String mesh shopping bag

EASY ◼◼◻◻ **4 MEDIUM**

Needle size: 7 or 8 double-pointed or 18 -24" circular needle
Gauge is not critical in this pattern.

Yarn: About 200-250 yards DK or worsted weight cotton, linen or micro-fiber yarn. It's important to use a yarn that is strong and does not stretch or break easily. I have used Ty Dy and 2nd Time Cotton from Knit One Crochet Too, Picoboo from Frog Tree yarns, and Mirto from Filatura di Crosa.

Create bag base.
Cast on 40 stitches.
Row 1: Slip 1 (slide the stitch from left needle to right needle as if to purl), knit 39 stitches (the slipped edge stitch makes it easier to pick up stitches when you create the circle). Repeat for 12 rows (6 garter stitch ridges).

Establish bag sides.
This may be easier using double-pointed needles.
Pick up 8 stitches along first short end of base. Use the loops in the slip stitch edges.
Pick up 40 stitches along cast-on long side of base.
Pick up 8 stitches along second short end of base. 96 stitches total.

Increase row.
Place marker.
K 2, M1 (knit into the front and back of the stitch to create 2 stitcches), K2, M1, then K4, M1 around the row. 118 stitches.

Mesh pattern.
Set-up row: Slip marker. Wrap yarn around needle twice, P2 together. Repeat to end of row.
Row 2: Slip marker. Wrap yarn around needle twice, P 2 together (purled stitch plus first wrap from previous row), slip 2nd wrap off needle. Repeat to end of row.

Repeat row 2 until you have 35 to 40 rows of mesh stitch. The bag should now be 10 or 11 inches in length.

Top band
Row 1: Slip marker. Knit all stitches to end.
Row 2 (decrease row): Slip marker. K3, K2 together. Repeat across row. 119 stitches.
Row 3: Slip marker. Knit all stitches across row. Repeat row 3 for 10 rows.
Bind off VERY loosely (I find it helpful to use a needle 2 or 3 sizes larger for binding off).

Straps
Make 2.
Cast on 8 stitches. Work in stockinette stitch for 7 or 8 inches.

Position and attach straps about halfway down the wrong side of the stockinette band. Use a grafting stitch to attach.