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Using Unused Things



Dollar Savers and Stretchers

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE
EXTENSION SERVICE

C. Larsen, Director
Brookings, S. D.

Making Use of Unused Things Around the Home

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Responses to the question "What unused things about your home might be turned into something useful," show that there is much furniture not in use because it is out of repair or out of style. There are old containers, cardboard and wooden boxes, boards, old clothing and rags which might be converted into something useful. Many interesting things can be made from these to supply the family's wants and needs. A few are discussed here.

Wall Brush

A satisfactory wall brush is made by covering the broom with a tufted slip-on bag made from old cloth. (Fig. 1).

1. Cut strips of old soft cloth $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and 5 inches long for the tufts. Tie the ends of two cords together and fasten securely at a convenient point. Hold the cords taut with left hand so that the forefinger is free. Place a strip with center over the cords. Hold in place with left hand. Pull ends of the strip up between the cords with the right hand, hold ends of strip upright and push the tuft with forefinger of left hand to point where cords are fastened. Place second strip with center over cords. Pull ends up between cords and push this tuft against the first tuft. Repeat until sufficient tufting has been made (about three yards). Additional cord is tied on as needed.

2. Measure in 8 inches from end of tufted strip. Turn at this point and sew the tufted strip in continuous rows around this center forming an elongated pad about 4 inches wide and 12 inches long. Make the pads as nearly as possible the same shape and size as the surface of the brush end of the broom. Sew firmly using heavy thread.

3. For the side of the bag cut a piece of strong material long enough to extend around the tufted base. Allow ample material for the seam and corners. The piece must be wide enough to fit snugly over broom to handle when finished. Allow for a seam and half-inch hem. Sew the side piece to the tufted pad with tufted side in. Begin at center of one side. Close the side seam. Finish the bag with a half-inch hem leaving two openings for double draw strings. Insert the draw strings. Turn the bag right side out. Slip it over the broom, pull up draw strings and tie around the handle.

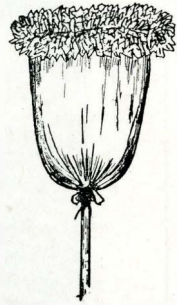


Fig. 1.—A slip-on bag for the broom makes a good wall brush.



Fig. 2. — Floor mop—a slip-on bag for the old broom.

Floor Mop

A discarded broom makes a good base for wet, dry, or oil mop. Wash the broom and cut away worn brush part until only substantial shoulders remain. Wrap these

with cord and reinforce with a tight covering securely sewed. Make a slip-on mop bag as follows (Fig. 2):

1. Cut a foundation piece 10x25 inches from feed sacks or old overall material. Cut nine fringe strips 24 inches long and 9 inches wide from old blanket, underwear, stockings, or other soft old material. Woolen fabric is better for dust or oil mops. Make slashes in fringe strips 2 inches apart and 7 inches deep leaving a 2-inch base.

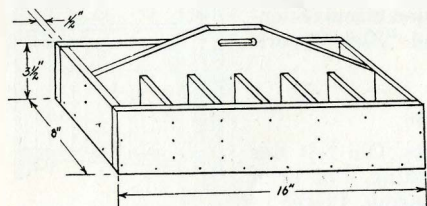


Fig. 3.—Cleaning or repair kit.

2. Turn the foundation piece with a long edge toward you. Draw lines $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from each of the side edges. Draw a line 2 inches above the lower edge between these lines. Continue drawing parallel lines $\frac{1}{2}$ inch

apart until within 4 inches of the upper edge.

3. Place the base edge of a fringe strip on the bottom line and stitch to place 1 inch from the edge. Place another strip on the line above and stitch 1 inch from the edge. When the last strip has been stitched in place turn under its edge and stitch on the edge of the fold.

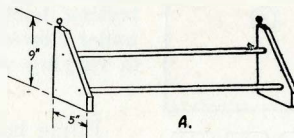
4. Fold the side edges of the foundation piece together with the fringe inside and sew $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the edge taking care not to catch the fringe. Put a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch hem around the upper edge leaving an opening in the hem at each side for double draw strings. Insert the draw strings. Turn the lower edge back $\frac{1}{2}$ inch on the wrong side and baste. Turn the unfinished bag with the fringe side out.

5. Prepare a 12-inch pad of fringe as thick as the machine will stitch. Cut off 1 inch of the base. Insert the base of fringe pad between the lower edges and stitch the edges together completing the bag. Tie the bag over broom stub and the dry or wet mop is complete.

