

Materials; - Seed Beads / Rocailles

Seed beads, also known as Rocailles, or sometimes Trade beads, are a category of small glass bead - that have a particularly large hole in proportion to the bead size. This larger hole size makes them particularly suitable for stitched beadwork and bead embroidery, as it allows for a needle and thread to pass through several times, which would generally be impossible on regular beads or gemstones this size. These beads are used in traditional beadwork around the world and are currently used for bead weaving on a loon, or with a needle, for bead embroidery and soutache, for making wired bead flowers as well as in regular bead stringing and other uses..



Round Seed Beads

The original and most common shape and the standard type of seed bead. These beads are not quite round - more like donuts - making them look oval from the side, so that when they stack (or are stitched) together they look like pebbles.

Seed beads come in a range of sizes, usually found between size 15/0 and 3/0 - 15s are the smallest at around 1.5mm, size 11 are the most commonly used and the 'regular' size at around 2mm. Size 11 being the most regularly used is also available in the widest range of colours and finishes.

Seed Bead Sizes

15/0	= approx 1.5mm
12/0	= approx 2mm
11/0	= approx 2.2mm
10/0	= approx 2.4mm
9/0	= approx 2.6mm
8/0	= approx 3mm
7/0	= approx 3.5mm
6/0	= approx 4mm
3/0	= approx 5.5mm

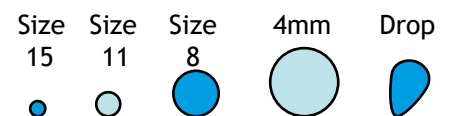
Cylinder Beads

Much more uniform and with much straighter sides than standard seed beads - cylinder beads are like a little tube, rather than a donut shape. These create a much flatter, smoother surface when stitched together - more like a smooth brick wall, than the cobbled street look of regular seeds - great for creating uniform flat panels of beading, for example making peyote stitch ribbons / bracelets, geometric beadwork and for forms such as boxes that need to be regular. The most common cylinder beads are **Delicas**, made by Miyuki, but there are also Treasures and Aiko made by Toho, and others. These come as standard in size 11, but you can also find different sizes.

Bugle Beads

Bugle beads are in the same family as seed beads and cylinder beads, but are long tubes, rather than a short round bead. They come in varying lengths ranging from approx 2-9mm in length, and you can also get twisted bugles, which give a sparkling effect where the light catches them.

All bugle beads have approximately the same diameter and hole size. Bugles can have sharp edges due to the way they are made, so be extra careful when stitching with them so they don't cut your thread. When you're buying them make sure of whether any numbers are the traditional bugle sizing or the mm length.



Bugle Bead Sizes:

1/2	= approx 2mm
1	= approx 3mm
1 1/2	= approx 4.5mm
2	= approx 6mm
3	= approx 9mm long

Charlottes

These are primarily (but not always) Czech made seed beads - they have a single facet cut on one side to add extra sparkle. Often found used in vintage European beadwork. These can often come up a little smaller than regular sizes.



Shaped Beads

You can also find seed beads in other shapes - designed to add different textures into your beadwork - Hex beads have facets cut into the sides to add sparkle, Cube beads come in a couple of different sizes and create a perfectly flat surface if used together, great for very flat or geometric work or to create alternative textures in flat or 3D works. Triangle and Hex beads give a bumpy look depending how the corners line up.



Drops / Magatamas

Several of the seed bead companies make drop shaped beads - small drops that are teardrop or oval shaped and have a hole across the top. There are also Magatamas made by Miyuki that are less rounded and appear an angled slice. Czech drop beads include Rizo and Pip beads.



These are great for adding texture or embellishments to a piece of beadwork.

Brands

Seed beads, generally, are produced in the Czech Republic, in Japan and in China. The Japanese brands **Toho** and **Miyuki** are the best quality, with the most uniform size and shape, which can be important for a lot of beadwork. These do come at a premium price however, so for example, if you're doing embroidery or free form work and know you won't need that uniformity, then Matsuno (Japanese) or the Czech made and unbranded Chinese beads are fine.

Different brands can also be slightly differently sized - like clothes or anything else. Again, this can make a surprising difference when following some patterns, or doing certain types of stitch where precision and uniformity are key, so it is important to know what you're working with and in most cases use just one brand within one project. If you are following a pattern and the designer specifies a bead brand, try and use that brand. If it doesn't matter, they won't specify a brand, just a size.

If you are a beginner, unless you're following a pattern that gives specifics, I would suggest choosing either Toho or Miyuki and sticking with them for now. For stitched beadwork, cheaper, especially unbranded seed beads are usually a false economy as you'll either need to spend hours picking out the most regular beads to use, or end up with mis-shapen beadwork, which really doesn't help when you're learning and just getting used to patterns!



TOHO BEADS®



Traditional Czech Beads