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Candle-Making

Jane Hammerly
Iowa State College

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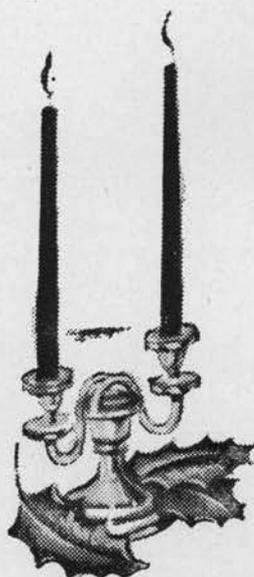
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Candle - Making

*a craftsman's art
that can be yours*



by Jane Hammerly

Technical Journalism Junior

The hand-dipped candles were used by Martin Luther on his Christmas tree. They represented the stars shining through the evergreens in the forest on Christmas Eve. This was the beginning of the Christmas trees and the electric Christmas tree lights we use now—and wouldn't be without during the holiday season.

Hand-dipped candles are made from broken or partially burned candles and braided candle wicking or string. You also need a can in which to dip your wick. The can size is determined by the length of candle you desire. An access to a source of heat such as a hot plate or stove is also necessary.

Dipped Candles

First you fill the can with water to within 4 inches of the top. Then place the can of water over the heat and add enough old candles to form about 3 inches of melted wax on the surface of the water. If you want to change the color, or add to it, add crayon or oil coloring to the melted wax and stir it in. The next step is to cut a piece of the candlewick 6 inches longer than the length of candle you want. This you tie over your finger when dipping your candle. It's also used to put over a nail when suspending the candle to cool.

Now you can begin the actual dipping. After each dipping hang the wick loop over a nail to cool. This is repeated until your candle reaches the proper size. The average candle takes 25 to 30 dippings. If the wax coating is very thin, the wax is too hot; thick uneven coating results when wax is too cool. If you want a mottled effect, you use the wax when it is cool so it goes on unevenly.

CANDLES TRADITIONALLY have been more than a source of light. They are the product of an age-old craft now becoming popular again.

We think of candles as synonymous with Christmas, but they were in general use even before Christmas was originated. Candles were used at the time of the Saturnalia to light the young pine tree which sprang up as the Thunder Oak fell. Candles were used for many symbolic purposes after Christ's birth, when the mid-winter became a time of celebration.

Popular Craft

Through the years candles have been in demand for their practical, inexpensive and creative beauty. They have been made principally by craftsmen trained in the art. Lately it has become a popular craft, and many people have made candles for their tables and windows which would rival the ancient craftsman's work.

The kind of candles you make is up to you. This craft offers unlimited possibilities for creation of something exclusively yours. Candles made in the home can be either hand-dipped or molded, and it's within these two main types you have your chance to create.

Your molded candles are the ones which are going to be the most fun to make at home this vacation, for they really challenge the imagination. In the actual mechanics of making molded candles you use either pure paraffin wax (sold in 10-pound cakes for about \$2) or old candles. It is melted either in a double boiler or in a shortening can set in a pan of hot water. Then you add color, the same as in the hand-dipped candles. If the color does not completely dissolve, you can pour the melted wax over a double thickness of cheesecloth in a tea strainer to separate the color particles from the melted wax. Now you pour the melted wax into the chosen mold and insert the wick or wick candle. The wick may be inserted before or after the candle hardens. Cool your candles overnight, then remove from the mold. Removing the candle is done easiest by setting the mold in the refrigerator for a few minutes, then gently rapping the sides and bottom of the mold. Your candle will slip right out.

Molded Candles

There are many, many varieties of molds and trims for your shaped candles. The following are but a few:

1. Round candle — use pint or quart ice cream carton.
2. Square candle — use pint or quart milk carton.
3. Short and stubby — use frozen fruit juice can.
4. Fat candles — use coffee can or cereal box.
5. Snow — whip when the wax shows signs of congealing around the edges, then pile on the candle.
6. Heart candles — use a heart-shaped jello mold with scalloped or fluted edge.

Valentine Candles

To especially decorate for Valentine's Day you can trim a Valentine heart with little red cinnamon hearts stuck in the foamy wax exterior. It can also be inset with a red valentine doily decoration and sprinkled with red sugar.

But whether you use your candles for light or decorations, you'll find them easy, fun and practical to make. This year you can become a craftsman skilled in the ancient and traditional art of candle-making.



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