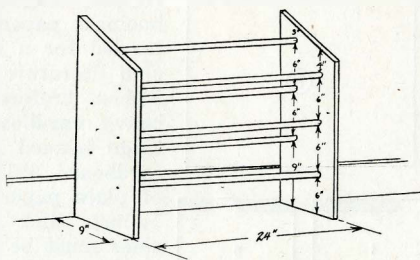
Soak the bag for oil mop in hot water to which 2 tablespoons of raw linseed oil have been added. (Stir thoroughly to blend the oil with the water). Hang the bag on line to dry. The water will evaporate leaving the oil evenly distributed on the mop.

Uses for Sacks

Extension Clubs in a southern state made more than a hundred kinds of useful articles from sacks. Mattress pads, bed spreads, lunch cloths, table covers, curtains, garments and many other articles can be made from flour or sugar sacks. Feed sacks may be used to make spring and mattress covers. They may be dyed and used as upholstery, slip cover or rug material. Burlap sacks



A.



B.

Fig. 4.—Shoe racks made from old broom handles and scraps of board. The top rack is made to hang on the closet door.

may be used as the foundation for hooked rugs or chair pads. They may be raveled and three strands used as one substituted for yarn or rags. The strands are wound into hanks and dyed rose, red, blue, green, and brown. The colors are subdued in tone and blend nicely with the natural color strands used for the background. See extension circulars entitled "Rug Making at Home" and "Slip Covers, Chair Cushions and Pad."

Uses for Old Felt Hats

Do not throw away old felt hats. Old felt has many uses. Rip off the band and lining. Cut brim away from crown for convenient storing. Pieces of felt may be glued on the bottom of accessories or pieces of furniture which otherwise might mar polished surfaces upon which they rest. Pieces may be used as weather strips to prevent cold entering poorly fitted windows and doors. The felt may be dyed and converted into attractive hats, boudoir slippers and bags for children.

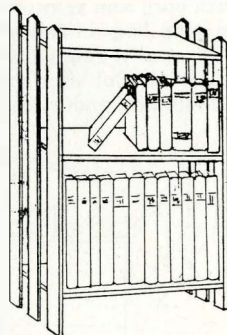


Fig. 5.—Filing box case.

Uses for Old Auto Tires

An old auto tire turned inside out makes a very good form for a small flower bed. It is pleasing left in natural color but it can be painted a soft grass green if preferred.

Many uses have been found for old inner tubes. They can be turned into toys, neat protecting boots for the kitchen chairs, pads for under flower pots and convenient rubber bands in varying widths and lengths.

Filing Boxes

Filing boxes are very convenient for storing recipes, magazine articles, club literature, and business papers for ready reference. Materials needed for a box of convenient size for filing club literature are: two pieces of board $2\frac{1}{2} \times 9$ inches, preferably $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick; one piece of heavy cardboard $12 \times 20\frac{1}{2}$ inches; four dozen large headed brads; 8 pieces of light weight cardboard 9×11 inches for guide cards; sheet of plain paper for labels and paste. If boards $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick are used, the cardboard for the sides must be $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide. If inch boards are used the cardboard should be $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide.

Turn the piece of cardboard, for box covering, with the $20\frac{1}{2}$ -inch side toward you. Mark in 9 inches from each end on both top and bottom edges. Connect these points forming a $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch panel through center. Score these lines with dull knife and bend to form a cover.

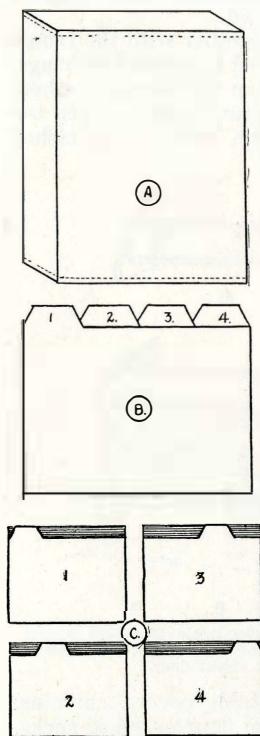


Fig. 6.—Filing box.

