



Semisolid Sock Yarns and The Pattern for Jane's Hedgerow Socks

By Jane Cochran

Editor's Note

Colorful hand-dyed yarns are fabulous to look at on the skein, but sometimes they can be a little tricky to knit. The more striking the color combinations, the more they tend to obscure any stitch patterning you wanted to use. Lace, ribbing, openwork, it all gets hidden behind the swirling flashes of color. A few hand-dyers have been experimenting with more subtle colorways involving one main hue. By sticking to this single tone, and playing with the depth and saturation of colors that

make up that tone, the hand-dyer manages to create a skein that is theoretically one color but, in fact, a living assembly of highlights, shadows, contrasts, and subtleties.

Semisolids let you do more—lace, cables, ribbings, and stunning Fair Isle and intarsia—while still giving you the satisfaction of working with an ever-changing yarn.

Is there any drawback to semisolids? Only one: Availability. Some of the most exciting colors come from boutique hand-dyers, true one-person operations, with Etsy shops or very small storefronts. You have to stalk your prey, regularly returning to check the sites and pouncing on any new updates the minute you see them.

One of my favorite hand-dyers in this arena is [Sundara Yarns](#), which is why I asked Jane to design a sock using Sundara's "Somewhat Solids" yarn. Jane is a capital-A avid sock knitter who has used this yarn extensively and writes more about it in her introduction below.



You can also find beautiful semisolid sock yarn options from [Sophie's Toes Sock Yarn](#) from Emily Parson (shown at far left), [Yarntini](#) (middle), and [String Theory Hand-Dyed Yarn](#) (right). Among the slightly easier to obtain semisolid yarns for socks are [Hand Jive Nature's Palette](#) (which is hand-dyed using all natural dyes), [Shibuiknits Sock](#), [Fleece Artist Merino 2/6](#) or [Sea Wool](#) (you'll find a few gorgeous semisolids among the multicolored skeins), and [Koigu Premium Merino](#). I hope you enjoy Jane's pattern and have fun experimenting with different yarns to see how they behave and find your favorite. — *Clara* (your friendly *Knitter's Review* Editor-in-Chief)

Pattern Introduction

Like many knitters, I love to knit socks. They're a portable project that's good to have stashed in a purse or bag. They're as simple or as complicated as I want them to be, and I can experiment with stitches and yarn without making a commitment to a larger piece. Sock knitting also results in warm, soft comfort for my feet throughout the winter months.

My first socks were simple stockinette stitch, with a flap heel, in [Cherry Tree Hill Supersock](#). Next I experimented with self-patterning yarns like [Opal](#) and [Regia](#). They were plain socks, transformed by the yarn. I became obsessed, of course. The increasing availability of hand-painted sock yarn made the experience even more delightful and I sampled as many as I could.

But I'm fond of texture and interesting stitch patterns, too. Once I understood the "idea" of a sock, I began to play. What stitch looked good with what yarn? How far could I go with dyed yarns that striped and pooled? Did I want my socks to be subtle or bold? Each time I cast on a new pair, I tried to let the yarn tell me what it wanted to be. Sometimes a plain stockinette stitch was perfect, but sometimes a yarn or color needed something different.

I began to turn to my stitch dictionaries, books, and published patterns for more inspiration. As my socks became more complicated, so did my search for yarns that wouldn't overwhelm the subtle stitch patterns that I was interested in knitting.

Introducing Sundara Yarns

I found [Sundara Yarns](#) accidentally by way of a blog. Sundara Murphy was just taking her hand dyed yarn "public" and making it available in limited quantities. Sundara's yarn business was born out of her own desire for the ideal combination of soft yarn and colors she loved. She studied traditional art in college, among other things, but color theory was what excited her most. Her yarns are beautiful, most are one-of-a-kind, and the multi-colors are unlike any I've seen before.

Sundara's sock yarn is so soft and the colors are so beautiful that it's become my favorite. The yarn is a two-ply superwash merino with a lofty, rounded twist. It knits into a firm fabric on the small needles typically used for socks, but it's still almost silky-feeling.

The Somewhat Solids

In the past year or so, Sundara has begun to offer a new line of colors she calls "Somewhat Solids." They're created with her usual intuitive approach, and the result is yarn that has incredible depth of color.

She dyes with a soft touch, so her colors never look heavy or dull. Some of the color pairings are vibrant, while others are quite subtle.

Washing and Wearing

I like to wear hand knitted socks every day, so they're washed often in the machine, in cold water, and laid out to dry. The socks I've made with Sundara's yarn have retained their color and shape, and the fabric just gets softer with wear.

