

Radish Love Tote

DESIGNED BY JESSICA PIGZA



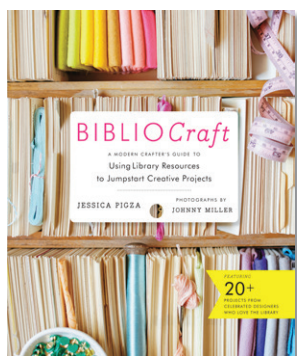
The hearts and leaves on this early twentieth-century design by Henri Gillet were on my mind as I sketched my radish form.

I started playing around with vegetable silhouettes one day after reading an article about Victory Gardens and learning a bit about World War II's propaganda campaigns. The artists who created posters promoting gardening on the home front really made their vegetables look like heroes, and I wanted my design to be just as bold. The heart-shaped ruby radish stencil is the result: a can-do visual reminder to myself to visit my local farmer's market more often and eat more vegetables each and every day.

You can add this stencil to a prepurchased plain tote. Or, if you're like me and experience no shortage of promotional tote bags in your life, you can add the design to the blank side of one of those freebies instead, and create a mixed message of propaganda of your very own.

BEYOND THIS PROJECT:

A stencil is, by its nature, adaptable to all kinds of surface decoration projects. The radishes in this project's repeating pattern can become the border of a tablecloth, for instance, or could be added to an apron. If you'd like to explore other veggie graphic possibilities, take a look at the variety of Victory Garden posters and design a stencil of your own favorite veggie or fruit. You could also use it as a template for a needle-turned appliqué design on a quilt. In addition to its use on textiles, the stencil design can be adapted at a small scale as a template for cut and layered paper cards for garden-themed stationery.



BIBLIO Craft

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JESSICA PIGZA

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STC Craft



FINISHED DIMENSIONS

- 15 × 15" (38 × 38cm)

SUPPLIES

- 1 white or natural cotton tote bag measuring around 15 × 15" (38 × 38cm)
- Iron and ironing board
- Two 8½ × 11" (22 × 28cm) sheets clear acetate film
- Fine-tip permanent marker
- Cutting mat
- Craft knife
- Scrap butcher paper or kraft paper
- Painter's tape
- Spoon
- Fabric paint in magenta and green*
- Small plate or dish
- Stencil brush (a small, round, stiff brush)

*Be sure the paint you buy is appropriate for fabric use, and read the instructions on proper cleanup, how to fix paint permanently, and how to care for the finished work.

STEP 1: PREPARE TOTE

Wash tote. Use an iron to press both sides of tote flat.

STEP 2: CREATE STENCILS

Photocopy radish template at 100%. Center enlarged template under sheet of clear acetate. Use fine-tip permanent marker to trace design onto surface of acetate.

Place acetate on cutting mat, and use craft knife to cut out radish shape along lines you drew.

Repeat with radish greens template and second acetate sheet to create a second stencil.

STEP 3: PREPARE TO START STENCILING

Note: This tote bag design incorporates a total of six stencil applications: three radish shapes and three radish greens shapes. You add each shape one at a time, leaving a few minutes' time for the paint to dry after completing each shape before moving on to the next one.

Cover work surface with a large sheet of butcher paper or kraft paper to protect it from paint.

Place tote bag flat on paper-covered work surface. Tuck folded piece of butcher paper or kraft paper inside tote so it lays flat. (This paper layer will prevent any paint from soaking through from one side of tote bag to other.)

STEP 4. STENCIL RADISHES

Using project photograph as a guide, position radish stencil in lower half of center of tote. Use painter's tape to secure stencil to tote so it won't shift while you work.

Use a spoon to add a small puddle of magenta paint to plate. Tap stencil brush up and down a few times in paint, and then apply paint to fabric within stencil area. Tapping stencil brush vigorously up and down onto fabric (instead of brushing it back and forth along surface as if you were painting a wall) will result in greater paint saturation and more vivid colors. Working in layers also helps: Cover entire stencil area with a thin layer of paint, go over it again and add a second layer, and perhaps a third layer, until you are happy with color. (No need to wait for each layer of paint to dry before adding next one.)

After you've finished stenciling this first radish shape completely, allow it to dry for a few minutes. Carefully peel back painter's tape and lift stencil off tote, being careful not to transfer any stray damp paint from stencil onto tote as you move it.

Repeat stenciling process to add one radish to left and one to right of first radish. You now have three stenciled radishes.

Allow paint to dry for an hour or so before starting on radish greens stenciling. While waiting, wash and dry dish, spoon, brush, and radish stencil, removing all traces of magenta paint. (Use cleaning method appropriate for the paint you've purchased.)

