The Treesweater

Note: if you are making a treesweater for a public tree, I recommend that you make the seams VERY sturdy. When people encounter the treesweater, their first reaction is often to tug very hard on the sweater. You will want your seams to withstand this kind of treatment.

First, find a good tree, then find a good branch on the tree. Ideally, the sweater will sit at eye level, and will have only one "arm." (The topography of knitting a sweater for more than one branch is tricky, although not insurmountable.) Measure:

1. The circumference of the tree
2. Circumference of the branch
3. Distance between the top of the branch (the "shoulder") and the next branch up, and the distance between the bottom of the branch (the "armpit") and the next branch down. These numbers let you know how much room you have to work with at top and bottom.

This pattern is sized for a tree that is 7 inches in circumference, with a 2 inch branch, and has at least 4 inches between the "arm" branch and the next one up. If the configuration of the arm branch is such that you won't be able to pull the sleeve over it, follow the variant instructions in italics. The pictures reference the standard version - in the variant, the slit for the arm basically goes all the way down.

GAUGE

4 stitches x 6 inches = 1 x 1 inches on US 8/5mm needles

DIRECTIONS

BODY

1. CO 26 and work 4 rows in k2p2 rib. *CO 13 and work 4 rows in k2p2 rib.*

2. Increase 6 stitches across the row (*k2, kfb* 6 times). (32 stitches). *Increase 3 stitches across the row (*k2, kfb 3 times*)*

3. Knit for 2 more inches (total 3 inches).

4. Divide the stitches in half, by putting 16 on a stitch holder (or spare DPN). Knit 6 rows on each half, then rejoin by putting all the stitches on one needle, and knitting all across. You should end up with a slit an inch and a half high. *Repeat rows 1 through 3 to make a second section, then put all the stitches on one needle and knit across.*

5. After knitting across, start your collar. For the pictured treesweater, I switched to reverse stockinette for 4 rows, to make a mock turtleneck. You can also work the collar in garter stitch, k2p2 ribbing, or the collar of your choice.

SLEEVE

1. CO 12 and knit 6 rows (or the desired length of sleeve).
2. Seam the length of the sleeve, then attach it to the slit. *Do not seam the sleeve, but attach it to the top of the slit.*

Last updated: 2/19/09

ATTACHING THE TREESWEATER

1. Slip the sleeve over the branch, and stitch a mattress sleeve up the side. *Seam the sleeve, too.*

Here the treesweater is being modeled by a plastic knife taped to a water bottle.

Take lots of pictures, and share them with the world!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Erika Barcott is a Pacific Northwest knitter and blogger. She lives near Deception Pass in Washington State; her blog lives at http://redshirtknitting.com. Erika urges you to follow your whims, no matter how silly, because you never know which one will make you Internet Famous.

Pattern questions or comments? Email Erika: mechagrue@gmail.com