) in 30/2, Malabrigo lace.

Table of Contents

The authentic shawl gauge.

Here is a warm Orenburg shawl. The pattern shown is diamonds 7 stitches wide in the middle; it makes 9 stitches for each diamond including both left and right side diagonals forming the diamond.

Gossamer gauge against 1 cent coin
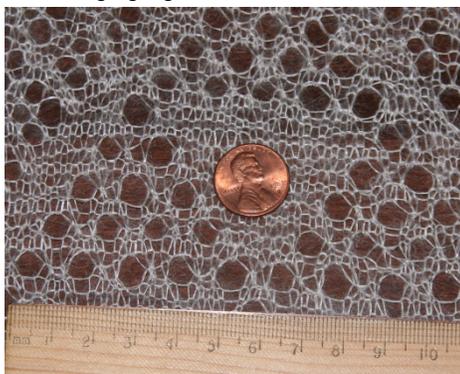
About 34 stitches in 10 cm for a shawl made by a younger local Orenburg knitter.

For lace weight yarns one will be just fine with the gauge 21 stitches and 42 rows = 4 inches in Garter Stitch.

The point here is that the knitter does control the gauge making the pattern and the yarn work together, never apart.

There is a good reason for the principal difference in construction of Orenburg gossamers and warm shawls. It is about the yarn and the physics. Warm shawl is lace weight yarn, it is thicker than gossamer yarn, and therefore it behaves differently when blocked. For that reason teeth borders on a warm shawl are simple and utilitarian, the main beauty of the warm shawl is in its wide border (4 of them are knit separately and then grafted together in the corners and with the body of the shawl) and frame (obvyazka). In special cases the body of the shawl is also decorated with lace. The teeth of this shawl are narrow enough to turn without tension with the lace weight or even fingering weight yarn, I would graft with yarn for gossamer or lace or fingering weight yarn.

This modern shawl based of the border of one museum shawls preserved in Orenburg, Russia. This modern shawlette starts with the bottom teeth ribbon like any Orenburg gossamer does. The corners are turned the traditional way for Orenburg gossamers. The lace part of the shawl is a rectangle; the crescent is created by adding extra teeth in the bottom ribbon, by the short rows on the top of the lace rectangle and by blocking. Orenburg gossamer wide border is at the core of this shawl.

Shawl language and base patterns

Russian lace looks incredibly complex. And yet it is very simple in its core. It has only knit, yarn over, k2tog(k3tog), only 3 stitches lace. The rest of it is **the shawl language**. The language of holes on the (garter stitch) fabric. This modern shawl is done using generations' old techniques. Let us begin with Russian charts. Why do we have here 2 types of charts and how does it work together?

The hole based chart or the layout chart is graphic representation something you do every time you knit. It is the "right hand chart" – what is already knit. The detailed chart is the "left hand chart" or how did we knit it. The holes based carts do not have k2tog/k3tog on them. What looks like 'vo' on the detailed chart is ' a' on the holes based chart

Look at the row of any lace you have knitted (on the "right hand" needle): at your right hand needle if you are right handed (the left if you are left handed). You have there the series of stitches on the needle separated by the yarn over's, they alternate, they make a pattern. Stitches form the solid fabric (garter or stockinet), the yarn over make holes, the make the the pattern similar drawing or writing on the paper, yarn over is compensated by k2tog to make a straight fabric. The important part is what kind of hole did you just out on the fabric, not how you executed it technically. What important in the layout is what kind of the hole it is and where is it relative to the other holes and the field of the shawl. The layout hole based chart comes from the paper on your fabric, literally. It is the graphic representation of you lace, the design view of the lace. It has color to appeal to the human color vision and take the advantage of it. For black and white printing/vision the chart has letters to help distinguish the kinds of holes on the fabric. That's why we use color to represent what kind of the hole we place on the fabric.

This shawl is small to medium size and can be the entry point into the world of Orenburg lace. However the shawl language is universal, it goes above and beyond Orenburg lace; it is the language of many pro lace knitters. They do not count just stitches. They follow the flow and the layout of the holes, they draw lace on the knitted fabric row by row. Any developed language takes some practice to learn to speak it. It is the same with the language of the shawl. Let's take a look.