STEP 5: STENCIL RADISH GREENS

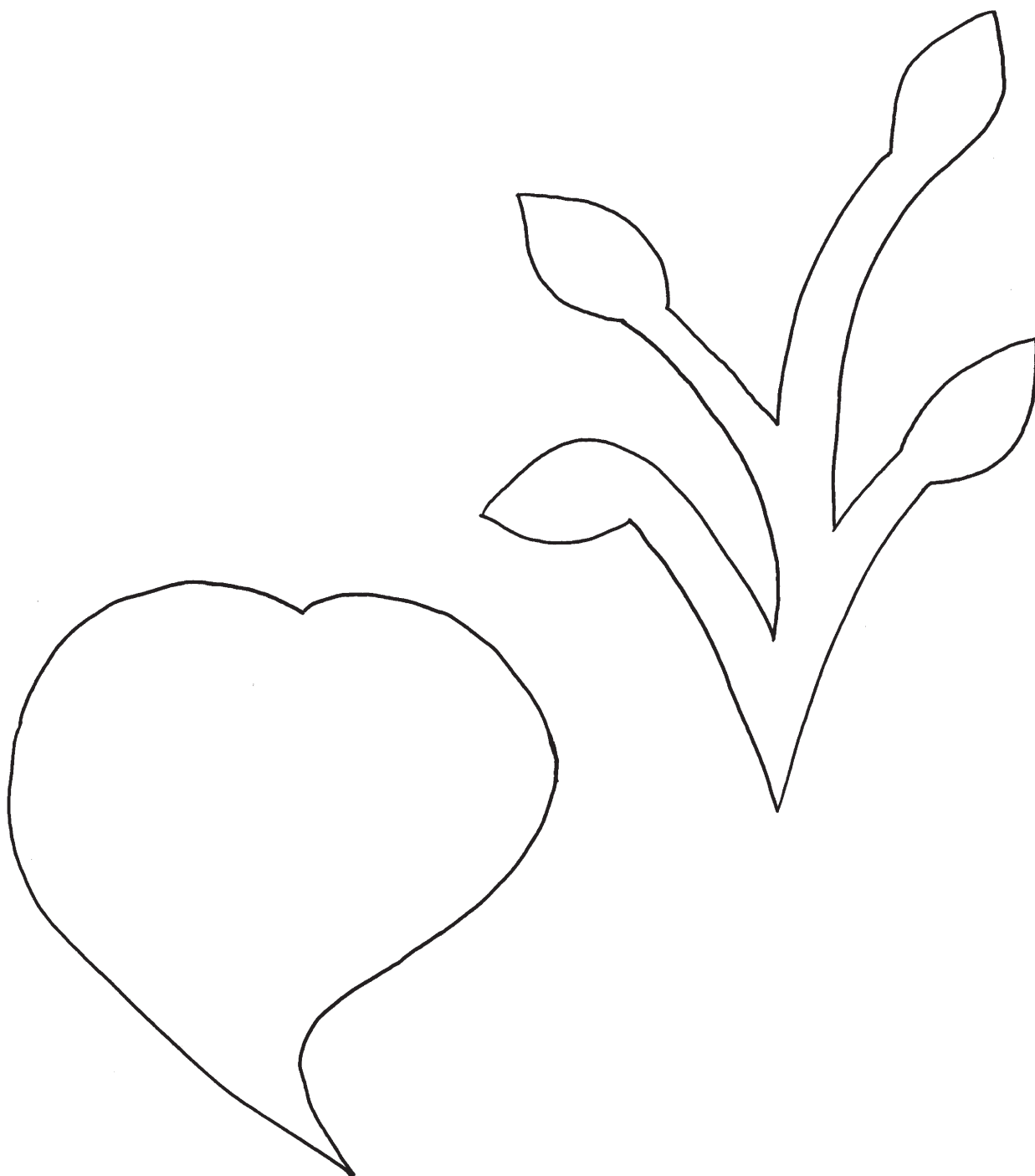
Following same method as described in Step 4 but using green paint, stencil radish greens above each radish, lining point of radish green stem directly above heart dimple on radish top.

Allow paint to dry.

STEP 6: SET DESIGN PERMANENTLY ON TOTE

Follow manufacturer's instructions for your paint to "set" or "fix" permanently on fabric. This may include applying heat with an iron or dryer.

Be sure to note any care instructions that accompany paint you used, so you can appropriately care for tote in future.



YOUR VICTORY GARDEN

counts more than ever!



ABOVE Hubert Morley's 1945 poster was one of many Victory Garden-themed wartime propaganda posters to depict heroic homegrown produce.

VICTORY GARDENS

From circus broadsides and theater announcements to travel promotions and government propaganda, posters have a long history in the United States. While posters were meant to have limited lives—displayed only until their messages no longer applied, then discarded or covered over with newer messages—all kinds of posters and broadsides have been carefully preserved in library collections. One example of bold poster design are posters printed during World War II by the Government Printing Office.

The U.S. Office of War Information worked with close to a thousand artists—some professionals, others amateurs—in the creation of poster campaigns promoting wartime economies in the early 1940s, a time when resources were severely limited. Americans encountered these posters at school or work, in libraries, and while shopping. One such campaign was the promotion of gardening on the home front, in the form of growing Victory Gardens. More than fifty million Victory Gardens were planted, and neighbors gathered together to share pressure cookers and other supplies at community canning efforts.

Looking back now, the Victory Garden campaign is viewed as having been more important for the part it played in Americans' sense of participation in the war effort than for any substantial food conservation. But that campaign, as well as other poster propaganda efforts, left behind a significant legacy of graphic design that can continue to inspire today. It was one such poster that set me on the path to create my Radish Love Tote project.

You can find a variety of government-issued World War II-era posters promoting Victory Gardens and other government initiatives in libraries and government archives. And these posters, like other materials printed by the U.S. Government Printing Office, are in the public domain and are free to use in your projects.

These resources will lead to images and information on World War II-era posters:

Northwestern University Library World War II Poster Collection: <http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/wwii-posters>

Produce for Victory: Posters on the American Home Front (1941–45). Smithsonian Institution: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/victory>

Powers of Persuasion: Poster Art from World War II. Stacy Bredhoff. Washington, DC: National Archives, 1994. A portion of the posters included in this volume can also be viewed on the National Archives website, www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/powers_of_persuasion_intro.html.

Additionally, you can use these Subject Headings to find more books about posters:

WAR POSTERS.

POLITICAL POSTERS.

POSTERS.