Going Round in Circles

Many of us feel we are going round in circles as Christmas approaches, hence the name for these little trees – thank-you Pat for thinking of it.

The trees are made out of simple crochet circles stacked on top of each other; there is very little sewing involved and they can be made in any size and with any sort of yarn, although it is best to work to quite a tight tension.

This pattern uses British crochet terms: htr = US hdc
dc   = US sc

First I shall show you how to make a rainbow tree and then explain how to vary this basic pattern.

Rainbow Tree

This tree stands about 12 cm / 5" tall and is 10 cm / 4" wide at the base. I crocheted it with double knitting weight yarn and a 4 mm hook. I shall give you the details of the yarns I used for this one but you can substitute any yarn of your choice and just choose a hook size that gives you a firm fabric.

The green and all the colours but one are Cygnet Superwash Pure Merino DK (104 m / 50g) in the shades listed below. The blue is Stylecraft Special DK (295 m / 100g). You will need about 60g of yarn in all.

2156	Bluebell
2999	Blueberry
Stylecraft Special, Aster	
2817	Everglade
2155	Gold
4888	Copper
298	Cranberry
2150	Tartan Green

First make the outer circles, the green ones in the picture. These are simple circles, each having one more round than the circle above it. Begin with the biggest circle.

Work 4ch and join with a slip stitch to make a ring.

Round 1: 2ch, 7 htr into ring, join with ss to top of 2ch (8 sts).
Round 2: 2ch, htr in same place, (2htr in next st) 7 times, join with ss to top of 2ch (16 sts).
Round 3: 2ch, 2htr in next st, (htr, 2htr in next st) 7 times, join with ss to top of 2ch (24 sts).

Round 4: 2ch, htr, 2htr in next st, (2htr, 2htr in next st) 7 times, join with ss to top of 2ch (32 sts).

Round 5: 2ch, 2htr, 2htr in next st, (3htr, 2htr in next st) 7 times, join with ss to top of 2ch (40 sts).

Round 6: 2ch, 3htr, 2htr in next st, (4htr, 2htr in next st) 7 times, join with ss to top of 2ch (48 sts).

Round 7: 2ch, 4htr, 2htr in next st, (5htr, 2htr in next st) 7 times, join with ss to top of 2ch (56 sts).

Round 8: 2ch, 5htr, 2htr in next st, (6htr, 2htr in next st) 7 times, join with ss to top of 2ch (64 sts).

You are increasing eight stitches on every round. The result will actually be an octagon rather than a perfect circle as the increases are piled on top of each other but the pattern is simpler this way and I don't think the irregularity matters here.

You will notice that my circle is not completely flat but curves up at the edge.
This is the result of working to a tight tension and is deliberate. If your circle lies flat, try again with a smaller hook.

For the rainbow tree you will need eight green circles all together. For the first one work one round of the pattern above, for the second work two rounds and so on.

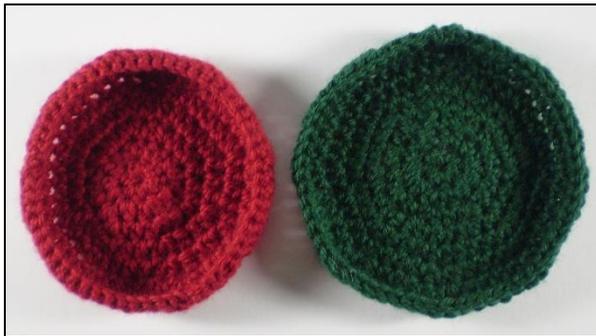You should end up with a set of eight circles that fit inside each other.

Now for the inner circles, each one worked in a different colour. For these, follow the pattern for the outer circles, making each circle the size of the green outer circle above it in the tree. Then work a final round in double crochet (US single crochet) without any shaping. This will pull up the edges of the circle more tightly than for the outer circles.

So, make seven inner circles in the following colours:

Red   Work Rounds 1 – 7 and then one round in dc (56 sts).
Orange   Work Rounds 1 – 6 and then one round in dc (48 sts).
Yellow   Work Rounds 1 – 5 and then one round in dc (40 sts).
Green   Work Rounds 1 – 4 and then one round in dc (32 sts).
Blue   Work Rounds 1 – 3 and then one round in dc (24 sts).
Indigo   Work Rounds 1 & 2 and then one round in dc (16sts).
Violet   Work Round 1 and then one round in dc (8 sts).

The curled edge on these circles gives them a bit of height when they are turned upside down to fit in the outer circle.

Again, the circles will nest inside each other.

Don't they look good?

Here are the two sets of circles, put together in pairs. The smallest green circle doesn't have an inner circle. There is no need to sew the inner circles to the outer ones but you can if you want to. When you have finished arranging the circles and playing with them it's time to assemble the tree.

This is really simple. Using the green yarn, thread up through the centre of each pair of circles in turn, beginning with the largest and ending with the smallest. Then take the needle through a button and back down through the centre of the circles to the bottom. Now you can adjust the tension by pulling on your needle and the button until the tree is fairly firm. Then fasten off the yarn at the bottom of the tree. I added a button here, I know it won't be visible but I thought it was rather nice and, anyway, I know it's there.

You can leave out either or both buttons if you want to.

Other Trees

You can make these trees with as many or as few circles as you please. Experiment with different colours and look for special beads for the top. I found little wooden stars and coloured bells for some of mine. You can even add decorations to your tree as I did with my green one, sewing on coloured glass beads.

You can also try using different weight yarns

I made a tiny tree (5 cm / 2" tall) using laceweight yarn and a 1.5 mm hook which would be the right size for a hanging decoration.

I also experimented with using double crochet for the circles rather than half trebles. This gives a narrower tree that is about the same height as the original one. If you want to try this, you will need to increase six times on each round.

Work 4ch and join with a slip stitch to make a ring.

Round 1:   1ch, 5dc into ring, join with ss to 1ch (6 sts).
Round 2:   1ch, dc in same place, (2dc in next st) 5 times, join with ss to 1ch (12 sts).
Round 3:   1ch, 2dc in next st, (dc, 2dc in next st) 5 times, join with ss to 1ch (18 sts).
Round 4:   1ch, dc, 2dc in next st, (2dc, 2dc in next st) 5 times, join with ss to 1ch (24 sts).
Round 5:   1ch, 2dc, 2dc in next st, (3dc, 2dc in next st) 5 times, join with ss to 1ch (30 sts).
Round 6:   1ch, 3dc, 2dc in next st, (4dc, 2dc in next st) 5 times, join with ss to 1ch (36 sts).
Round 7:   1ch, 4dc, 2dc in next st, (5dc, 2dc in next st) 5 times, join with ss to 1ch (42 sts).
Round 8:   1ch, 5dc, 2dc in next st, (6dc, 2dc in next st) 5 times, join with ss to 1ch (48 sts).

For the inner circles, instead of working a last round in double crochet, slip stitch all round instead.

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<u>Abbreviations</u>

ch   chain
ss   slip stitch
st / sts   stitch / stitches
htr   half treble (US half double crochet)
dc   double crochet (US single crochet)