The alphabet and the notes

Knit ; yarn over ; k2tog/k3tog

holes	stitches	
☐	☐	knit
☐	v	k2tog
☐	w	k3tog
color symbol	o	yarn over
different types of YO based patterns: this pattern s based on the single base Orenburg pattern - diagonals 'kosoryadki'		
a	o	diagonals

Orange is used to highlight the logical end of the shawl part or to mark a middle of the shawl.

The words

Reading the charts:

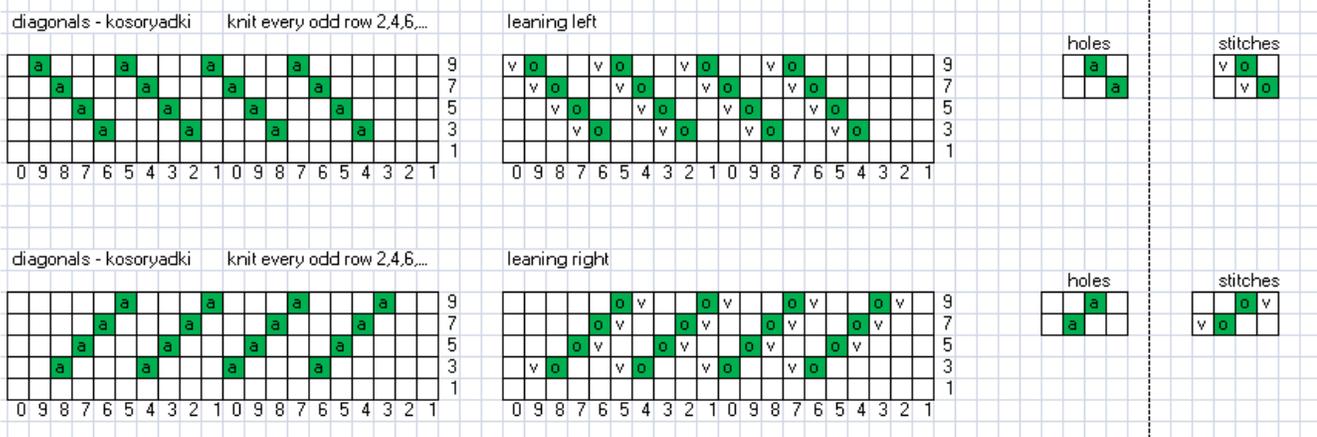   Rows 1,3,5,7,… read from right to left

     Rows 2,4,6,8,… read from left to right.

Base patterns used in this shawl. Hole based chart always shows only 1,3,5,7… odd rows. Detailed stitches chart shows depending on if the yo exists in even rows both odd and even rows (like fish) or just odd rows (like diagonals, mouse print, strawberry)
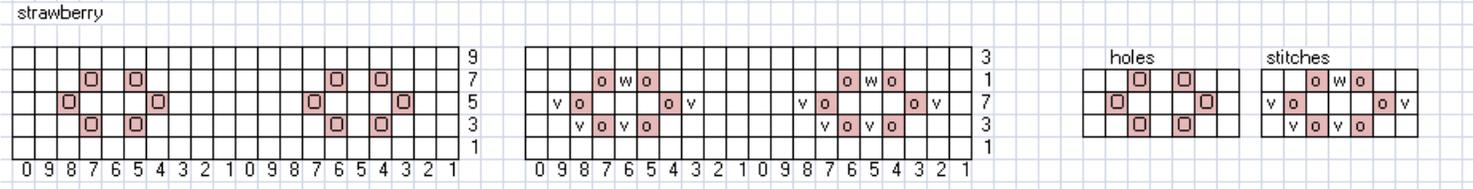
Diagonals:

Diagonals lean left or right. Here we show only odd rows, all even rows are knit

diagonals - kosoryadki — knit every odd row 2,4,6,…

leaning left

holes / **stitches**

diagonals - kosoryadki — knit every odd row 2,4,6,…

leaning right

holes / **stitches**

This complex lace shawl is made using only 1 simple base pattern: diagonals.

