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Room Furnishing Project

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T. A. ERICKSON, State Leader ^③

University Farm, St. Paul



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Room Furnishing Project

MILDRED SCHENCK and AMY WESSEL

Dreaming

"My home must have a friendship with every happy thing.
My home must offer comfort for any sorrowing.
And every heart that enters shall hear its music there,
And find some simple beauty that every life may share."

—FANNIE R. BUCHANAN

We are all interested in making our homes more attractive and livable. Sometimes this may be achieved through the rearrangement of furniture, refinishing walls, or sprucing up old chairs. Perhaps the rooms may be made more cheerful with bouquets. Sometimes the furniture needs refinishing, or perhaps new, simple pieces can be made. Whichever you choose to do, we hope that you will be able to complete your work in such a manner that you and your family may "keep your home through all the years a kindly, happy place."

Prerequisites.—Members enrolling in the room furnishing project must have done three years of clothing work or must be 15 years old and have done the equivalent of the first three years of clothing work.

Requirements.—See Leaders' Manual and Room Furnishing Record.

Program of work.—Decide upon the room and the unit to be improved. Draw a sketch of the floor plan as well as walls before starting the project. Show placing of furniture, pictures, rugs, and windows. Pictures of the room may be taken instead of making the sketches. Plan the entire color scheme before starting. Estimate the entire cost of work and materials.

SUGGESTED UNITS

The following units may serve as a guide in determining what might be included in the various units. Any 5 articles must be included in a unit, and 3 out of the 5 must be made or refinished.

I. Bedroom Units

A. Dressing Table Unit

Refinish or make:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Dressing table | 4. Floors |
| 2. Chair or bench | 5. Woodwork |
| 3. Walls and ceiling | 6. A mirror framed |

Make or select:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 7. Rug | 11. Slip covers for chair, chair pads, cushions |
| 8. A lamp or shade | 12. Curtains |
| 9. Dresser scarf | 13. Wall hanging |
| 10. Window shade | 14. Select, frame, and hang a picture |

B. Sleeping Unit

Refinish:

- | | |
|----------|----------------------|
| 1. Bed | 3. Bedside table |
| 2. Chair | 4. Walls and ceiling |

Articles which might be made:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 5. Pair of sheets | 12. Quilt protector |
| 6. Pair of pillow cases | 13. Pair of curtains |
| 7. Bedspread | 14. Window shade |
| 8. Bedside table lamp | 15. Lamp shade |
| 9. Mattress cover or pad | 16. Rug |
| 10. Wall hanging | 17. Footstool |
| 11. Quilt | 18. Select, frame, and hang a picture |

C. Writing or Reading Unit

Select or refinish:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Chair | 3. Lamp |
| 2. Table or desk | 4. Walls and ceiling |

Articles which might be made:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 5. Desk set | 10. Book covers |
| 6. Slip covers for chair | 11. Hanging book shelf |
| 7. Lamp shade | 12. Cover for table |
| 8. Cushions for chairs | 13. Book ends |
| 9. Rug | 14. Footstool |

D. Closet

Refinish or make:

- | | |
|----------|-----------------------|
| 1. Walls | 3. Chest of drawers |
| 2. Floor | 4. Built-in furniture |

Make or select:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 5. Shelves for closet | 9. Hat rack |
| 6. Clothes pole | 10. Clothes protectors or bag |
| 7. Shoe rack | 11. Laundry bag |
| 8. Hat box | |

E. Window Treatment

Make or select:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Pairs of curtains | 5. Refinish wall |
| 2. Window shade | 6. Chair |
| 3. Rug | 7. Window-seat cover |
| 4. Lamp | 8. Cornice board |

II. Living Room Units. (See above for suggested articles for various units.)

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| A. Reading | C. Writing |
| B. Window | D. Game center |

III. Dining Room. (See above for suggested articles for various units.)

- A. Table
- B. Buffet
- C. Window

- D. Writing
- E. Reading
- F. Rest center

IV. Kitchen Units. (See above for suggested articles for various units.)

- A. Kitchen cabinet
- B. Window
- C. Business center

The "cheery room" will be inviting because of its (1) restful centers, (2) group centers being related, and (3) simple, pleasing color combinations throughout.



FIG. 1. ATTRACTIVE WINDOW AND DRESSER UNITS
(Courtesy of the New York State College of Home Economics
at Cornell University)

The restful centers are made possible through careful elimination of unnecessary bric-a-brac and by having a harmonizing color scheme and well arranged furnishings. The present-day magazines often carry many puzzling color combinations. Some of these furnish good ideas for the amount of strong coloring to be introduced. Study them and then sift out only those colors which fit your needs.

Care of room.—The daily care of the room means much in developing “personality.” Beautiful things are often hidden because too many things have been crowded into a small space. A few well chosen, well arranged, useful articles make it possible to tidy the room quickly each day. The room should be aired and dusted daily.

