

## *About Seed-Beads:*

Seed Beads can be made of many different materials, but glass is the most popular. When purchasing beads, you may notice different sizes, shapes, finishes, manufacturers, and price points. This can be confusing when starting out, and we are often tempted to purchase the least expensive option and hoard as many different colors as we can. **NOT ALL BEADS ARE CREATED EQUAL!**

Below, I will explain some seed bead differences and how it can effect your results. Depending on the type of project you are working on, various types of seed beads may help or hinder your progress. Spend wisely. It is easy to go overboard with seed beads, they are all so beautiful! Sometimes it is worth spending a little more for specific beads, and other times it is not. My advice is to buy what you need for a specific project at first - or if the designer offers a kit, go for that. You will build your stash with beads you will actually use, and have a better understanding of materials that work for the type of projects you want to make.

### **SHAPE:**

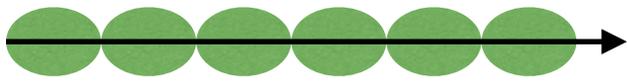
Seed beads come in a variety of shapes, square, triangle, round with square hole, 1/2 size (Demi round), O's, bugle, and more. The most popular shape is the **ROUND**, and **CYLINDER**.



ROUND	CYLINDER
Wider in the middle than at the ends	Same width from top to bottom
Used in all types of bead stitching	Typically used in Peyote and tight fitting designs
Referred to as Seed Beads, Rounds, etc.	Referred as Delica, Aiko, Treasure beads

## SIZE:

Sizes are shown as n/0 on bead packets. This roughly correlates to how many beads (n) per inch. The higher the n, the smaller the bead (because you can fit more of them into an inch thread). The most popular size seed bead (outside of cylinder) is the 11/0.



*When learning a new stitch, I recommend using a larger bead (usually the 8/0) because they are easier to see and hold.*

Once you have the hang of it, the 11/0 beads are great to make a majority of your projects and the smaller the bead, usually the more detailed and intricate you can get.

## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION:

This is where you will notice the most difference in price, quality, and what seed beads work best for you. The two most popular types of seed beads are Czech and Japanese, and there are benefits and detriments to both.



Czech	Japanese
Size and shape varies greatly among beads	Shape is very regular with few odd-balls
Generally less expensive per gram	Generally more expensive per gram
Usually many vibrant and durable color options	Colors and finish may be little more delicate
Easy to find at local craft shops	Limited supply at local craft stores, usually need a bead specialty shop to get better selection
Good for practicing and less tightly woven pieces	Better for intricate shapes or designs
Generally very durable and have large holes	May have smaller holes and thinner walls (less thread passes)

While Czech seed beads may not work in every project, Czech glass beads, fire polish, multi-hole, and shaped beads are very popular well known for quality, color, and durability.

The two most popular Japanese seed bead brands are **TOHO** and **Miyuki**. Some patterns may specify or recommend one over the other because TOHO beads tend to be ever-so-slightly bigger. If the pattern calls for Miyuki, and you are using TOHO, small adjustments may need to be made along the way to account for this general size

difference. Miyuki may have a billion color and finish options, but TOHO is generally more accurate sizing and higher finish durability. If your project calls for many colors of seed beads, you may want to select colors in ONE brand to make the pattern work out more favorably without too many adjustments.

## **BEAD FINISHES:**

As if color wasn't heard enough to pick sometimes, the number of finishes will make your head-spin! Remember too, if your bead is translucent (you can see through it) the color of your thread will also effect the bead color showing in your finished project!

Here are some of the most popular terms for seed bead finishes:

**AB:** Aurora Borealis - This is a highly reflective, somewhat metallic, holographic coating on all or part of the beads that make them very shiny and flash a lot of color.

**Ceylon/Opal/Pearl:** These coatings give the bead a pearly surface look (creamy shine) or a cloudy milky look to make the color more soft.

**Color-Lined/Silver Lined:** The outer bead color is translucent, but the inner core is either lined with silver (giving a metallic flash) or another color. This can give a dimensional effect and also add interesting variation to your project.

**Galvanized/Permafinish:** This is a coating usually on metallic or metal beads to help secure the coating to the bead and enhance durability and longevity.

**Luster:** This is a clear coating that flashes white along the bead surface often making it look super polished and maybe even wet.

**Matte:** Makes the bead surface more soft looking and less light reflective.

**Rainbow:** A thin clear coating that shows multiple colors OVER the original bead color

***Remember:*** No bead finish is absolutely perfect. When working with (and wearing) beads, have clean dry skin. Some people sweat a lot or have more acidity to their skin and it can eat the finish off even the most expensive beads. Use of hair spray, lotion, or perfume can also effect bead finish. Make sure all cosmetic items are dry before putting on your beads, hands are dry and clean of lotions when stitching, and do not shower, bathe, or swim with beads on. Not only will this effect the finish, but can rot your stringing material, and cause mold to grow inside the beads too! YUCK!