Strawberry is a diagonal based pattern that did receive its own name.

strawberry

holes / **stitches**

Phrases

There are 3 phrases in the shawl:

> teeth made of strawberry and diagonals
>
> snowflake (wide border)
>
> pilka (saw) made of diagonals ("reshetka")

The top part of the shawl is garter stitch field.

## Method of the shawl construction and description.

1,2,3,4,5

These are the steps we will do when knitting the shawl

1. Knit bottom teeth ribbon (40 teeth).

2. Turn the work 90 degrees (aka turn corners), pick up the stitches from bottom and flat side of the ribbon and knit straight up

3. Decrease the width of the shawl before the lace part

4. Knit straight lace part (265 stitches wide).

5. Make crescent shape (short rows involved) and cast off the stitches of the last row.

Step 1: The teeth ribbon. Cast on. Slip the first stitch of the row ☺.

In Russian knitting in every row we slip first stitch of the row purlwise.
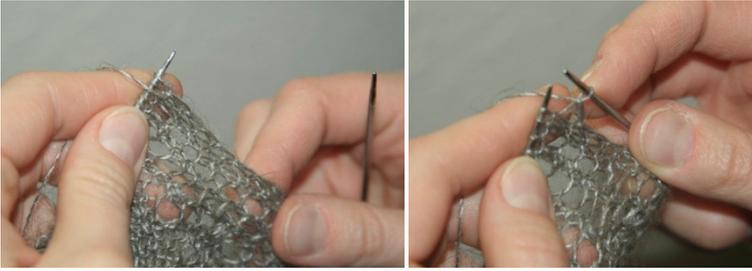
The shawl is knit starting with the bottom teeth ribbon, then the corners are turned and the shawl is knit straight up (right teeth ribbon, body, left teeth ribbon), when the body is finished (at the last row of the main hole based chart) the crescent garter stitch part begins, this fabric is worked with short rows (the modern part of the shawl starts here), when that is completed the very last part is casting of the top edge stitches of the shawl.

We start with teeth ribbon. Cast on 11 stitches (we use Russian cast on). Following chart A knit 0 row, this row is important, it is the row where you will turn left bottom corner. Knit 40 teeth using chart A like so: knit tooth 1 using chart A rows 0-18, then repeat 38 more times rows 3-18 and make the 40-th tooth repeating rows 3-17.

The 5 holes teeth

The teeth of Orenburg shawls have 5 holes diagonals. 5 to rise, 5 to decrease. It does not matter how complex the teeth lace is, the size of a tooth is always same, same 8 stitches will be picked from it in any Orenburg gossamer. If one would count the yo (holes) closest to the edge of the tooth from the narrowest point to the widest they come with 5 holes (5 rising the width). Same if one would count from the widest point to the narrowest (5 decreasing the width). The 5-th hole is important. It is the point where "you turn" it. What it means is at the 5-th hole of the tooth the leading lace diagonal changes the direction from increase to decrease and vise versa. A tooth starts growing wider or narrower.
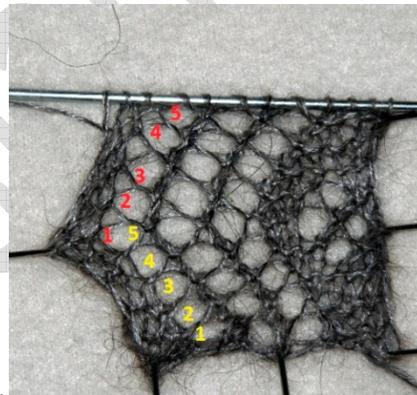
Yellow numbers show "rise" holes count, white numbers show "decrease" holes count.

The corners of the shawl are turned at the narrowest point, at the 5-th (by yellow "decreasing" count on the photo above) hole.

Last 2 stitches when you make the tooth narrower:

1 tooth. It does not matter how many rows of lace has a tooth, it always has the same amount of rows, the 5 holes rule remains from the simple 7 stitches wide teeth to complex 21-29 stitches wide teeth.

Step 2: Turning corners

 There are 2 similar methods (one is done in gray yarn, one is in white). Both methods are traditional. Gray yarn method is beneficial for the thicker yarns, also people who have tighter cast on and tighter side edges of teeth ribbon will find this beneficial. I call it "granny's" method; it's an old family thing, I do not know how old it is. The method shown in white yarn pictures is the traditional for modern Orenburg gossamers. I'll provide a work around for those who have tighter cast on.

