

# What to Expect From a Digital Crop

By Katie Mann

It seems like announcements for digital crops are everywhere you turn lately. Every site with a chat room or access to one holds crops, and designers are continually trying to find new ways to entice you to attend their crop, especially when there are multiple crops being held at the same time.

Just as their art differs, so do the crops that are offered and designers are always looking for a new twist. There are crop kits that are made up of pieces of a designer's regular kit, crop kits that were created specifically for the crop, and still others do inspiration crops or theme crops.

There are a few basic types of crops, and before you choose one, you'd probably like to know what the choices are.

**Pay for Play** – You buy a crop kit at a reduced price, and you can either choose to attend the actual chat portion of the crop or not. Your choice, after all you already have the kit. Many designers will give a freebie after one of these crops, usually in return for you posting a layout to the site gallery.

**Free Crops** – You can preview the kit, download the kit, but you can't play with the kit unless you attend the crop. These kits are password protected, and the password is given out during the crop to ensure that you attend. Sometimes there are additional freebies and sometimes there aren't. It depends on the designer and her time constraints.

**Inspiration Crops** – The designer gives you an inspiration item, such as a quote, piece of artwork, or even a type of element and you get to create a layout based on that inspiration.

Let's get down to the nitty-gritty. What exactly does one DO at a digital crop? Well, this depends on the designer and the attendees. Some scrappers go to the crop, say hi, grab the password, and then go off to crop and you won't hear another word until they post the link to their layout. Others come to the crop, stay and chat, and crop later. Still others somehow manage to do both. It's entirely up to you.

Most designers who are offering freebies or other enticements for a posted layout will give you a deadline, the URL to the gallery, and will PM or e-mail you the freebie link after the crop. If you don't get any of this, then be sure to ask. Sometimes a designer gets so caught up in the conversation that they don't realize that someone hasn't gotten all of the information.

If you've been putting off attending a crop, don't be afraid. Just grab the kit, and join in the fun. If nothing else, you'll have a new kit and probably at least one

more layout done. And... if you don't mind terribly... would you please come to one of my crops?