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STORAGE OF CLOTHING

The University of Nebraska Agricultural College Extension Service and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln
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Storage of Clothing

VERNA GLANDT AND HELEN ROCKE

THE CARE of clothing is a simple task when ample closet and storage space is provided. When such space is not provided, more thought and planning are required to care for clothing properly. The aim of this circular is to aid the homemaker in daily and seasonal storage of the family clothing.

DESIRABLE CLOSET FEATURES

The essentials of a good closet are:
- Sufficient light, which may be introduced by a small window, a wall light that works on a battery if the closet is not wired, or by a flash light placed in a convenient place near the door and always left there.
- Ventilation, by having a small window.
- Protection against dust—tight-fitting doors.
- A shallow, wide closet is more convenient than a square one.
- Suitable closet equipment, to increase the capacity and convenience of the closet.
- Space well proportioned so that every part may be utilized to the best advantage.

IMPROVISED CLOSETS

If closets have not been a part of the house construction, they may be built in permanently, or a movable type may be made. A satisfactory movable closet may be built with a few simple tools, boxes, or crates and some scrap lumber. In constructing the closet use six orange crates, three on each end, one fastened above the other. Place the two groups of three crates each forty inches apart or as far as space in the room allows. A cross brace is placed at the back to keep them in position. A board the width of the crate and as long as the closet is placed across the top to form a ceiling (Fig. 1). Extend a pole from one side to the other for hangers. Curtains of chintz, monk’s cloth, or Osnaburg may be used across the front. The side sections provide storage space for shoes, hats, knit wear, etc. A more permanent improvised closet may sometimes be constructed in the corner of a room, or if the room has a slanting ceiling, a shallow closet of wall board may be built along the entire low side of the room.

PREPARATION OF CLOTHING FOR STORAGE

The first requisite of storing away clothing is thorough cleaning to free it of any substance upon which insects feed, and thorough brushing, airing, and sunning.

Brushing.—Brushing clothes immediately after wearing is a good practice, for it does not allow the dust to settle in the fabric. Brush garments with the nap of goods and use long strokes. Occasionally turn pockets wrong side out and don’t neglect to brush stitching, tucks or underside of seams, collars, and cuffs. Whisk brooms may be used for

1 Acknowledgment is given Miss G. Carolyn Ruby, Assistant Professor of Clothing, University of Nebraska, for criticism of the manuscript of parts of this circular.
general brushing. A brush of short stiff bristles is good for heavy woolen. Use a soft bristle brush for heavy silk, straw, or velvet. A soft velvet mit or pad is excellent for soft silk fabrics. A rubber sponge is good to use in removing dust and dirt from felt hats, collars, suede shoes or gloves. A flat clothes brush is advisable for hats, coat collars and places where one requires short strokes for best results.

Airing.—Air all clothing before placing it in the closet. This removes body odors, freshens the garment, and aids in restoring the garment to its original shape. Here are some suggestions:

Place dresses, suits, and coats on hangers in bedroom near an open window or place on a hanger and fasten on the clothes line.

Shake undergarments well upon removal and hang up to air.

Place shoe trees and thoroughly air shoes after each wearing.

Closed closets may be aired frequently by having the doors open all night.

It is well to remove garments from the closet several times a year to air and sun them.

General care.—A well-groomed wardrobe is an aid to an attractive appearance. Brushing clothing after wearing is essential, because dust injures materials and if allowed to remain, settles on spots and makes them more conspicuous. Dust causes shine on some materials. Pressing clothing and keeping up small repair, such as buttons and snaps well sewed on, seams sewed, and trimmings well fastened, will lengthen the service of clothing.

Hanging.—The shape and good appearance of clothing may be kept by placing each garment on a hanger as it is removed. It is also wise to hang slips, negligees, and night gowns on hangers. The hanger should fit the shoulder line of the garment. If it is padded, the hanger will not leave an impression on the shoulder of the garment. Care in hanging clothing will save much pressing.

**DRESSING UP THE CLOSET**

Closet accessories of harmonious colors and materials do not serve more efficiently, but they do give a more harmonious and satisfying setting for the owner and an incentive to want to keep clothing in order.