Granny's method

Left bottom corner:

Pick all the stitches from the bottom edge of the ribbon for the left border on your left needle (for the charted tooth – 11 stitches). Be sure to pick them up from the outer edge in. Leave them there for now so they do not slip off. Left bottom corner is turned.


Now turn right bottom corner:

With the same needle that has the top (right teeth ribbon) stitches of your bottom teeth ribbon and using the same yarn you were knitting the teeth with, pick up all stitches from the flat side of your ribbon for the body of the shawl. Go under a side loop pick the yarn and pull it through.
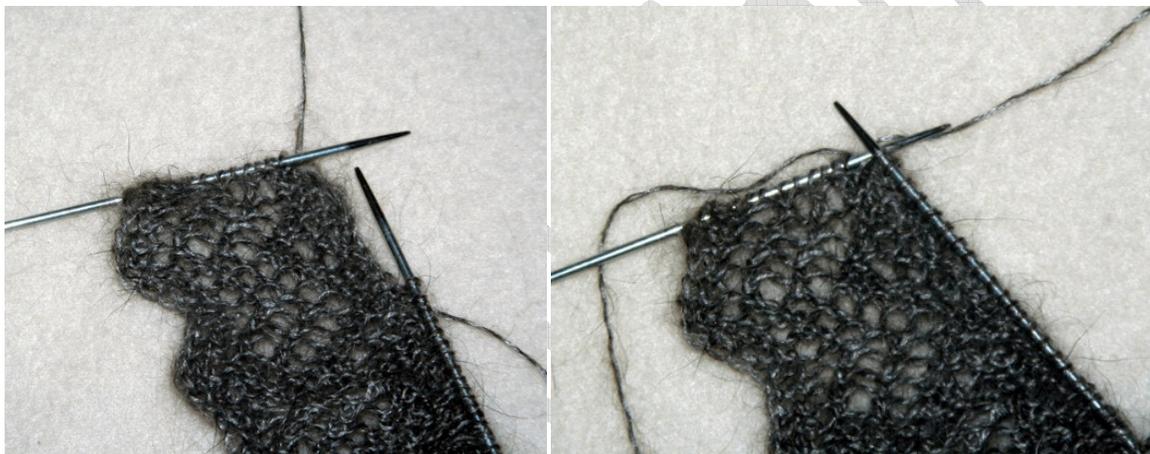
Make sure your last stitch is right next to the first stitch of the 14 stitches you have on your left needle for the left teeth border of the shawl.

Turn your work around and knit all the body stitches and the right border (last row of 7th tooth - row 18 chart A). The corners are turned.
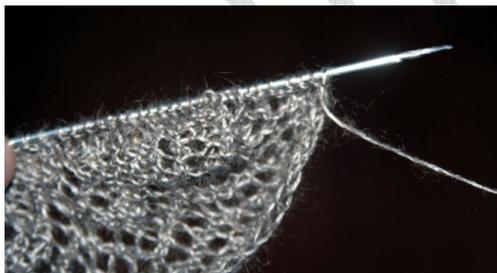
Modern Orenburg gossamer method

What can be simpler than picking up the stitches starting from the bottom edge of your teeth ribbon and from the side of the ribbon all the way to the top? That's what this traditional method is in a nutshell. Pick up the stitches, turn the work, put the yarn behind your work and keep knitting row 1 of the body all the way to the end.

White teeth on the photos are slightly different, it does not have the mouse print on it, and otherwise it's the same (to avoid the confusion and separate the 2 methods).

In pictures:

<u>Step 1.</u> Turn left bottom corner.

Pick stitches with your free (left) needle from the bottom of the teeth ribbon.

For tight cast on: knit that edge with the yarn you have.

You can use this way if the cast on was tight, so the ribbon will not pull and block nicely. Alternatively you can cast on using 3 or even 4 needles instead of 2 needles to make it loose.

