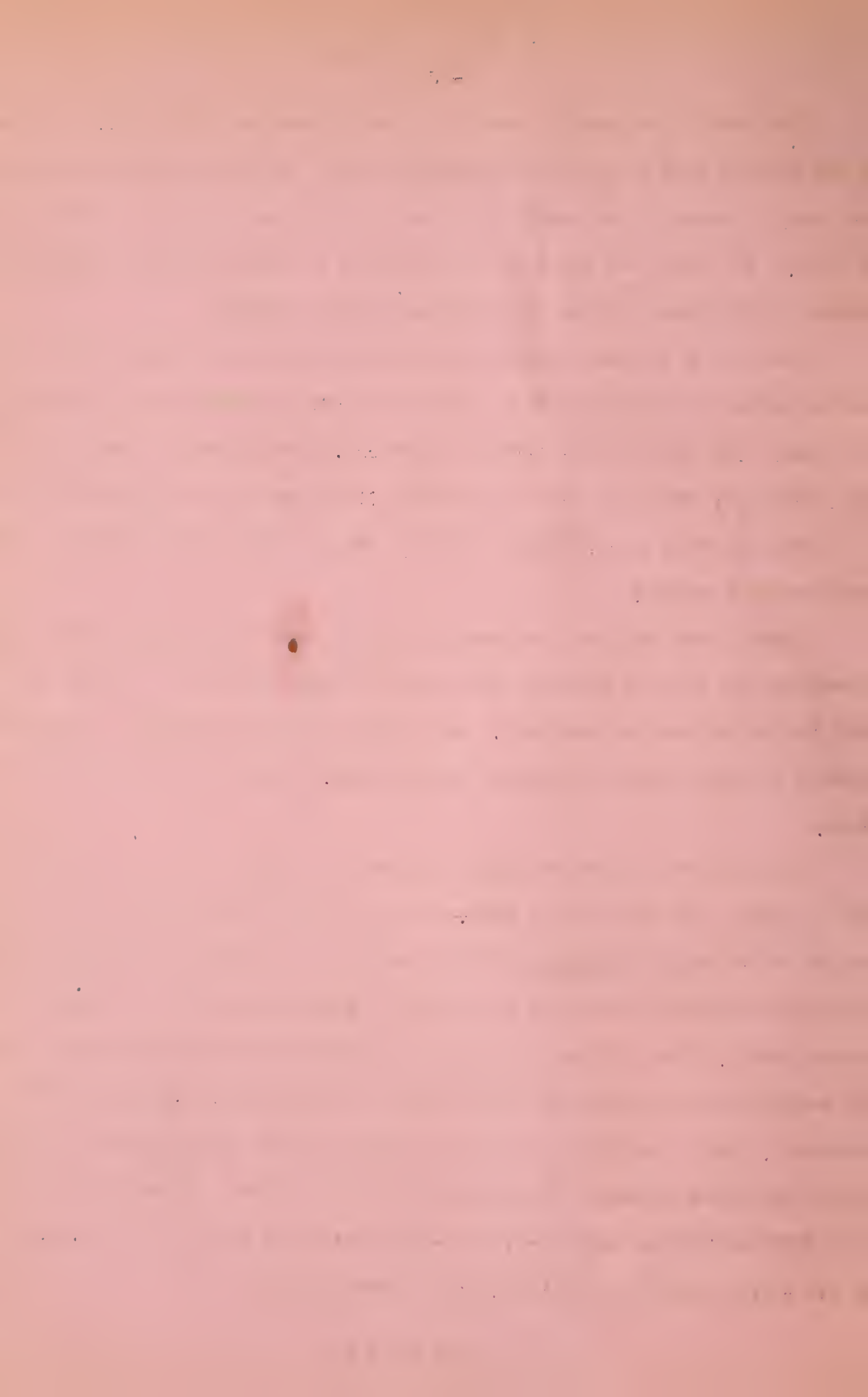


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homemakers' chat

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Friday, July 3, 1942

SUBJECT: "TO KEEP WASHABLE DRESSES WASHABLE" Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Come warm, sunny days, and every woman longs for cool, washable dresses. We all want smart, crisp-looking frocks that can go into the tub and under the iron with excellent results.

