

1960

EC60-1149 Fabrics for Curtains and Draperies

Magdalene Pfister

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

Pfister, Magdalene, "EC60-1149 Fabrics for Curtains and Draperies" (1960). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 3503.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/3503>

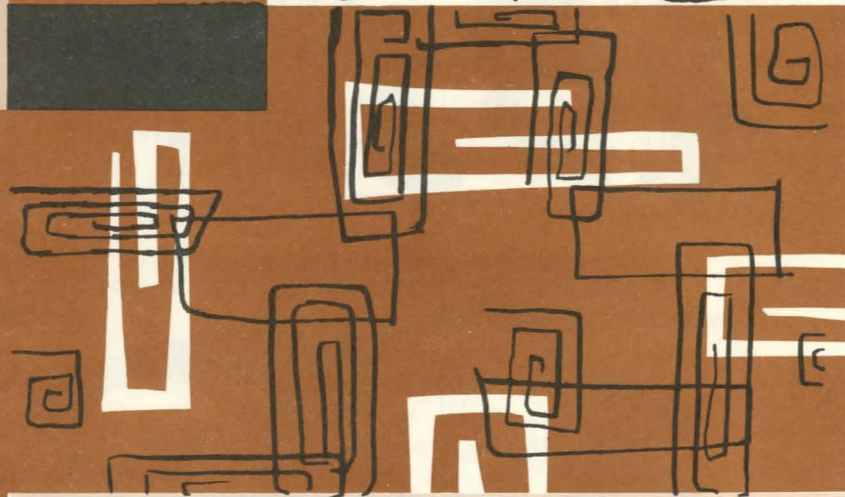
This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

AGRI
S
85
E7
#60-1149

E.C.60-1149

FABRICS

for
CURTAINS
and
DRAPERIES



EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATING
E. F. FROLIK, DEAN E. W. JANIKE, DIRECTOR

FABRICS

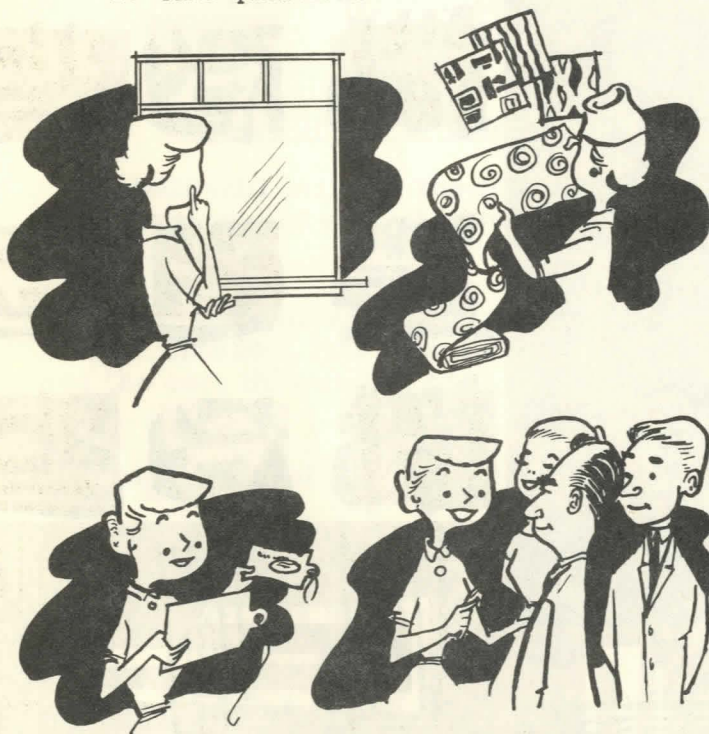
for

CURTAINS and DRAPERIES

by Magdalene Pfister,
Extension Specialist in Home Furnishings

There are many kinds of fabrics to choose from for window treatment. In both yard goods and ready-mades you'll find interesting textures, beautiful patterns, new finishes and coordinated colors. Before buying, you need to:

1. Decide on what you want and need.
2. Shop and make comparisons.
3. Read and interpret labels.
4. Ask questions.



A satisfactory choice will depend upon whether the fabric:

1. Is suited for the purpose.
2. Looks well.
3. Is easy to care for.
4. Is durable.

Suited for Purpose

In a room with strong light, sheer glass curtains prevent glare by softening or diffusing the light. Glass curtains of less transparent material will screen an unattractive view or give privacy from neighbors or passersby.