If the closet adjoins the bedroom, the walls may be papered or painted like the bedroom or to harmonize with it. The closet shelves may be
Painted or covered with paper or oilcloth. Wall paper may be pasted on the shelves and then varnished. A removable pad to fit the shelf may be made and covered with a washable material which can be slipped off for laundering. Shelf edgings made of glazed chintz, oilcloth in colors, oiled silk, gingham, or percale may be bought by the yard or may easily be made at home with little expense. The edgings may be plain, ruffled, or plaited and are tacked to the edge of the shelves. Some commercially made edgings are applied with a new type of gummed tape. Scalloped edges may be pinking, finished with rick-rack or bound with tape to make an attractive finish. One-fourth yard of 36" material will make four yards of scalloped edging.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSERVING SPACE AND KEEPING ORDER**

One of the first things to provide in a closet is some means of keeping clothes and shoes in perfect order. A closet with clothing cluttered about is untidy, difficult to clean, and shortens the life of the clothing. It is surprising how much clothing can be placed in a small closet if the arrangement has been well planned.

Some closets have high shelves used for storing articles not frequently used. If such articles are placed in boxes or packages with large labels on the ends they may be easily identified. The labels may be made of different colored tabs or large numbers which have been cut from an old calender.
Then an index of the contents of each package may be listed and this list tacked on the closet door. Following are two examples:

Green Label—Jane's cap and sweater
Red Label—Mother's wedding dress, or
Box 1—Odds and ends of lace
Box 2—Bob's snow suit

Rod for clothes hanger.—Small piping, broom-sticks, curtain poles, towel racks, or commercially made rods may be used. The rod should be placed at a height convenient for the occupant of the room. If an adult is to occupy the room, place the rod high enough to keep the garments from touching the floor, but not so high that space below the garment is wasted. If children occupy the room, place the rod low enough for the child to reach. The location of the rod will be determined by the plan and size of the closet. A rod through the center of a long, narrow closet is advisable; if the closet is too narrow for hangers, a rod placed across either end or brackets attached to the wall may be used (Fig. 2). If more space is desired, various kinds of sliding shelf bars may be purchased (Fig. 3). Towel rods such as the sliding bar illustrated may be fastened under shelves for additional space.

Hangers.—If clothing is to be kept well pressed and in shape, provide a hanger for each garment. Four kinds of coat hangers are shown in Figure 4: (A) wire type; (B) wooden hanger, edges not so sharp; (C) curved-edge hanger, good for slips or garments which must be hung by the shoulder straps; and (D) wooden hanger with device to keep garments from falling off. This type may be improvised by taking a wooden hanger and placing thumb tacks, rubber bands, or bands of velvet about two inches from either end of the hanger. To make a hanger for a two-piece garment, drop two spring clothes pins on a cord or tape from a wooden hanger as in E. For sheer gar-

![Fig. 4.—Types of hangers.](image)

![Fig. 5.—Special types of hangers for skirts and trousers, fur piece, and ties.](image)
ments, padded hangers are recommended. Cotton, paper, or newspaper may be used for padding. Emergency hangers may be made from paper or magazines rolled, tied in the center, and the width made to correspond to the shoulder width of the garment. There are two types of hangers that may be purchased for skirts and trousers (Fig. 5). A number of trousers and skirts can be hung on a swinging hanger without crowding. The slide-clamp type of hanger holds one skirt or one pair of trousers. To hang pieces of fur, it is possible to purchase a large ring hanger (Fig. 5). There are different kinds of tie racks on the market. A most convenient type is a swinging rack, divided by pins so that when one tie is removed the others are not dislodged (Fig. 5).

**Equipment for storing shoes.**—A closet floor cluttered with shoes is untidy and difficult to clean, and the shoes are injured by dust and being scuffed about. Devices for storing shoes are determined by the general arrangement of the closet and space available.

A rack for shoes may be made from two curtain rods, placed so that the upper rod makes a two-inch depth and the lower one a four-inch depth. The rods should be about four inches apart. The heels of the shoes rest on the upper rod and the soles rest on the lower one (Fig. 2).

Shoe bags may be made of chintz, cretonne, ticking, percale, Indian head, or Osnaburg. The size depends upon the number of shoes that the bag is to accommodate and the wall space or size of the closet door on which it is to hang. In making the bag, place a box pleat in each pocket to provide sufficient fullness for the shoes.

A slanting shelf about twelve inches wide, placed above the baseboard along the closet wall, is easily built. Nail a strip of wood to the top of the shelf to hold the heels. Boxes covered with wall paper or chintz are inexpensive and easily made, or they may be purchased. Boxes of this kind can be made from crates or scrap lumber.