ACCESSORIES

Stools.—Cheese boxes or wooden butter tubs make good material for stools. They may serve as chairs as well as for storage space. (See cheese box in room photo.) The box may be covered entirely with a slip cover or with a padded top cover and a short skirt, as shown in the illustration. Small prints in glazed chintz or cotton prints make attractive skirts.

Measure diameter of lid and add six inches, which gives room to tack the skirt to the cover. Measure depth of box and make allowance for a small hem at top and a wider one at the bottom. If pleats are to be used, you will need 2 yards of 32- to 36-inch material for the full-length skirt. One yard is needed for a short skirt.

The padding may be made in the form of a small cushion and then the material can be fastened to the cushion. The folded strip around the box may be crosswise or lengthwise of the material. This strip should be at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide when finished. The flounce is thumbtacked in place at the same time as the band is put on.

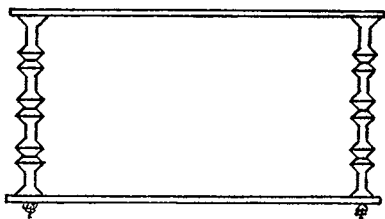


FIG. 2. HOMEMADE SPOOL SHELF

Spool shelves.—The number of spools to be used will depend upon the available space. Plain boards may be finished the same as the spools. Such racks are strong, easily made, and inexpensive. The spools

and boards may be put together with a rod. This rod must be small enough so that it will go through the spools, and then the rack may be hung by means of heavy picture hooks. Other types of shelves may be made.

Covered boxes.—Did you ever cover strong pasteboard boxes with wall paper, gingham prints, or chintz? If so, perhaps you have fitted them into a drawer and thumbtacked them in place. Such boxes make excellent containers for handkerchiefs, gloves, comb and brush, etc.

Attractive dressing tables or window seats may be made out of orange crates or packing boxes. Suggestions for making may be found in current magazines.

Containers for the kitchen.—The kitchen with its many articles of food that need to be protected offers numerous possibilities for containers. Tin cans of various sizes with close-fitting lids come to a kitchen. From these may be chosen uniform-sized containers for flour, tea, coffee, etc.

Labels will not stick to tin, so the best way is to apply a quick-drying paint of a soft color that helps carry out the color scheme in the kitchen. Stenciled designs may be used for some of the larger containers, such as marshmallow cans and lard pails, or the tins may be painted.

Bookends.—Materials for bookend foundations, such as heavy tin or galvanized sheeting, are frequently available in the home. With a pattern and a pair of tin shears, bookends may be cut and shaped. If these materials are not at hand, a



FIG. 3. BOOKENDS

tinner will do the work for a very reasonable sum. The metal may be lacquered or enameled to obtain the desired color. Paper or fabric may be used for covering the bookends. First pad the outside of the metal with outing flannel cut the size of the metal. The padding should be thin. The outside covering should be cut about a half inch larger than the base so it will turn over the edges of the metal. Felt may be glued on the base to protect furniture. If the outside covering is figured, the lining should be plain. Other types of bookends may be made.

COLOR

The kind and amount of color to be used depend upon the exposure, the size and shape of the room, the amount of light in the room, and the type of furniture. They should all harmonize in line, color, and design.

Exposure of room.—Colors are classified in either the warm group or the cool group. The warm colors are those containing red or yellow or any of their combinations. The cool colors are those containing blue or green or any of their combinations. North and east rooms usually have little light and therefore require warm colors. As a rule, the west and south rooms have more light and require cool colors.

Size and shape of room.—The size and shape of the room help determine which color and the amount to be used. A large room appears much brighter if the walls are finished in bright colors, and a small dark room is made lighter by the use of light colors.

One general rule to follow when selecting colors for a room is suggested by mother nature's color scheme—the sky (for the ceiling), trees (for the walls), and ground (for the floor). We find that the color becomes darker as we come down the scale.

CURTAINS

Curtains fit into so many units and have to be replaced perhaps more often than do any other articles. For this reason the window treatment should be planned very carefully. The following points should be considered:

Purpose of curtains.—Why do we want curtains? Glass curtains are used to diffuse the light as it shines through the glass. They give a feeling of privacy, and they add coziness to the room. Drapes may be used with or without glass curtains. When drapes are used as draw curtains, the shades or glass curtains are not necessary.

Materials.—The most effective curtains are made of materials that are firm and color-fast. Such materials are not expensive in the long run because they stand much wear, laundering, and ironing. Scrim, theatrical gauze, dotted swiss, and dimities may be used in living rooms and bedrooms. Prints in small designs may be used in kitchens as they are crisp and cheery looking.