Insert one piece of wood between cover at top edge and fasten with brads spaced three-fourth inches apart. (Fig. 3a). Fasten other board between lower edge of cover in the same manner. If unattractive cardboard is used it should be covered or enameled. The box is stood on end with open

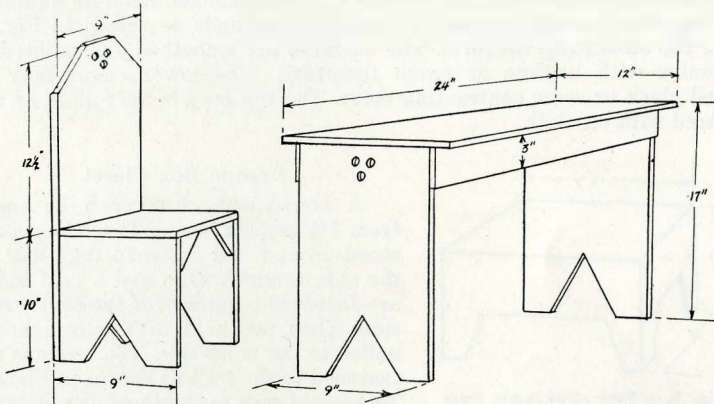


Fig. 7.—Child's chair and table made from scraps of wood. The dimensions should be adapted to the size of the child.

space toward wall. A label should be placed 1 inch above the bottom edge.

Eight guide cards will be needed for club literature, one each for "Clothing," "Food," "Home Furnishing," "Home Management," "Christmas Gift," "Music in the Home," "Reading in the Home," and "Economy Literature." They are made in two sets of four each (Fig. 3b). Divide the upper edge of each guide cardboard into four equal parts. Draw half-inch lines at right angles to these points. Draw a line at the end of the half-inch lines parallel with upper edge. Cut out sections shaded in Fig. 3c. Make second set. Fit sets together. Label in order desired. Put into box and file literature.

A convenient storage place should be provided for the filing boxes. The one shown in Fig. 4 is made from scraps of lumber and enameled to fit into the color scheme of the room in which it is used.

Household Kit

A kit which can be used for cleaning or repair supplies is illustrated by Fig. 5. The materials needed are two pieces $\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2} \times 16$ inches for the sides; two pieces $\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ inches for the ends; one piece $\frac{1}{2} \times 8 \times 15$ inches for the bottom; one piece $1 \times 8 \times 15$ to be shaped for center division. The hand hold is made by boring five 1-inch holes close together, then cutting out the connecting wood and smoothing all sides of the opening. One side of the kit is left undivided for cleaning rags or repair tools. The other side is

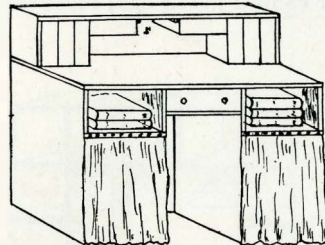


Fig. 8.—Child's desk made from two apple boxes, six or eight cigar boxes, scraps of wood, a partitioned tray for a drawer, and two dyed flour sacks.

divided with pieces of cigar boxes into the desired compartments for cleaning supplies or for nails, tacks, screws, etc.

Foot Stool

An attractive foot stool for kitchen or porch is made from an ammunition box. Sections are cut out of the sides and ends as shown in Fig. 9, giving the stool graceful form. The surfaces are smoothed and painted to harmonize with kitchen or porch furniture. The lower edges may be painted black or some contrasting color. The top may be left plain or upholstered with oil cloth.

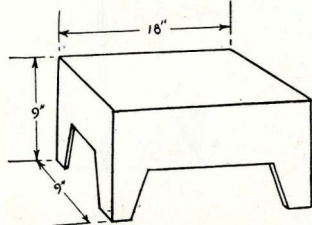


Fig. 9.—Foot stool made from ammunition box.

Orange Box Closet

A convenient closet can be made from $7\frac{1}{2}$ orange boxes. Three boxes are stood on end and fastened together for the side sections. One and a half boxes are fastened together for the center section. They are held firmly by a board nailed to the underside. The sections are fastened to the wall as shown in Fig. 10. Two metal rods for hangers are fastened to a board placed a convenient distance

below the center section. The boxes may be painted or papered inside. The closet is covered with curtains of unbleached muslin or other suitable material.

The shoe rack is made from one end of an orange box cut in two on the diagonal. The pieces are fastened together as illustrated with four narrow pieces of wood.

Window Cold Storage Box

Materials needed for cold storage box illustrated in Fig. 11 are a soap or canned goods box; material from another box for shelves; four pieces

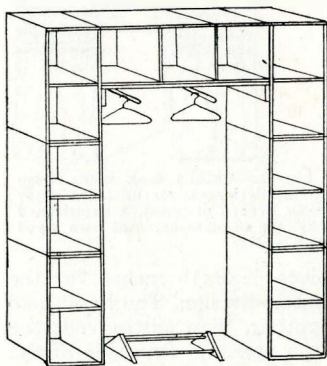


Fig. 10.—Closet made of orange boxes.