Because of the war, many of us are working longer hours now. We have less time to devote to our clothes but we want to get good results just the same. So here are some tips from textile and clothing experts of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, on just how to take care of washable frocks.

First of all, remember to treat a dress gently....whether it's cotton, silk, or rayon. This has a lot to do with the way it looks and how long it wears. Don't pull or yank when you're putting the dress on or taking it off. If you do, you may rip a seam or even break through the fabric.

However, no matter how well you treat your clothes, most dresses need some repair sooner or later. Whether it's a rip, tear, or worn spot, mend it right away before it has a chance to get any worse. You can mend many of these places so the mend is hardly noticeable. When patching a print dress, match the patch to the print. It's also wise to check over a dress occasionally. A button, a hook, or a piece of trimming may be loose and a stitch in time saves much trouble later on.

Enough closet space is important for good care of your clothes. If possible, see to it that there's a little space between garments hanging in the closet. It helps to hold the press, and keeps the fabric from getting that stringy look.

Be sure to hang up a dress as soon as you take it off. Use hangers near the shape of your dress shoulders....wooden or padded hangers are usually best. Unless your closet is well ventilated, first hang your dress where air can get at it for awhile. This is very important in hot weather when frocks are often damp with perspiration.

When you hang up a dress, be sure to fasten it to keep it from sagging out of shape. Fastening also keeps anything from catching on hooks, buttons, and zippers. Another thing - don't leave your belt on the dress - hang it separately. If the belt has a buckle you can suspend it from the hook part of the hanger. If not, drape it over the rod section. When left on a dress the weight of the belt may pull too heavily on the fabric.

Packing clothes for a week-end or vacation trip requires some care. Be sure to pack dresses loosely with tissue paper between folds and in the sleeves. Unpack and hang them up as soon as you can. In some fabrics, creases caused by packing will soon disappear, especially if the weather is damp.

But the real job on the care of wash dresses is laundering. They must be washed often and thoroughly. Check on the kind of fabric your dress is made of before you put it in the tub. Some materials need a little extra care.

Close all zippers before you put a dress in water. And check on trimmings, buttons, and other fastenings to make sure they are washable. If they aren't take them off before you tub the dress.

Wash cottons and washable silks and rayons in warm water - never in hot. Use a mild soap that won't affect the color, and rinse very well. Squeeze rayons when you wash them - never rub because some types are weak when wet. Also look out for colors that might run. If materials are not labeled colorfast to washing, the colors may fade or "bleed" into other clothes you are washing with them.

In case you have a frock with colors that might run, wash it separately and as quickly as you can. Then roll it in a towel and squeeze gently to remove surplus water. Take it out and dry as soon as possible, and iron when the frock is almost dry.

Some people use a wringer for their more sturdy dresses. If you do this, be sure to put them through wrong side out or turn the buttons under so they can't be easily caught or broken. Make certain, too, that buttons are flat and watch out for anything that might cut or snag the fabric.

Hang your frocks outdoors in the shade to dry. Never hang them in the sun.... the sun fades some colors. If you prefer, put better dresses on hangers inside the house but where air can reach them. You'll find that sheer wash frocks look better if rolled in a turkish towel right after washing, and then ironed at once.

When you iron, watch the temperature of your iron. Don't let it get too hot. Some fabrics, such as acetates and nylon, will melt under a hot iron, and all materials can be scorched. Watch the pressure you use also. Fabrics with rough weaves look a lot better if you don't press them too hard.

Many materials also look better if ironed on the wrong side. Among these are linens, linen-like rayons, rayon sheers, acetates, crease-resistant fabrics, shantung weaves, dotted swiss, and cotton seersucker. In fact, this applies to practically any fabric with a rough texture. It prevents shine, and also helps to bring out the texture of the fabric more than ironing on the right side.

And that's all today on keeping wash dresses ship-shape in hot weather.

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