Making curtains.—The amount of curtain material to use depends upon the desired length. Since the general rule for determining the length is to end the curtains on wood, the desired length should be measured and five or six inches added if two-inch hems are to be used.

Pull a thread and then cut the material to straighten the cloth. The selvage should also be cut off before stitching.

For side hems, the raw edge may be turned in to the desired depth of the finished hem. Turn the hem again the same depth, press, and stitch. Next put in the upper and lower hems. This makes it possible to invert the curtains.

Smart up-to-date curtain finishes are: bias tape, rick-rack, and yarns of contrasting colors.

Hanging.—A solid brass rod that fits into sockets is best for glass curtains that are hung without valances. Flat or round extension rods may be used for hanging a double set of curtains.

CUSHIONS

Cushions are made for comfort, and they may also add interest to the room. Figured materials make the most attractive pillows, but if the couch or chairs on which they are to be used are covered with figured material, the pillows should be of a plain color. The richer

deeper-toned materials blend with the colors in a living room, while the more delicate shades are more suitable for bedrooms.

Materials that are particularly suitable for pillow covers are monk's cloth, burlap, chintz, gingham, homespun, cotton rep, and cretonne. Many suggestions for suitable materials and for making pillows can be found in pattern books.

REFINISHING FURNITURE

A piece of furniture that has good lines and whose wood is in good condition is worth the time and effort required for refinishing.

If you elect refinishing as a part of your work, be sure to allow plenty of time to do the work well. Then get directions for the kind of wood you are going to finish. A natural finish should be used for walnut, cherry, and mahogany so the beauty of the wood will not be concealed. Birch, pine, and poplar can be made more attractive by means of a stain or paint. Each wood requires special treatment, and the directions can be obtained with the paint or stain.

Removing the old finish.—Wax should be removed by sponging the surface with turpentine and then washing with warm soapsuds, followed by clear water. The surface should be wiped dry. If the old finish is thick, hard, and smooth, a remover should be applied according to the directions on the container. A thin, brittle finish can usually be rubbed off with sandpaper or steel wool.

Preparing surfaces for the finish.—A varnished or painted surface may be washed, dried, and sandpapered and the new finish or paint applied over the old.

A high, glossy finish, such as golden oak, should be sandpapered or sponged with ammonia. The new finish will then stick without flaking off. Wicker furniture, whether it has been stained, painted, or left natural, should be scrubbed with soda water (1 heaping tablespoonful of washing soda to a quart of warm water). It should be dried in the sun, if possible, and the new finish applied.

New pine furniture that is to be finished in a delicate tint should be coated with white shellac to bind the pitch and prevent discoloration of the paint. Orange shellac, which is cheaper, may be used under dark finishes. It is desirable to shellac knotty places of all woods.

For best results, it usually is desirable to apply a paste filler or two or three coats of shellac to all open-grained wood, such as oak.

If the surface of the piece of furniture that is to be painted or stained is rubbed with 00 sandpaper, the new finish will be more permanent. The rubbing should be done with light, even strokes, first across, then with the grain. All dust must be removed.

Applying the paint finish.—Paint should be used over woods that do not have beautiful grain and natural color. On the other hand, beautiful woods should be treated with a finish such as oil, shellac, or wax, which will not conceal the natural grain and color. These woods should never be painted.

Mix the paint thoroughly by shaking the can before opening and by stirring the contents with a clean stick after opening. The foundation coats (two or three) should be applied in thin, smooth coats. Flat white is commonly used under all light-colored enamels. Be careful to keep the paint from settling in the grooves because thick coats will not dry properly. Each coat should be brushed well into the wood and allowed to dry 24 hours. Each coat should then be sandpapered slightly to remove brush marks, and the surface dusted before the next coat is applied. The paint can be thinned with turpentine if it does not flow freely. The last undercoat may be a mixture of flat paint and enamel, half and half. If a large can of paint has been purchased, it is advisable to pour some of it into a small container after mixing.

The finishing coat (one or two) of enamel should be mixed thoroughly and applied, without thinning, with a clean two-inch brush. When enamel is applied without flat undercoats, it is likely to flake off. You can mix your own colors by adding oil paint to the enamel. Attractive grays can be secured by mixing a very small amount of lampblack with white paint. Chrome yellow may be added to this gray to make a warm gray.

Soft tones of ivory, buff, gray, and green are satisfactory colors for furniture. The large surfaces should be done in soft tones, while the trims may be done in brighter colors. Bands or stencils in bright colors, if not overdone, will add character to painted furniture. Avoid too many colors and too much bright color.

Applying the stain finish.—This finish is satisfactory for cheap woods, but it is not as decorative as the paint finish. The stain should be thoroughly mixed, then applied with a brush one or two inches wide. The surplus stain should be wiped off as soon as the surface begins to look dull. Some woods require two or three coats of the stain. A coat of white shellac may be applied after 24 hours. The shellac will bind the stain. The shiny finish, due to the shellac, should be rubbed down with pumice and oil.