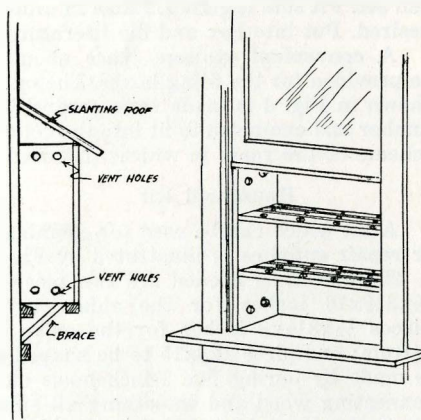


Fig. 11.—Window cold storage box.

1x2x12 inches for shelf cleats; two pieces 1x2x12 inches for braces; one piece 1x2 inches the width of box for bottom cleat, two blocks 1x2x2 inches for brace rests; and four pieces of non-rusting screening 3x6 inches to cover ventilating holes at sides of box. The shelves should be constructed so as to permit good circulation of air.

Storage Case for Sewing Machine

The old fashioned sewing machine is difficult to dust and it is not very ornamental. What to do with it when not in use is a problem for most homemakers. The storage case illustrated in Fig. 12 protects the machine from dust and makes an interest center which can be adapted to any room in the house. If used for a desk or dressing table the cabinet should be just high enough to permit the machine to slide under when the drop leaf is raised. A pigeon hole section made from cigar boxes may be added to the top if it is used for a desk. If used for a dressing table a curtained shelf may be placed at the back to form a compartment for cosmetics. The case may be made sufficiently high to provide a compartment above the machine for sewing supplies or books. The drop leaf may be omitted if desired. The curtain may be made to cover the entire front.

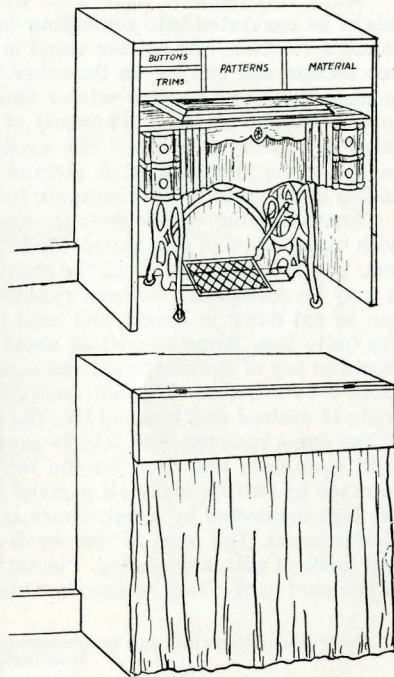


Fig. 12.—Sewing machine storage case.

Bedside Table

The modernistic bedside table (Fig. 13) is made reversible so that it can be placed on either side of the bed. The compartments are open at both front and back. The table is made of 14-inch lumber to accommodate large magazines. The compartments (inside measure) are 11 inches wide and 10 inches high. The entire height of the table is 36 inches.

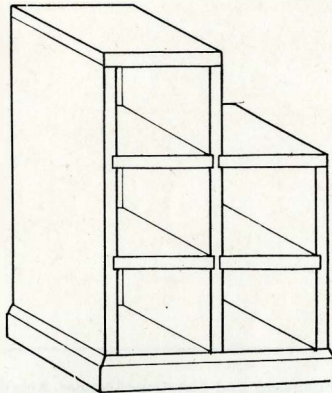


Fig. 13.—Bedside table.

Modernizing Furniture

Many homemakers have been wishing that their old fashioned stand might be converted into something modern and pleasing. One homemaker found a solution. She cut the stand in two diagonally leaving three legs on one section and one leg on the other. She used the three-legged part for a console table and hung a mirror above it. It made a lovely center of interest, just the place for a bouquet of cut flowers in summer and a colorful piece of pottery in winter. She used the one-legged section as a bedside table for the alarm clock. A strip of board fastened to the wall with finishing nails made a good support for the back edge.

Another thing which gives the homemaker concern is the old bedstead with high head and foot board. Modernizing it really is not a difficult problem. The foot board is about the right height for a modern head board and it may be substituted without change for the head board. The head board can be cut down in height and used for the foot board. Many foot boards are quite low. Some consist of short posts even with or but little higher than the top of the mattress, and connected with a board varying in width from 6 to 9 inches. Wooden door steps may be screwed into square top posts if desired and finished like the bed. The iron bed can be modernized in the same manner. The foot is used for the head. The head is cut down with hack saw, and used for the foot. A fashionable studio type bed can be made by cutting away all parts of the head leaving only short posts and the legs connected by a bar. Holes in the metal rods can be built up with plastic wood. The ends of the small posts can be filled with large corks, and finished with a door stop. Plastic wood can be used to finish off the top of the post at the base of the door stop.

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