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Research Develops More Products from Plastics

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Research Develops More

Products from Plastics

Mary Elizabeth Lush tells of plastic articles being manufactured for the homemaker's needs

Plastic houses containing a variety of plastic accessories from bathtubs to bud vases are promised to the postwar homemaker. The war bride may boast plastics in her smaller kitchen utensils now, but in the case of larger plastic equipment homemakers will have to wait until producers make the transition from war to civilian output.

An eye-teasing array of colorful equipment is on the manufacturers' list for future production. Included are bathroom fixtures, dinnerware, radio cabinets, ice cube trays and clothespins.

Plastics include all materials capable of being molded by pressure. However, current usage rules out glass, metals and natural resins, leaving only synthetic resins as the basic substance. Even when the term plastic is defined and limited it covers a number of diversified materials. Some are tougher and more elastic than rubber, others are hard and brittle. One group of plastics permits free passage of ultraviolet light and cannot be used in airplanes because it would cause the occupants to acquire a sunburn.

The plastic industry is increasing its facilities for the molding of tremendous quantities of war necessities. Airplane wing tips, radio parts, tropical helmets, waterproof flashlights and parachutes are a part of an endless list of plastic items now in use among the Allied Forces.

Designing engineers are giving the homemaker many new and valuable articles from the small percentage of plastics now being manufactured for home use. A waterproof scouring pad especially created for cleaning fine enamel, glassware and porcelain has been shown to have long wearing qualities. It is cotton treated with a resin solution. Women will appreciate the transparent smocks and gloves designed from a plastic substance. The material, light in weight, has a high resistance to both tear and abrasion.

The wood industry also has been affected by plastic innovations. A decorative and flexible plywood can be obtained to conceal unsightly piping and improve drab interiors. Because plywood is relatively inexpensive and can assume many combinations of thickness, strength and texture, it has been falsely assumed that entire houses will be built from it in the postwar era. However, construction of a mold large enough for even a small house would present tremendous engineering difficulties and expense.

Plastic is considered by many to be the best material for toys. Wooden blocks were replaced by plastic blocks before the war because the colored toys attract a child's attention and the color does not come off.

Jewelry is the main product now being made from scrap plastics in the converted war plants. Since metal and rhinestone have been eliminated practically all are now being made of plastic materials.

Gaily colored toys are now being made from waste plastics remaining after the manufacture of war necessities and household equipment. Replacing wood in many play articles, plastic is considered to be an excellent material because of its beauty and durability.