HOMEMADE FURNITURE

Orange crates, prune boxes, cheese boxes, and shipping boxes may be used in making homemade furniture. Stools, spool shelves, and covered boxes are classified as homemade furniture. These are discussed under "Accessories."

RUGS

Rag rugs were used by our great great grandparents and no doubt will be used for generations to come.

These rugs can be purchased ready-made or you can make them yourself. If your rag bag is bulging with material and if you have the time, you will get much pleasure from making a rug.

Rugs can be expensive or they may be very inexpensive, depending upon your ability to select them or to make them. Rugs must be made carefully if they are to last, and they must be of the correct size, shape, color, and design.

Go through your rag bag and sort the material into cotton, woolen, and silk groups. Rayon may be put in with the silk because of its luster. Is the rug to be put in the bedroom, kitchen, or living room? Cotton rugs are better suited to the kitchen or bedroom and the woolen to the living room. If there are a lot of heavy woolen rags which harmonize in color, you might make a braided rug. If they are mostly of light-weight material, you might crochet or hook a rug. When old material is used, it should be washed first, pressed, and then dyed if it does not harmonize in color. Choosing your colors and dyeing your material is one of the most interesting parts of homemade rug construction. Use a good-quality dye and follow the directions carefully.

Braided rugs.—All you need for braiding a rug is the cotton or wool material of enough colors to make an interesting design; carpet warp or twine; tape, needle, and sharp shears.

The width to cut or tear the strands depends upon the thickness of the material used. Thick woolen materials may be cut one inch wide or narrower and the edges turned under as the braid is made. Cotton and materials of similar weight may be cut wider. A strip $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide with each edge folded to the center and the strip folded through the center gives a finished strip $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide with no raw edges. The folded strip should be pressed or basted before braiding. It is well to start a braid with comparatively short strands and then sew new strips to the strands as the braiding progresses. A good way to sew on additional strips is to lay the ends of two strips together at right angles, sew diagonally, cut off corners,

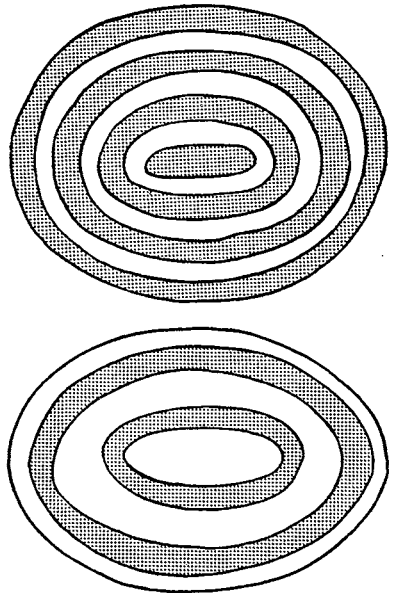


FIG. 4. BRAIDED RUGS



and press seam open. This distributes the bulk of the seam. It is easier to sew strands together and a flatter braid results if the strands are turned under at the outside edge instead of being drawn in as one does when braiding hair.

It is best to sew the rug together as the braiding progresses. Joinings should not come at the same place continuously. To join ends of braids inconspicuously, allow enough of each strand to sew invisibly to a corresponding strand at the opposite end of braid.

A round rug is begun by making a flat, circular loop near the beginning of the braid, leaving just enough to turn under. Sew the end in place firmly and as inconspicuously as possible. For an oval rug, double the braided strip for a length of several inches and slipstitch the edges together. The end should be turned under and sewed firmly down as in a round rug. The longer the doubled center strip, the longer the oval of the finished rug will be.

In planning the rug, a consideration of design principles is necessary in order to secure interesting results. In the preceding sketches, figure 1 is less interesting than figure 2 because the division of space is too monotonous.

Hooked rugs.—Hooked rugs, crocheted rugs, etc. may be made for this project. Directions for making them are not given in this bulletin because of lack of space.

GAME CENTER

Making games is an interesting piece of handicraft work. Some club members make games for family use, and these can be applied on the handicraft work or the room furnishing project.

The game center might include games, storage cupboard for games, a table, a chair, and chair pad. This unit will be most useful where there are young children and grownups living in rather small quarters.

Games that can be made of wood or wood substitutes are good to include in your kit. Besides games, you might be interested in making a storage box for the boards. The following list may help you to decide on five games for your kit:

Baseball	Ring the Nose	Shifting Blocks or 9-Block Puzzle
Bull's Eye Target	Friends	Scoop
Six-Pointed Star	15-Hole Puzzle	Nine Mens' Morris
Do-Do	Dart Baseball	