Shoe trees should be purchased in correct lengths, if they are to keep shoes in shape. If too long, they will pull the shoes out of shape.
Hat stands.—Hat stands help to retain the original shape of the hat. Various hat stands may be purchased, or such stands may be made at home. Cereal boxes padded and covered to match the bedroom color scheme, or cone-shaped hat stands made of stiff paper and covered with chintz or wall paper are inexpensive and satisfactory for this purpose.

Hat protectors.—Hats not in frequent use should be stored in boxes or covered to protect them from dust. Covers for hats may be made of glazed chintz or oiled silk. The covers are pyramidal or circular in shape to fit the size of the hat. The protectors are made in sections bound together and at the lower edges with bias tape. These can also be purchased ready-made. Transparent hat boxes made of a heavy treated cellophane are new and convenient.

Garment bags.—Garment bags are used to protect clothing from dust and light. A close-weave fabric is more dust proof than a loose weave. Cretonne, sateen, oiled silk, glazed chintz, unbleached muslin, and percale are materials often used. Bags for dresses may be made in a variety of ways. One of the simplest and most quickly made is the kind which is left open down one side or the center front and has a wide flap to cover the opening. The garment on the hanger is slipped into the bag from the opening. To make a bag of this kind, measure the length of the material several inches longer than the dress which it is to cover. The width of the material should be twice the width desired in the finished bag, plus six to eight inches for lapping under to make the closing. Shape the material at the top like the hanger. Bind the edges of the opening; then fold over the allowance for the lap and bind the two parts of the bag together across the bottom (Fig. 9). Other types of bags are opened down the center and may be fastened with snaps or a zipper. When there is not enough closet space and one must use a makeshift closet or hang clothing in a
large storage room, the so-called wardrobe garment bags provide protection for six or eight garments. These have a frame-work of wire or wood at the top. A piece of heavy cardboard serves to hold the bag in shape at the bottom. The most satisfactory have a zipper fastening down the side, which is quickly opened and closed (Fig. 10).

**Shoulder covers.**—Shoulder covers help to protect the tops of the garments from dust. These are shaped to fit the hanger and need to be large enough not to crowd the garment. The same materials as recommended for the clothing bag are suitable for shoulder protectors. A good size is eighteen to twenty inches wide and nine inches deep. Shape to fit the hanger. Cut two pieces alike. Cut a small curved opening on front side for the hanger. Bind or hem opening, bind together front and back pieces and bind around lower edge (Fig. 11).

**Laundry bag.**—The coat-hanger type of bag with a slash opening in the center is convenient. The opening may be bound or faced back to reinforce it. A zipper fastening across the bottom makes it possible to empty the bag quickly. Others are made with the back of the bag long enough to turn up over the front about six inches. When buttoned in the center and at the edges, pockets are formed. These may be used for soiled handkerchiefs and hose (Fig. 12).

**Dresser drawers.**—Almost every store has an array of boxes in dainty colors to be used in keeping dresser drawers in order and making articles kept there more accessible. There are nests of boxes similar to the nests of mixing bowls which we have on our kitchen shelves, boxes with compartments of varying sizes, and boxes divided into even-size compartments just large enough to hold a pair of hose. Often we have boxes at home which can be used for making such compartments in the drawers of our dresser. Deep dresser drawers where underwear is kept may be divided into compartments by means of cardboard as shown in Figure 13.

Ordinary cardboard covered with wall paper is the material used to make a partition for a deep drawer. One piece of cardboard seven inches wide and as long as the width of the drawer is cut. Then two pieces the same length but about three and one-half inches wider than the other are cut. On the larger pieces a line is drawn three and one-half inches above one of the long edges, and the cardboard bent along this line until a right angle is formed. Then the larger surfaces of the two bent pieces of cardboard are glued together back to back to form an inverted T, placed on the edge of the table, and pressed with weights. When thoroughly dry cover one surface of the smaller piece of cardboard with glue, and on this adjust the base of the inverted T.
Weight this to dry. The edges of the partition may be bound with passepartout tape; then pieces of wall paper may be cut and fitted and neatly pasted over the cardboard. Pieces of cardboard may be covered in the same way to make linings for the bottom of the bureau drawers. Both the partitions and linings may be shellacked to make them more sanitary and durable.

**SEASONAL STORAGE**

In storing garments from one season to another it is necessary to protect them from insects, dust, wrinkling, and stretching.