Draperies offer greater variety in color, design and texture than glass curtains and so are more important in the decorative scheme of a room. By day, draperies can be used effectively to frame a view. Drawn across a window at night, they give greater privacy than glass curtains and may create a different decorative effect.

One of the first steps in planning is to decide what you want curtains to do for the room. This decision furnishes a guide to the kind of fabric to choose. Will the purpose be served best by glass curtains or draperies, or are both needed? Should the material be sheer or non-sheer?

Looks Well

Window hangings should hang in soft folds, keep their size and color and have good design if figured.

Judge the draping quality of the fabric. There should be enough body to look well, especially at a large window. Heavier, more dense fabrics should not be bulky. Those hung on traverse rods must look well when closed and must be pliable enough to hang in compact, deep folds when drawn back.

Hangings must be wide enough to cover the space and to hang in graceful folds. Sheer fabrics need triple fullness, while twice the width of the space to be covered is usually enough for heavier fabric.

Some guarantee of color fastness is desirable. Note on the label the kind of color fastness, whether to light, fumes, washing or dry cleaning.

Vat dyes result in fast colors. Solution dyed synthetics are resistant to fading. Yarn dyed fibers are more likely to permanent color than piece dyed fabrics.

Fabrics may shrink with changes in humidity as well as with cleaning. A cloth labeled "not to exceed two per cent residual shrinkage" will not shrink more than 3/4 inch per yard.

If a pattern is selected consider the quality of its design. The type of design should be in keeping with the yarn and weave as well as with the flat, pliable and continuous nature of cloth. This suggests that delicate patterns are suitable for material with fine yarn and weave, while bold patterns are better for coarse materials. Uninterrupted patterns are better than separate motifs which appear "spotty." Motifs that resemble real objects and strong three dimensional enrichment are generally out of place. Enough depth, however, is needed on the flat surface for interest. In good quality printed fabric the printed design is on the grain of material so that lengths can be cut on the true grainline to hang and clean well.

Lining draperies will usually improve their appearance. It helps them to hang in soft folds and to show the pattern more clearly. A lining protects them from dust and sun.

If the drapery is to be unlined be sure the pattern is not objectionable from the outside and that it doesn't look faded as the light comes through when seen from the inside.

When buying ready-made draperies be sure that the design is matched in each pair and that the arrangement of the design units is the same in all pairs. When buying figured material, remember to allow enough fabric for matching the design.

Easy to Care For

Many special finishes are being used to improve the appearance of the fabric and to make it more useful. Some give crispness, which lasts the life of the fabric. Some prevent slipping or shifting of yarns and so keep the fabric in shape after laundering. Some finishes repel moisture. These are especially desirable where windows are open much of the time or when there is much humidity.

Durability

Fabrics used at windows may be affected by light, heat, moisture, abrasive wear, air-borne soil and microorganisms. The resistance to these conditions is largely determined by the fibers used, the way they are twisted and spun and the way the cloth is woven and finished.

Fibers vary in their resistance to sunlight and even the same fiber may vary with different construction and conditions of use. Bright fibers have better resistance than dull ones.

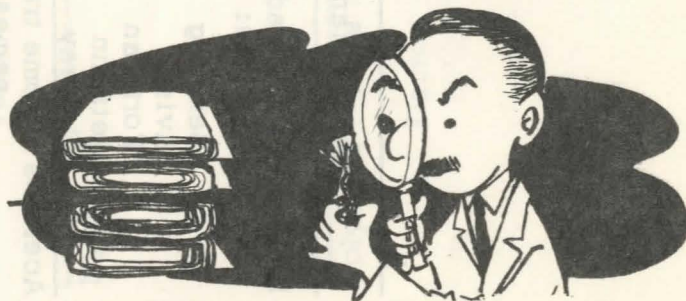
The yarn and fabric construction can also affect the rate of deterioration. Usually the more the individual fabric is exposed to sunlight the less resistant it is. The finer the yarn, the less resistant to deteriorative light. The looser the weave, the less resistant to light.