I haven't noticed much pilling or felting aside from the usual wear and tear that my clumsiness produces (there was an unfortunate encounter with an office chair that I'd rather not discuss). My feet are always happy when I'm wearing my Sundara socks!

The Roots of the Hedgerow Socks

When I began to design these Hedgerow socks, I asked myself what the yarn wanted to be. A skein of Sundara's Somewhat Solid sock yarn in a color called "Green over Apricot" was waiting patiently in my stash. The soft apricot color seemed to rise through the leafy green, rather than sharing the surface with it.

I came up with a combination of stitches that has lots of texture without being too complex, but there's enough to keep me interested in the way the yarn's colors shift across the surface. Even in a solid color yarn the rows of ribbing and moss stitch create a beautiful fabric.

The socks are worked from the top down with a heel flap and a round toe. To make things even more interesting, the stitch pattern continues into the heel flap.

Why "Hedgerow" socks? I live in a small town where privet hedges define nearly every road and property. They rise like soft green walls that hug the contours of roadsides, lawns, and fields. There's almost nothing as lovely as the view down a shady privet-lined street on a soft summer afternoon.

***Note:** After publication, designer [Lisa Parker](#) kindly emailed to let us know that she published a sock pattern in 2003 with the name Hedgerow (which you can [find online here](#)). The patterns are in no way connected and we truly apologize for any confusion that may arise from the naming of this pattern.*

Skill Level Advanced beginner.

Finished Size Fits Women's Medium to Large, about 8-8½ inches (20-22 cm) foot circumference and about 9½ inches (24 cm) in length. Because the Ribbed Stitch Pattern is stretchy and flexible, the socks can be made larger or smaller by going up or down a needle size and increasing or decreasing the length from back of heel to beginning of toe decreases.

Materials

Yarn - About 350-400 yards (320-366m) fingering-weight sock yarn (the exact amount needed depends on your sock size). I used a little less than 1 skein (350yd [320m]/100g) Sundara Yarns Somewhat Solid Sock Yarn (hand-dyed superwash two-ply Merino wool). **Needle** - Set of 5 double-pointed needles, US 1 (2.25mm), or size needed to obtain gauge. **Notions** -Stitch marker to mark beginning of round (optional), tapestry needle. **Gauge** - 32 sts = 4 inches (10cm) in stockinette stitch. A note about yarns: This pattern will work well with any hand-dyed yarn that has a subtle color scheme that's either semisolid or only discretely contrasting. Yarns that have been dyed a more dramatic combination of colors may obscure the stitch motif.

Terms Explained

SI1: Slip 1 stitch as if to purl unless otherwise indicated.

K2tog: Knit 2 stitches together as a single stitch.

P2tog: Purl 2 stitches together as a single stitch.

SSK: Slip 2 stitches knitwise, one at a time, from left to right needle. Insert left needle into the front of the 2 slipped stitches and with right needle knit together through back loops.

Ribbed Stitch Pattern (multiple of 6 stitches)

Rounds 1 and 2: *K2, P1, K1, P2, repeat from * to end of round.

Rounds 3 and 4: *K1, P1, K2, P2, repeat from * to end of round.

Pattern

Beginning at the cuff, loosely cast on 66 stitches, using a long-tail cast-on or your preferred method. I use a spare needle that is larger than my working needles for my cast-on row.

Divide the stitches as evenly as possible onto 4 needles. Join into a round, being careful not to twist the cast on row. Place a marker to indicate the beginning of the round.

Cuff

Round 1: *K4, P2, repeat from * to end of round. Repeat this round for 1¼" (3cm, or approximately 12 rounds).

Leg

Begin the Ribbed Stitch Pattern. Work until cuff and leg measure a total of 6½" (16cm), or until desired length from the cuff to the beginning of the heel flap, ending with Round 4.

Heel Flap

To center the Ribbed Stitch Pattern over the heel, work as follows:

Work 30 stitches in Round 1 of the Ribbed Stitch Pattern, ending with P2.

Turn, and work 32 stitches back and forth as follows:

Note: The numbers assigned to the pattern rows for the heel are not the same as for

5

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working in the round.

Row 1 (wrong side): Sl1, P5, (K2, P1, K1, P2) 3 times, K2, P6.

Place remaining 34 sts on 2 needles to rest while heel flap is completed.

Row 2 (right side): Sl1, K5, (P2, K1, P1, K2) 3 times, P2, K6.