Pick up all stitches from the flat side of your ribbon for the body of the shawl all the way to the top of the ribbon.
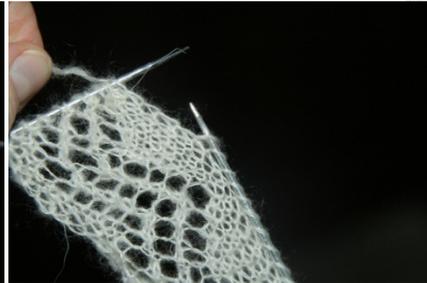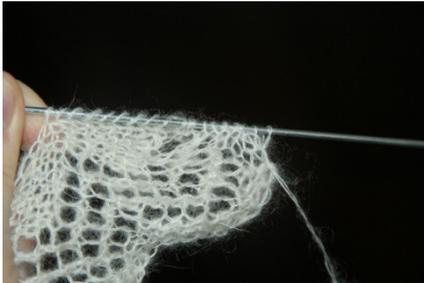
<u>Step 2.</u> Turn right bottom corner.

Turn your work, throw the yarn behind the work. Done. Ready to knit row 1 of the body of the shawl like so.

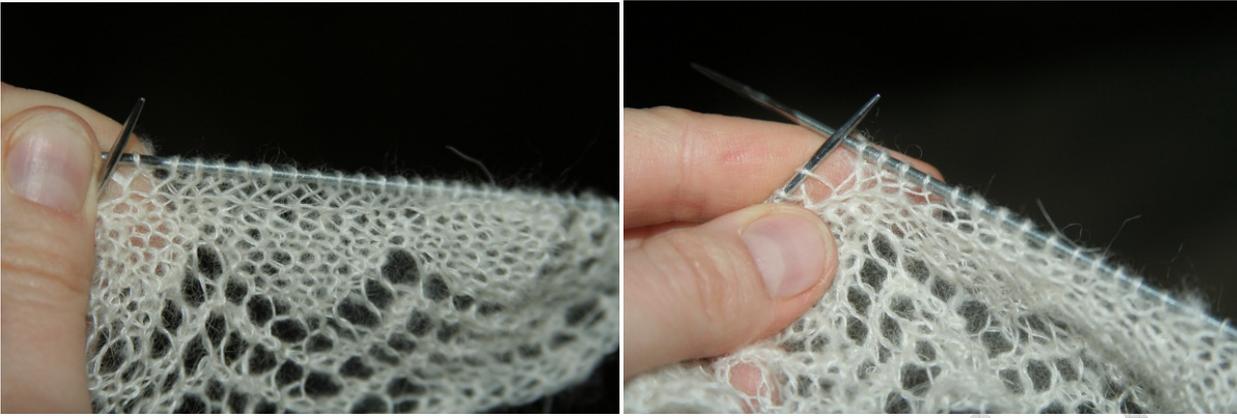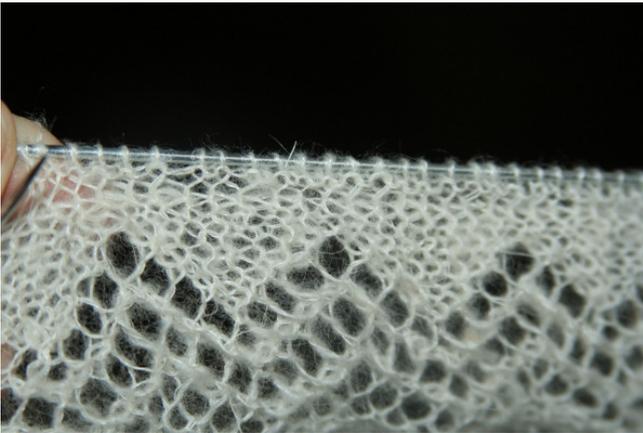Start   Finish

Orenburg gossamers have this look: the stitch knit "crossed". It does not matter how was your stitch positioned on the needle and did you knit into the front or the back leg of the stitch, same look, both ways:

Next row knit:

As you can see this works for thicker lace weight yarn also (thicker yarn is chosen for better pictures).

What's the difference between the 2 methods? Granny's method it hides some knitting mistakes (too loose side edge or too tight side edge is one of them). The method shown I white yarn will reveal too lose edge (up to the point that it can look like lacy line of "yo" after the blocking), therefore the cast on needs to be just right, and the side edge needs to be just right. Both methods reach same goal. Method shown in gray yarn works for gossamer , lace or fingering and even dk yarns, the method shown in white yarn is better for gossamer and lace yarns. It's up to the knitter what method to use.