Heat and moisture hasten deterioration of curtain fabrics. The "brown line" effect resulting from moisture drying in the fabric may contribute to the softening of cellulose fibers.

Look for more nearly balanced construction between warp and filling yarns. Strain is placed on a fine warp when the filling is heavier. If there is not more than ten threads' difference in warp and filling the fabric is considered as having good balance.

Fiber content gives an indication of durability and the care of fabric. In a blend the fabric is generally treated as the fiber which occurs in the greatest per cent. The Textiles Products Fiber Identification Act requires that fabric be identified by its generic (family) name. The percentage of fiber by weight must be listed.

Following is a summary of fibers:



I. MODIFIED NATURAL POLYMERS DERIVED FROM CELLULOSE BASE

Generic Name	Characteristics	Limitations	Care
<p>Rayons - some trade names:</p> <p>Bemberg Avisco Fortisan Jet spun Coloray</p>	<p>Soft, drapes well, dyes easily, low static. Low to moderate cost. Solution dyed rayons highly resistant to fading. Burns with a blaze.</p>	<p>Weak when wet. May stretch with high humidity. Stretches and wrinkles easily unless stabilized.</p>	<p>Wash with care. Check label. May be starched if not treated, using a lighter starch than for cottons. Avoid chlorine bleach if resin treated.</p>
<p>Acetates - some trade names:</p> <p>Celanese Avisco Chromspun Celaperm</p>	<p>Soft, lustrous, drapes well. Fair wrinkle resistance. Doesn't soil or stain readily. Thermoplastic. Melts and burns.</p>	<p>Fair resistance to abrasion. Loses strength when wet. Dissolved by acetone. Softened by heat. Sensitive to fume fading unless solution dyed.</p>	<p>Wash with care. Don't rub or wring as it may set wrinkles. Press at lowest temperature. If needed, starch like rayon.</p>
<p>Tri-acetate - trade names:</p> <p>Arnel</p>	<p>Soft, drapes well. Higher melting point than acetates. If properly treated, dyed fabrics made of Arnel are more resistant to fume or gas fading than acetate. Sunlight resistance measured by strength retention puts Arnel above rayon, cotton and acetate.</p>	<p>Does not dye as readily as acetate because of lower absorptive ability.</p>	<p>Washes easily and dries quickly. Can take higher pressing temperature than acetate.</p>

II.

FIBERS DERIVED FROM CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS

Generic Name	Characteristics	Limitations	Care
Acrylic - trade names: Acrilan Orlon Zefran Creslan	Sturdy, light weight. High resistance to sun- light. Doesn't stretch or shrink. Filament yarns dry quickly; spun yarns dry slowly. Ease of washing and quick drying. Thermoplastic. Melts and burns. Good abrasion resistance. Good resilience.	Burns rapidly, but a fire resistance finish is being supplied. Some dye easier than others. Not as durable as nylon.	Check label. Weak when wet. If pressing is needed iron at lowest temperature setting.
Modacrylic - trade names: Dynel Verel	Soft, drapes well. Moderate strength. Dimensional stability. High sun resistance, melts, doesn't blaze. Flame resistant.	Weak when wet. Melts at very low temperature. Difficult to press. Solu- ble in hot 100% acetone. Unless treated, collects dust.	Similar to above.
Nylon	High strength. Resist- ance to abrasion. Light- weight, soft, wrinkle resistant. Doesn't shrink or stretch.	Weakened by sunlight. Yellows or grays in use. Great affinity for oils and oil borne stains. Forms static electricity. Especially dull yarn has poor resistance to sun- light.	Check label. Avoid washing white with col- ored. Don't twist or wring.
Polyester - trade name: Dacron	Strength with abrasion resistance. Retains crispness. Washable. Not readily soiled. Sun and fire resistant. Drapes well. Wrinkle resistant wet dry. Dries quickly.	Poor resistance to heat. Do not use near radia- tor. Problem of static electricity. Can be dyed by specialized techniques. Results have good to excellent washfastness, fair to good light fastness. More durable than acrylic but not as dur- able as nylon.	Washes easily. Requires little ironing.

