Humbug Bag

I love large totes, but finding stuff, particularly small stuff, in a large tote can be a bit of a challenge. This humbug bag is a great solution for keeping small, similar or related items together. One or more humbug bags might be corralled in a large tote. The natural-but-strange three-dimensional shape of a humbug bag is the result of the end seams being twisted 90 degrees. A full humbug bag has no parallel sides. A humbug bag does not lay flat without wrinkling somewhere – these qualities make a humbug bag easier to single out from other items in the dark unknown of a large tote, or whatever name you want to give to an enclosing structure that you may or may not attempt to carry, but if you do attempt to carry, the distance will likely turn out to be much farther than you thought it would be, and the tote much heavier than you ever thought it could be.

The bag can be made almost any size that fits your needs. You might find some scraps of fabric just too wonderful to toss are large enough for a bag – killer solution, solves two problems with one project.

I’m using oilcloth and a basic sewing machine for this blog project. This is quite a change for me as I usually use quilted or upholstery fabric and sew bags like this on a serger. Oilcloth is not as easy to turn inside out as ‘regular’ fabric, and a serger sometimes combines two or more operations into a single operation. There is no ‘step skipping’ here – miss a step or commit a misstep and you may not get the correct results.

**Supplies:**
Rectangle of material - Oilcloth or heavy fabric. Short side of rectangle must be about 1 inch longer than the desired finished opening. Long side of rectangle slightly longer than twice the desired length of one of the twisted end seams.
Zipper – nylon tooth zipper, at least 2 inches longer than the short side of the fabric rectangle.
Wonder Tape (optional)
Instructions:

1. Follow all the steps to create a wrong-side out, open-ended fabric tube, with a lengthwise zipper. With oilcloth or fabric right-side up, place the zipper face down, aligning the edge of zipper tape with the short edge of the fabric. Make sure the zipper extends equally past both long edges of the fabric.

2. If you are using oilcloth, you may find it helpful to use Wonder Tape to hold the zipper in place while sewing.
4. Align the remaining loose edge of the zipper tape, right-sides together, with the remaining short edge of oilcloth or fabric.
5. Sew zipper strip to fabric.
6. Working with the end where the zipper pull is located when the zipper is closed, fold oilcloth or fabric so the zipper is centered across the tube end. Pin end closed.
7. Open the zipper about half way so you will be able to turn the bag right-side out after sewing both tube ends closed.

8. Stitch across the only pinned end.
9. Flatten the open end 90 degrees from the sewn end and pin.
10. Stitch across the end.

11. Trim the excess zipper tape even with the edges of the bag.
12. Turn the bag right side out.