Step 3: Decreasing the width

To make the crescent we have knitted extra 6 teeth on the bottom ribbon in comparison to what we would do if we were making a rectangle or a square. We have 40*8=320 "laying" stitches on the straight side of the bottom teeth ribbon. We picked up 320, we need 45 stitches less. Rows before the first lace row 9 are used to decrease these stitches

Place middle of the shawl marker (320/2=160 – mark that stitch, count after your right teeth ribbon marker). Keep knitting left and right teeth according to the detailed chart (or charts A and B, the teeth are shown on both charts). For the body of the shawl (between the stitch markers) decrease 52 stitches in rows 9-8 like so:

Alternative row 3 main chart: make decreases in this row between the side markers, there will be 297 stitches when done.

      K2tog, k2tog, k2tog, repeat 8 times (k16,k2tog), k9, k2tog, k9, repeat 8 times (k2tog, k16), k2tog, k2tog, k2tog

Knit row 4 between the right and left teeth markers: knit all stitches.

Alternative row 5 main chart: make 23 decreases total in this row between the side markers, there will be 275 stitches when done

      K3, repeat 10 times (k2tog, k11), k2tog, k13, k2tog, k11, repeat 10 times (k2tog, k11), k2tog, k3

Knit row 6 between the right and left teeth markers: knit all stitches.

Alternative row75 main chart: make 10 decreases total in this row between the side markers, there will be 265 stitches when done

      Knit 3, repeat 5 times (k2tog, knit 11), knit 150, repeat 4 times (k2tog, knit 11), k2tog, knit 3

Knit row 8 between the right and left teeth markers: knit all stitches.

Step 4: Knitting lace

The shawl is knit straight up from row 9 using main layout chart and the detailed charts. The hole based main chart is the lace layout. There are 11 snowflakes knit and the "saw" above it. Keep knitting left and right teeth ribbons before and after the body markers.

Charts A and B show the teeth, chart C is main holes based chart, charts D and E are detailed charts for the snowflake and triangles. The repeat of the pattern is highlighted as the bold rectangle. Stitch marked orange on the chart is the last stitch of the teeth (and first for left teeth).

Tips and tricks: Weight the lace to speed knitting.

Wide lace can be weighted using teeth on the bottom. Make large loops with crochet cotton through the 5-th hole of each tooth (or every other tooth), connect the loops at the bottom, and attach small weight. Knit keeping the weight on your knees. You can use elastic to adjust the weight position, do no keep it too high so the weight is on your hands, that will make you tired faster instead of helping. Right amount of weight will just open the stitches pulling the yarn slightly down so knitting will be faster.

Tips and tricks: To speed up your knitting keep one needle stable and the movements small.

Step 5: The crescent

We did put a good base for the crescent in step 2: we decreased the width of the shawl so the teeth can be blocked nicely. Now we are ready to complete the shape of the shawl.

When we have completed row 69 we are ready to start the modern crescent part of the shawl. To do that we will need 3 markers to make out job easier. Marker N1 is at the middle of the shawl (stitch 140 not counting the left or right teeth ribbons). Where is it in the lace? Look at the main layout chart. See marked orange stitch with the numbers above it in the last row of the chart? It is above the middle lace diamond. That's where the marker goes.

The idea here is 'to insert the crescent shape in the row' 69 on top of the rectangular fabric. How are we going to do it?

First we knit row 69 to the middle marker (stitch 140). Now we start working the garter fabric according to the crescent charts S1.
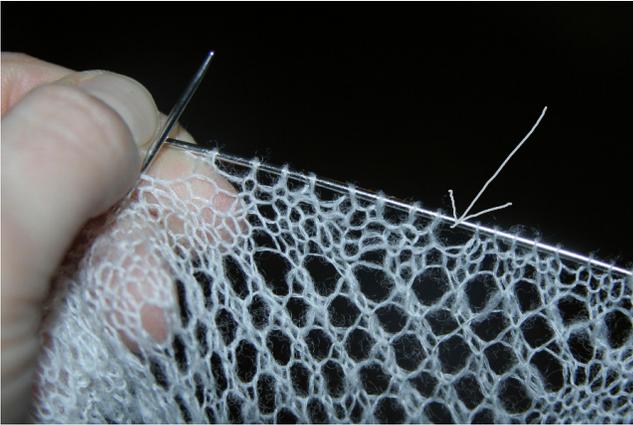
We knit 6 stitches to the left from the middle marker (chart S1, row 1).

