

Orange is most likely not to be pieced into a quilt. Or so the story goes.

Quilters tend to favor cooler colors like blues, greens, and teal. Warm colors, browns, yellows, and some oranges, such as burnt orange are selected, though. Strait up and down Orange is left to the fruit growers.

Another exception is orange in nature. The Monarch Butterfly is dressed in magnificent orange highlighted by the black outline and a dot or two of white. As winter approaches Monarchs in United States and Canada breed and then as if they hear a high note all get up one morning, stretch, yawn, whisper audios and set sail to the forests in Central Mexico. It is a grand display of marking the beginning of winter. Thousands of orange pin dots in a blue-sky background wing it to a warmer climate. Each land on a branch of the Oyamel tree. They move in close to each other huddling for warmth as they blend in with the trees around them. There they rest for six or eight months after a 2,500-to-3,000-mile journey resting every 100 miles a day or so when they find their food source of milkweed.

When Springtime blooms so too do the offspring. Each caterpillar fortified by milkweed blossoms and continues the hibernation journey of their parent. On cue the now bright new orange butterflies find the way back to the U.S. or to Canada.

Orange is their color. Each butterfly wears their grown-up togs proudly. Their migration story is a quilt in the making.

"The challenge of this quilt," says the quilter, "is to use the color Orange in the piece." The listening crowd groans. "I know," adds the quilter giving instructions 15 years ago, "Orange is not the color of choice. That is the challenge, though. Have fun with it."

Years ago, when our quilt guild was in its toddler years members began a challenge to stretch the ability to create. The annual challenge still exists as a popular creative challenge activity. Although selecting the color of orange to use in a quilt remains an iffy color choice.

Guild Show 'n Tell quilts are dressed up in all colors from fabric choices. A little orange in quilts is often displayed. Those are blended well with other color choices. Like the Monarch Butterflies which are now on the extinct list, the color Orange could be classified the same. We may want to use it in our creative endeavors; however, we hold back. Orange is a color that may be bold enough to stand out and take over the overall look of a design.

Afterall, who wants to eat orange Jell-O, orange popsicles, or drink orange soda pop?

"Here," says my dad to the four of us sitting in the car. "I brought you each an orange pop." I curled my lips and scrunched up my nose at the color and the taste to come. (I drank it on the previous 'weed-picking' parties.) "Can I have root beer instead?" I ask. "Not this time," he answers... That day began my revulsion to the color of orange. That is my story.

Lana Russ