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## Prepare to Dye!

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# Prepare to Dye!

By Helen Penrose and Elizabeth Flynn

"I JUST haven't a thing to wear!" Modern Eve groans as she views the faded gowns of last season and sadly notes the thinness of her collegiate purse.

Nothing to wear . . . and yet . . .

Had you noticed Mother Nature joyously splashing color from her magic dye-pot and drenching the autumn days with yellow, red and bronze? She is trying to give us a bright idea. Why shall we not also annex a dye-pot, and change the somber or anemic color of those passe dresses, cushions and drapes into attractive hues which will brighten our rooms, wardrobes and dispositions?

The "P's" and "Q's" of home dyeing are easily learned and the process need take little time or expense. The commercial dyes on the market are put up in convenient form and are to be found in practically every hue, shade and tint, while new combinations may be made by mixing colors.

## Avoid Sick Colors

In selecting a new hue for a piece of material, consider the fabric's original color. Certain colors only, may be used in top-dyeing, since in the boiling process the new and old dyes may mix, giving a wholly undesirable shade. Grayed shades and tints will be the outcome if a dye is applied over its complement or near complement, as in the case of red upon green or blue upon orange.

When top dyeing one color over another, it is not always easy to judge the strength of the original color. The dye should therefore be added gradually, until the desired shade is secured. It is impossible to dye a piece of material a lighter color, unless discharge dye is used first, but one may obtain a brighter or darker value of the same color in fabrics which may need to be freshened.

One of the sad errors of the dye novice is that he centers all of his attention upon the color of the dye and none upon the fiber of the material to be dyed. The choice of the dye, the temperature and the method of handling are determined by whether the fiber is animal or vegetable in nature. Wool and silk may be used with a cotton dye, but it is difficult to make cotton or any vegetable fiber take a dye made for animal fibers. Some commercial dye companies offer one dye which can be used satisfactorily for all fibers, while others have different dyes for each different type of fiber. If any vegetable fibers are blended with the wool or silk, then an all-fabric dye must be used. However, if the cloth is unmixed, the fuller, richer colors are

usually obtained by choosing a dye adapted only to that material.

The equipment for dyeing is simple. A small tin or granite pan which holds over a quart of water may be used for dissolving the dye. A large vessel, such as the wash boiler or the baby's enamel bath, should be used to provide plenty of room for water and stirring. The vessel must not be of iron, aluminum or galvanized iron, as these metals may react with the dye and dull the color. Two smooth sticks are excellent for stirring and lifting the material.

Dyes should be dissolved according to the directions of the commercial dye used. It proves most convenient to dissolve an entire package of dye in a quart of water. The unused dye, which may then be kept bottled indefinitely, should, however, be boiled each time before using to make sure that all particles are completely dissolved.

When dyeing one shade over another to make a special shade or tint, dye a sample first to test the color of your dye bath. The material to be dyed should be cleaned, all heavy pleats, padding and hems taken out, and the material thoroughly dampened before immersing in the dye bath.

Pongee, tussah, rajah and Shaantung silks are made of raw fibers which have not been entirely degummed. This gum forms a resistance to animal fiber dyes and necessitates the use of cotton dyes on these materials. The amount of the dye to the pound should be doubled and the fabric boiled for a longer period of time.

Unbleached muslin, which contains natural wax of the cotton fiber and tiny motes not removed in the ginning process, may be prepared for dyeing by cleansing thoroughly and boiling for at least half an hour in clear water to which one-half ounce of washing soda for each pound of muslin has been added.

## This Ticklish Rayon

Rayon or artificial silk is of vegetable origin and may be distinguished by the burning test. Viscose rayon burns in a flash like cotton, leaving little ash; celanese curls back as it burns and forms a sticky ash which becomes very hard as it cools, and unweighted silk forms a beady ash which may be crumbled between the fingers. Viscose rayon dyes readily with dyes for cotton, linen or mixed goods. Celanese rayon cannot be dyed except after special treatment. To prepare celanese for the dye bath, cleanse and immerse in a special bath composed of one part of silicate soda (waterglass) and two parts water. Steep

the materials in this bath for one and a half hours, but do not boil. Rinse and proceed with the dyeing process.

After the dyeing of any material is complete, rinse until the water is clear, then squeeze the material and shake it to prevent the streaking that is apt to occur if it is hung while wet. Roll the shaken material in muslin, keeping folds of the muslin between each fold of the goods, and leave until dry enough to press. Most dyed materials should be pressed while damp.

After dyeing plush or velvet, shake out the moisture, but do not wring or squeeze the material. When nearly dry, draw the wrong side taut over the surface of an upturned, moderately hot iron.

## Dame Fashion Piques the Economist

Ross says that fashion is a series of recurring changes which nevertheless do not lead to progress. Economists deplore this vicious circle arrangement because of the great waste involved which is, of course, tremendous and is becoming more and more so with more rapidly shifting styles. Although fashion has no definite aim or goal, the changes nevertheless are of some value. This is measured in terms of an individual's increased happiness or well being. If everyone purchased or consumed only essentials in the most limited quantities, the world would be a dull place.

Changes in fashion may be economically wasteful and thus to be deplored, but they make life more interesting to one who follows their trend. A study of style sources renders present fashions all the more interesting, for in it we see both development and retrogression, and can trace specific styles through hundreds and even thousands of years of change. The art of costume designing is a fascinating and versatile one.

In spite of economists warning, fashion will doubtless continue its course of "rhythmic imitation and innovation". This constant change is full of interest and excitement, and while it may be a shallow pleasure, it is nevertheless, a real one to many. The recent and widely heralded change is both important and amusing, for with change in dress, women adopt different attitudes and almost new personalities. The influence of fashion changes on individuals would prove an intriguing study.

—Madelyn Murray.