Row 3: Sl1, P5, (K2, P2, K1, P1) 3 times, K2, P6.

Row 4: Sl1, K5, (P2, K2, P1, K1) 3 times, P2, K6.

Repeat these 4 rows a total of 8 times (32 rows), ending with Row 4.

Turn Heel

Note: Unlike many other sock patterns, the heel on this sock begins on a wrong-side row and ends on a right-side row. This creates a smoother transition between the heel and where the stitches are picked up along the side of the heel flap. If you need a little extra reassurance during this step, you may want to read the Turn Heel section of the [basic sock tutorial](#) first.

Row 1 (wrong side): Sl1, P16, P2tog, P1, turn.

Row 2 (right side): Sl1, K3, SSK, K1, turn.

Row 3: Sl1, P to within 1 stitch of the gap, P2tog (1 st before, 1 st after gap), P1, turn.

Row 4: Sl1, K to within 1 stitch of the gap, SSK, K1, turn.

Repeat rows 3 and 4 until all stitches are worked, ending with the final SSK, K1 on a right-side row. 18 stitches remain.

You'll now begin to shape the gussets and knit around the sock again. For the time being, stitches will be distributed as follows:

Needle 1: Heel stitches and stitches to be picked up on first side of heel flap.

Needles 2 and 3: Instep stitches (worked in Ribbed Stitch Pattern).

Needle 4: Stitches to be picked up on second side of heel flap.

Shape Gussets

With Needle 1 (which holds all 18 heel stitches at the moment) pick up and knit 16 stitches along the side of the heel flap.

To eliminate the gap that forms as you turn the corner, pick up two stitches in the space between the gusset and the instep (one from each side of the gap). These will be decreased on the next round.

Resume working in the Ribbed Stitch Pattern (beginning with Round 1) across Needles 2 and 3.

With Needle 4 (empty at the moment) pick up 2 stitches between the instep and the gusset as you did at the end of Needle 1, and then pick up 16 stitches along the side of the heel flap. Knit 9 stitches (half the heel) from Needle 1. The round now begins at the center of the heel.

Stitches will now be distributed as follows:

Needle 1: (Beginning of round) ½ heel, gusset, 2 extra stitches (27 stitches).

Needles 2 and 3: Instep (34 stitches).

Needle 4: 2 extra stitches, gusset, ½ heel (27 stitches).

Total: 88 stitches.

Round 1: On needle 1, K across to last 2 stitches, K2tog; on Needles 2 and 3, continue instep in Ribbed Stitch Pattern; on Needle 4, SSK, K to end.

Round 2: On needle 1, K to last 3 stitches, K2tog, K1; on needles 2 and 3, continue instep in Ribbed Stitch Pattern; on needle 4, K1, SSK, K to end.

Round 3: On needle 1, K; on needles 2 and 3, continue instep in Ribbed Stitch Pattern; on needle 4, K to end.

Repeat Rounds 2 and 3 until 64 stitches remain (30 stitches in stockinette stitch on bottom of foot, 34 stitches in Ribbed Stitch Pattern on instep).

Foot

Continue working in stockinette stitch on Needles 1 and 4 and in Ribbed Stitch Pattern on Needles 2 and 3 until the sock measures about 7½ inches (19cm), or 2 inches (5cm) shorter than desired foot length. End with Row 2 or 4 of the Ribbed Stitch Pattern.

Round Toe

For remainder of sock, knit all stitches.

Decrease Round 1: *K6, K2tog* repeat from * to * around (56 stitches).

Knit 5 rounds.

Decrease Round 2: *K5, K2tog* repeat from * to * around (48 stitches).

Knit 4 rounds.

Decrease Round 3: *K4, K2tog* repeat from * to * around (40 stitches).

Knit 3 rounds.

Decrease Round 4: *K3, K2tog* repeat from * to * around (32 stitches).

Knit 2 rounds.

Decrease Round 5: *K2, K2tog* repeat from * to * around (24 stitches).

Knit 1 round.

Decrease Round 6: *K1, K2tog* repeat from * to * around (16 stitches).

Decrease Round 7: K2tog around (8 stitches).

Finishing

Cut yarn, thread tail through the remaining stitches, and secure. Weave in all ends.



About the Designer

Jane Cochran knits, spins, and runs a bookstore on the East End of Long Island, New York. A long-time knitter, she learned to knit socks in 2002, after discovering Knitters Review and the KR Forums. She hasn't stopped since, and insists that having at least four pairs on the needles at all times is completely sane. Jane blogs at [Not Plain Jane](#).