Turn the work around, slip first stitch purlwise, knit to the marker , the marked stitch, and 6 more stitches after that (S1, row2). Turn the work around.
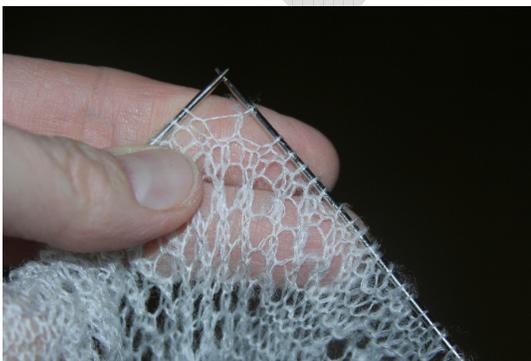
 - on the gossamer shawlette

2 short rows are done.


(the arrow points at the turn slipped stitch.)

We are be working chart S1. The idea is very simple: start the 6+1+6 stitches long short row in the middle, after make the short row 6 stitches wide and place the k2tog above the "turn stitch" of the short row. We reduce the total amount of shawl body stitches by 1 in every short row (if one would count all the open stitches on both needles). S1 shows first several short rows pairs.
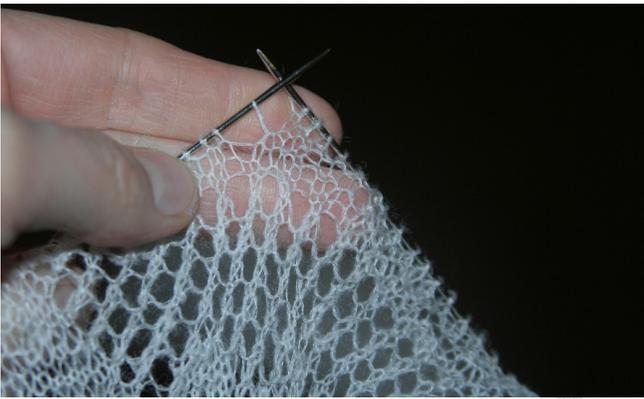
You will be knitting the slipped turn stitch and the stitch next to it 2 together.

Next short row is 6 stitches wider than the previous one
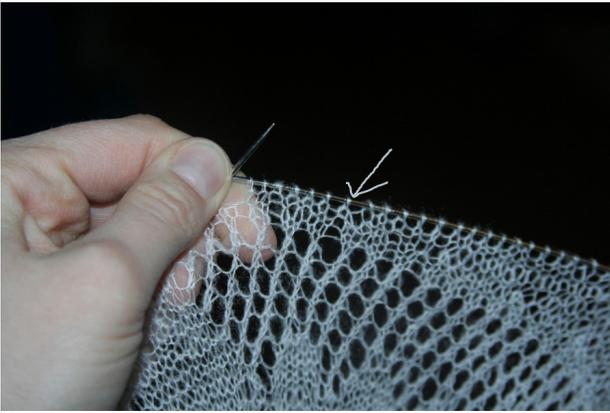
. The arrow points that the k2tog in the previous short row.

Keep knitting short rows using S1 till there will be less than 6 stitches till the right/left teeth ribbon markers.

When you have knit all the short rows (you have less than 6 stitches left before your right and left teeth borders start).

Completing "row 69" of your main chart (the crescent is inserted fully by now): knit this row to the end and complete the last lace row of your right tooth, turn your work around, knit row, cast off all the stitches (the top edge of the shawl). Use Russian cast off. You can use i-cord cast of for the edge for your lace weigh yarns if you like this finish.

Finishing: Block the shawl

Wash the shawl gently in warm water, remove access water. Ready to block. A foam mat can be used and strong pins (bead pins or t-pins work, t-pins are stronger).