Heavy garments, especially those with fur trim, may be hung on padded hangers and stored in sealed bags.

Soft silk fabrics and heavily trimmed or knitted garments are folded carefully with paper in between the folds and stored in sealed labeled suit boxes or in chests or trunks.

Wash garments, such as cotton or linen, may be left unironed after washing and folded and placed in a clean dresser drawer or in labeled suit boxes and stored in a dry place to prevent mildew.

Rubber goods such as rain coats may be hung on hangers. Stuff the sleeves with paper and keep garments in a cool, dry place. Galoshes and rubbers should be stuffed with paper and stored in a similar place. The basement is usually satisfactory.

Furs are usually expensive, and to assure the best care, send them to a furrier where they will be placed in cold storage during the summer. If kept at home, store in a cool place; the basement is good if it is free from moisture. Before storing furs, dust thoroughly and place in sealed packages or bags.
All woolen material needs to be protected from moth damage during storage. Since moth control is a general problem, the next section of the circular has been given to a discussion of this problem.

CLOTHES MOTHS AND CARPET BEETLES

The principal pests that attack clothing, stored fabrics, carpets, upholstered furniture, furs, etc. are clothes moths and carpet beetles. Clothes moths most commonly damage clothing and stored fabrics while the carpet beetle larvae, which are known as buffalo moths, are most commonly found damaging carpets, rugs, and upholstered furniture. Either, however, may be found under a wide range of conditions.

Clothes moths and carpet beetles are likely to be found in nearly all dwellings. Temperature, humidity, type of house construction, nature of furnishings, and the thoroughness and frequency of house cleaning influence their abundance and the extent of the damage done by them.

True clothes-moth larvae are small whitish caterpillars, almost free from hair. They burrow into and eat woolens, fur, feathers, mohair, and other clothing materials of animal origin. They seldom, if ever, attack articles manufactured entirely from materials of plant origin such as linen or cotton goods. The adults are small, pale buff-colored moths with a wing expanse of about a half-inch. They are most commonly seen flitting irregularly about the room at night, avoiding strong light, and usually hiding in corners or other darkened places.

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The following section and the section on "Moth Control" were prepared by O. S. Bare, Extension Entomologist.
Buffalo moths are the larvae of several small, black, brown, or mottled beetles that are commonly called carpet beetles. These larvae are brownish or black, with more or less hair on the body or at least a tuft of hairs at the tip of the abdomen. They are commonly called moths because of confusion with larvae of the true clothes moth.

In addition to being found working in the materials mentioned, they are frequently found breeding in woolen, lint, and hair that accumulate in floor cracks and under quarter rounds and baseboards, or similar situations. Dog and cat hairs accumulating in basements frequently furnish breeding grounds that yield a plentiful supply of moths.

**MOTH CONTROL**

Moth control is a rather complicated problem because of the many and varied conditions under which these pests are found. If an entire house is heavily infested, fumigation by a professional fumigator may prove to be necessary, but in the great majority of cases the infestations are so localized that simpler, and more readily available treatments can be made fully effective, particularly if they are accompanied by thorough cleaning.

**Sunning, airing, and brushing.**—Bright sunlight is fatal to both the eggs and larvae. The eggs are quite soft and are easily destroyed or dislodged by vigorous brushing. Clothing not frequently used and subject to moth attack should be thoroughly brushed and exposed to bright sun-

![Fig. 15.—A, White moth eggs laid in the nap of cloth or on the surface; B, pellets of larval excreta, which usually are colored according to the color of material upon which the larva has been feeding. U. S. D. A. Leaflet 145.](image-url)
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Light for several hours at least once a month from May to October. This is one of the most effective methods for controlling moths.

Dry cleaning.—Dry cleaning kills all forms of moths, but does not give extended protection unless the cleaned articles are packed at once in mothproof bags.

Washing.—Washing with neutral soap kills all moths, but as with dry cleaning, it does not give extended protection.

Heat.—A temperature of 110-115°F. kills all stages of clothes moths in a half-hour, while buffalo moths are killed by exposure to 120°F. in the same period. A half-hour at 125°F. is necessary to kill carpet beetle eggs. Where heating facilities are available during hot summer weather, entire houses can be heated to a high enough temperature to destroy practically all kinds of house-infesting insects. About twelve hours of heating is ordinarily required to get the exposure to heat necessary for this.

