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Trends

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TRENDS

by Ruth Anderson

Technical Journalism Sophomore

SPRING is all wrapped up in synthetics. Why? Because synthetic fibers can be produced under better control and to more precise specifications than natural fibers. Because textile creators can fit the fiber to the use with greater efficiency with synthetics.

These reasons and more explain why the new classes of textile fibers known as synthetics coming out of the laboratory are going immediately into commercial production. These versatile yarns are living up to their promise as the fibers of the future, available today!

Orlon

Orlon, a close sister to nylon, has become a wonder fabric in its own right. One of the things that appeals most about orlon is its warm, friendly feel whether wet or dry, in contrast to the cool, lifeless feel of nylon.

Orlon rainwear, umbrellas and awnings are becoming known for their durability and partly because they are almost as strong wet as dry. This strength when wet is the result of the small amount of water absorbed which leaves less chance for moisture to weaken the fibers. This property of strength when wet is particularly important in fabrics used out-of-doors.

One of the faults of orlon is that it does not dye easily. For this very reason that it is chemically inert, orlon is used many times to give a decorative pinstripe or design to fabrics made of other fibers. When the other fibers are dyed, orlon stays white through the process and so creates a woven-in design.

Vicara

Vicara, the fiber made from corn protein called zein, has been named the "fiber that blends" because usually it is found combined with other fibers such as cotton, nylon and acetate. It gives a sheen to gabardine and a warm feel to rayon that makes it a spring success.

Vicara is as soft and warm as wool, but it is cheaper. It can be found blended with both worsteds and wool knits. Some of its advantages over wool are that it has no bad odor when wet, does not shrink during dyeing and is elongated in laundering.

Invariably vicara is compared to cashmere since it has the same soft, warm, cuddling qualities which make it a luxury to wear.

If you inspect some of the summer suits now appearing on the store racks, you will discover that a fiber, dynel, is being used more and more. It, too, is

often used in blends with other fibers and contributes fluffiness, bulk, resilience and warmth.

Unlike orlon, dynel is easily dyed, so may be found on the market in a great variety of colors. It is moth proof, mildew proof, resistant to acids and alkalis, and is warm. One of its disadvantages is that it is very heat sensitive.

Dacron, one of the newest synthetics, is coming on the consumer market this spring in summer weight wool and will not wrinkle. Pleats in skirts and other details stay in permanently in this fabric and will come out only with heat and high pressure.

When found in blends, dacron adds its wrinkle-resistant and shape holding qualities to the other fiber. Thus blends require little or no ironing. However, they need complete cleanings in order to stay white since once they get dirty the grime is in the fibers, not on the outside.

When buying these new fabrics, you can depend on the labels attached to the garment or yard goods. Manufacturers are doing a good labeling job and give you good wear and care information. The directions are usually clear and thorough, and what is more important, completely dependable.

This spring highlights synthetics. Americans are becoming entirely wrapped up in synthetics—the fibers of the future available today.

Clothes made of new synthetics—vicara, orlon and dacron—modeled by Floramae Gates, Mary Kay Pitzer, Marilyn Purcell