Blocking and weights: some yarns respond better to force blocking with weight. All edges of the shawl need to be pinned when force blocking. Some dumbbells can hold the mat in place if needed, water bugs work very well also, cans from the pantry, whatever it is that is heavy and the contents are safely enclosed inside (otherwise cleaning the mess, fighting stains, re-washing the shawl... not a good thing). To make the crescent shape first pin the middle of the shawl the top and the bottom, about 4.5-5 cm between the pins for thicker. Make the pinned area about 15 cm long. At the bottom pin the points of the teeth. Pull on the point down and pin.

Here are several close ups of the partially blocked shawl, top corners, the middle of the top edge and 3 teeth close to the bottom corners first (the details are illustrated with a different shawl of the same shape)

Then block the sides

Then finish the top edge best you can, it always can be corrected, start from the middle, work to the left and right edges like so.

Tips and tricks: finer lace and t-pins closed to one another can allow one to put a t-pin at 45 degrees to the edge of the shawl, but tighter blocking and/or thicker yarn requires that t-pin is at 90 degrees to the edge of the shawl (otherwise the t-pin can come out under the force the shawl is pulling 'inside', it pulls more the cooler it gets). You can see how the blocked fabric start pulling on t-pins at the top right of the picture below.

Bottom corners, and more from the center and from the corners after that . T-pins are positioned at 90 degrees or close to that relative to the edge, they are not going anywhere, if some do (soma mats have less dense foam than others), add some t-pins at the pot of the solid fabric of the teeth, be careful do not position too close to the lace holes (to little material between the lace hole and the t-pin is not a friend in this case).

If there are enough of t-pins at the top edge they can be at 45 degrees angle, they will hold because there are so many of them and it does distribute the forces, t-pins positioned at 90 degrees hold better.

Wet shawl fabric will try to pull on the mat and lift it under the tension , especially when the shawl cools down more. Weights can be used to stabilize the blocking area. Like above (or other handy things like soup cans, water bottles and similar). These shawls are blocked tambourine tight.
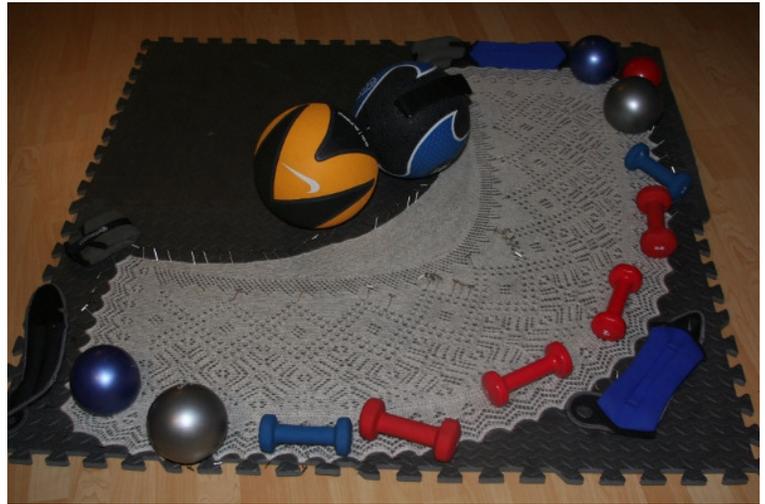
It's best to block both left and right teeth ribbons first and 3-4 teeth at the bottom of the shawl on its left and right side making nice 90 degrees corner. You can place a t-pin into each diamond top hole to make it more even (in case if it needs such an additional correction).

Work your way from the outer narrow part of the shawl along the bottom teeth ribbon towards the middle. Pin each side evenly 10-15 cm at a time and switch sides. Sometimes you may want to re-arrange the teeth a little to make them look nice and even. Finding ¼ of the length of the bottom teeth ribbon and pinning it can help to do it evenly. Always pin at the 5-th hole of the each tooth (it's top), see how pins on the picture above grab at least 2 stitches (pin is placed into the lace hole, not into the edge of the fabric).

Let the blocked shawl dry at least overnight (if it's dry, or even couple days in more humid environment, let the yarn to take the form). Remove from the blocking pins and weights. It's ready.

Thank you.