Cold storage.—Cold storage gives excellent protection to furs, woolen garments, etc. Moth larvae do no damage at 50°F. or lower, but it requires one or two days of zero temperature to kill them. Cold weather has little effect on them in houses.

Paper bags and wrappings.—Bags that can be tightly sealed give protection if articles placed in them are free from infestation. Such bags may be made from wrapping paper and gummed tape. Naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene flakes placed in the bags in generous quantities will destroy larvae that may be in the stored articles. Freshly cleaned articles may be wrapped in heavy unbroken paper and sealed with gummed tape.

Moth-proofing solutions and sprays.—Many moth-proofing solutions and sprays are on the market. Some of them are of considerable value when used plentifully, according to the manufacturers’ directions. None of them, however, will permanently protect fabrics. Dry cleaning, washing, and exposure of moth-proofed fabrics to strong sunlight usually weaken their moth-resisting qualities. Moth-proofing solutions that depend on any form of arsenic for their effectiveness are not recommended by the United
States Department of Agriculture nor the entomologists of the Nebraska College of Agriculture, because their use may be dangerous under some conditions.

**Naphthalene and paradichlorobenzene.**—Naphthalene, which comes either in flakes or as "moth balls," and paradichlorobenzene, which comes in flake form, are repellent to clothes moths and buffalo moths, and prolonged exposure to the concentrated fumes of either will kill both larvae and eggs. Either, if used plentifully, will prevent infestation of stored articles. Closet and trunk contents may be fumigated effectively with either naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene, if the trunk or closet can be closed tightly. Doors or other openings should be sealed with gummed tape. In fumigating closets, place on a top shelf or suspend in light cloth bags one pound of flake naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene to each 100 cubic feet of space. The heavy fumes sink throughout the closet and its contents and kill the moth larvae if the fumes are held sufficiently long. The closet should be kept sealed for several days.

**Carbon tetrachloride.**—Carbon tetrachloride is a transparent colorless liquid with a pungent aromatic odor. It evaporates readily and the heavier-than-air vapor is fatal to both larvae and eggs of clothes moths and carpet beetles. It should be used at the rate of one to two pounds to 100 cubic feet where rooms, closets, or containers can be sealed tightly. It should be used only when the temperature is 70° F. or higher. Carbon tetrachloride is neither inflammable nor explosive and can be used safely in dwelling houses. It should be exposed in shallow dishes at the top of the room or container and the room or container should be kept tightly sealed for 48 hours.

**Other fumigants.**—Many other fumigants can be used, but they are too dangerous to be recommended for home use or are too difficult to obtain. Hydrocyanic-acid gas is used much by commercial fumigators but is so dangerous that it should be used only by a professional fumigator. Carbon bisulphide (or disulphide), which somewhat resembles carbon tetrachloride, is an effective fumigant but as it is highly inflammable and its vapor is explosive, it cannot be used safely in occupied dwellings. Sulphur candle fumes are effective if used at the rate of at least a couple of pounds per 1,000 cubic feet, and the fumes confined for 18 to 24 hours. However, there is some danger of fire, and sulphur fumes tarnish metals and have a bleaching effect on many fabrics and wall paper.

**Cedar chips, cedar oil, cedar shavings, cedar chests, cedar-lined closets.**—The odor of cedar seems to be somewhat repellent to clothes moths and carpet beetles and has a tendency to prevent or lessen chances of infestation. The oil also is partially effective, at least against young larvae. It is not effective, however, against older larvae and adults. Consequently while cedar containers and preparations have some value, they are not dependable, and clothing stored under such protection must be watched closely.

**Worthless substances.**—Entomologists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture state that the following substances are worthless although often recommended for clothes moth control:
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Tobacco extracts containing nicotine, and tobacco powder when used at reasonable strength
Lavender flowers (scattered on)
Cayenne pepper
Black pepper
Pyrethrum stems (dusted)
Air-slaked lime (dusted)
Powdered sulphur (dusted)
Borax (dusted)
White hellebore (dusted)
Formaldehyde (sprayed 1 to 10)
Baking soda (dusted)
Sodium carbonate (dusted)
Lead carbonate (dusted)
Lead oxide (dusted)
Red cedar leaves (dried and placed in clothing)
Salt (dusted)

REFERENCES

Suggestions in the preparation of this circular have been secured from the following references:

A Convenient Clothes Closet, Form HC 31, Agricultural Extension Division, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minn.


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