

Beaded
rope

A crocheted necklace complements a hand-carved bead

by Sylvia Sur

I started beading in 1994, after buying a book called *Beads* by Janet Coles and Robert Budwig in a lovely bookstore in Moab, Utah. Then, for my birthday, a friend gave me *The New Beadwork* by Kathlyn Moss and Alice Scherer. I was hooked.

For most of my life, I have been designing and making my clothes. I am very visual, and getting the colors right is possibly the slowest but most rewarding step when I work. If I get stuck or don't like my first ideas, using a color wheel often helps. I refer to textiles and paintings for really striking, unexpected color combinations, then memorize and look for these colors when bead shopping.

My projects often start with a favorite focal bead, such as the iguana in the necklace at far left. Then I search through my stash or shop for the right beads to use with it. The carved, tagua nut iguana is organic in style, so I looked for large beads in rainforest greens to balance the size of the carving. Three-sided oval beads work up looking like paved stone or a reptile's scales, which struck me as right for this design.

stepbystep

Starting a crocheted rope can be frustrating if you don't have a knowledgeable companion nearby, so I'm offering an easy, ladder-stitch alternative. If you're comfortable with bead crochet, however, begin this necklace the traditional way.

crocheting the rope

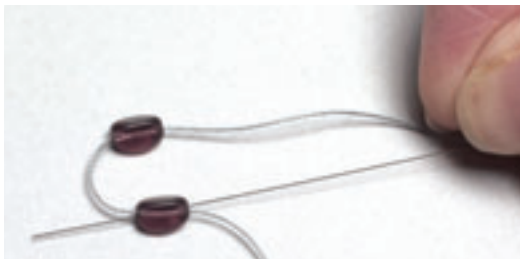
❶ Before you begin to crochet, transfer all the oval beads to upholstery thread. Tie the beads' temporary thread to the upholstery thread with a tight overhand knot (see "Basics," p. 146) and slide the beads across. Or, string the beads onto the upholstery thread using a Big-Eye needle.

❷ Replace the Big-Eye needle with a beading needle and work a 4-bead ladder, as follows: Slide 2 beads to about 12 in. (30cm) from the tail end. Stitch through the second bead, going into the hole where the spool end of thread is exiting (**photo a**). Repeat, adding a third and fourth bead to the ladder in the same way.

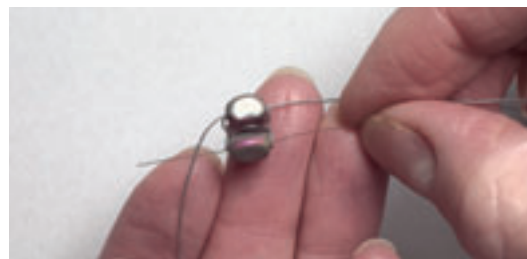
❸ To connect the ladder into a ring, tighten the thread so the beads are parallel and sew through the first bead (**photo b**). Sew back through the fourth bead. Make one more pass through these two beads, then remove the needle. Hold the ladder so the thread tail exits the bottom and the working thread is at the top.

❹ Insert the crochet hook under the thread at the top of the bead that's closest to the working thread. Catch the working thread with the hook and bring it back under the bead's thread to form a loop (**photo c**). Working counter-clockwise, insert the hook under the thread at the top of the next bead. (Lefties, work clockwise.) Slide a bead against the loop (**photo d**). Make a single crochet stitch (**figures 1 and 2**).

❺ Continue to work counter-clockwise around the ladder, making a total of 4 bead single crochet stitches in this row. The new



a



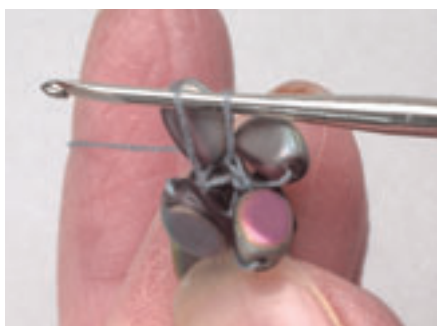
b



c



d



e



f



g

beads will appear crowded, and they'll sit horizontally across the vertical beads in the ladder.

6 Insert the hook between the bead and thread of the first bead added in the previous row. Push the bead to the right-hand side of the hook and pull up slightly on the hook (photo e). The



h

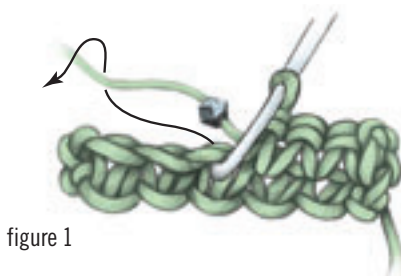


figure 1

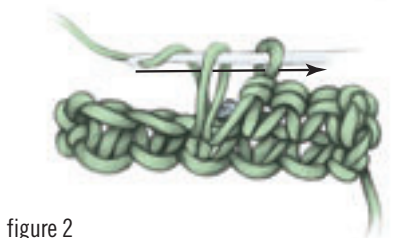


figure 2

bead, which was horizontal, will now stand up. Slide a new bead into place and make a single crochet. Repeat until your rope is the desired length. Keep the tension firm as you stitch and always bring down a bead before you make the first loop of each single crochet.

7 Finish the rope by working a ladder of 4 beads into the last row of single crochet, so this end of the necklace will match the start. Or, stitch a row of single crochet (no beads) after the last row of beads.

8 Cut the thread, leaving an 8-in. (20cm) tail. Knot the tail around the ladder threads or pull it through the last crochet loop to tie it off.

finishing the ends

You can either cover the end beads with bead caps and hide the thread in bullion wire or use bullion wire alone.

1 If you're using bead caps, string a cap on each thread tail and slide it into place over the end beads.

2 Cut a 1/2-in. (1.3cm) piece of bullion wire. Thread a needle onto one of the tails and go through the bullion (photo

f). Avoid snagging the bullion as you slide it over the needle and thread and down to the rope.

3 String half the clasp. Go back through the bead cap (if applicable) and into another bead in the end row. Pull the thread until the bullion nearly buckles to make a strong, neat loop around the clasp (photo g). Secure the thread in the beadwork. Repeat on the other end of the rope.

4 Another way to finish the ends is to complete the bullion loop without stringing the clasp. Attach a jump ring and clasp after the loop is finished.

stringing the centerpiece bead

1 Decide how you want to hang the focal bead. Tagua nut beads have openings in several places, which gives you a few options about position.

2 Working with about 1 yd. (.9m) of Nymo, secure it in the beadwork near the necklace's center. Maneuver through beads and inside the rope, but don't allow any additional thread to show. Exit any bead near the center.

3 String 6-8 seed beads and go through the tagua bead. Check the tagua's placement and string another short run of beads. Go through a bead on the necklace rope. String more seed beads and repeat as necessary to support your focal bead (photo h).

4 Create decorative tendrils along the crochet rope by stringing a few seed beads and sewing through a rope bead. Repeat randomly on both sides of the tagua bead. Secure the thread in the beadwork and trim the tail. •

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materials

- Carved tagua nut bead (Red Horse Ranch, 949-831-1316)
- 300 6mm Oval 3-sided Czech beads
- 5g Seed beads, size 10^o or 11^o
- Clasp
- 2 Bead caps (optional)
- Bullion wire, medium diameter
- Big-Eye needle
- Beading needles, #10 or 11
- Coats nylon upholstery thread
- Nymo D beading thread
- Crochet hook, size 8-12