II. FIBERS DERIVED FROM CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS (cont)

Generic Name	Characteristics	Limitations	Care
<p>Saran - trade names:</p> <p>Permalin</p> <p>Rovana</p> <p>Velon</p> <p>Lumite</p>	<p>Strength - stain proofness. Color fastness. Flame proof. Weather resistant. Good resistance to sunlight degradation.</p>	<p>Darkens when exposed to sunlight.</p>	<p>Shake well. Vacuum or wipe with damp cloth to remove surface dirt. Use low sudsing detergent and hot water (140°). May run through entire cycle or may drip dry. If necessary to iron use low setting with damp cloth.</p>

III. GLASS

<p>Glass -</p> <p>Fiberglas</p>	<p>Unharmd by sun and moisture. Melts, doesn't burn. Color lasting. Not as transparent. Proof against fire, light, rot, insects, stretching and shrinking. Least elastic of fibers, therefore, it will not stretch or sag out of shape. With aid of certain finishes has excellent draping and wrinkle resistant qualities. Dirt and dust do not cling.</p>	<p>Brittle, low resistance to rubbing, especially when wet. Difficult to dye.</p>	<p>Easy to launder by hand. Hang carefully. Do not wring or use clothespins. No ironing.</p>
---------------------------------	---	---	--

IV

NATURAL FIBERS

Generic Name	Characteristics	Limitations	Care
Cotton	Strong lightweight. Does not stretch readily. Special finish makes it resistant to wrinkles and shrinkage. Easily dyed.	Attracts dirt particles because of roughness, unless treated.	Practically all are machine washable. Over drying makes material harsh and hard to iron. Don't use chlorine bleach if fabric has been resin treated for special finish. Sizing needed if hasn't permanent finish. Can take hot iron.
Linen	Strong, shrinks very little, absorbent. Does not soil easily. High luster. Can be pre-shrunk. Water repellent and crease resistant if treated.	Wrinkles easily unless treated. Difficult to dye bright colors.	Washes and cleans easily. Crease resistant, fabrics require little pressing.
Silk	Very strong. Drapes well. Colorfast. Luxurious. Does not wrinkle easily. Smooth surface does not attract dirt.	Weakened by sunlight. Expensive. Water spots unless treated.	Dry cleaning preferable. Check label. If washable, wash only a short time, don't rub or wring.
Wool	Absorbent. Dyes well. Resilient, does not wrinkle easily. Warm hand. Flame resistant. Reasonably colorfast.	Subject to moth attacks. Weak when wet. Can be given special finishes.	Hard to clean if heavily soiled.

Shop & Make Comparisons

When you shop for curtains or draperies, one authority* suggests that you establish a value rating for each possible choice by considering the extent to which it satisfies your "wants and needs and ease of care."

Consider your household environment and list the "needs" as to size, type, sheer-ness, color and appearance. There may be other properties that you "want" but do not absolutely need, such as crispness, double stitched hems or long service. "Care" should be considered. Must the fabric be dry cleaned, will it resist soil? If drip dried, do you have room for hanging? These factors, together with the amount of money to spend, will give you the value rating.

Thus:

$$\text{Value} = \frac{\text{Needs} + \text{Wants} + \text{Care}}{\text{Dollars}}$$

Read & Interpret Labels

Labels will indicate the fiber or fibers and percentage of each if more than one is used.

Special qualities such as color fastness, kind of finishes, how long finish will last and the care they should have may also be given.

Save the label for reference.

Ask Questions

The following questions will help you decide:

1. Will the fabric hang in graceful folds?
2. How can it be cleaned?
3. Will the material shrink or stretch?
4. Is the material colorfast to sunlight, washing or dry cleaning?

5. Does it have the finish you need? (Is it crease resistant, fire resistant, and moisture resistant? Is the finish permanent?)

6. Is the color suitable to the room in which you plan to use it?

7. Is the pattern in proportion to the size of your room and furnishings?

8. Is the texture of the material in harmony with the walls and other furnishings in the room?

9. Is it the best quality material for the money spent?

* Jules Labarthe in a talk at the National Home Furnishings Conference.