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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE



CURRENT SERIAL RECORD

NOV 14 1944

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Friday, November 24, 1944

ANSWERS FROM:

Home economists of the U. S.
Department of Agriculture

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Reserve
QUESTION BOX A

Clean woolens at home?
How repair hooked rugs?
How mend ironing cord?

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And now for a homemaker's quiz session. Our questions today come from conservation-minded women -- women bent on making their household goods last as long as possible. The first one wants to know about cleaning woolen clothes at home. Another is interested in repairing her hooked rugs...and a third asks how to mend an ironing cord. Here are the answers from the U. S. Department of Agriculture's home economists.

Let's take this first question. The homemaker writes that she tried to get a small grease spot out of her new flannel dress with carbon tetrachloride. It seems she got the spot out all right...but now there's a big ring in its place. "Can I or can I not take out little spots like that here at home?" she asks. Well...the answer is yes...you can. But chances are you won't have any more success than Lady Macbeth had if you use her method of just talking to it and scrubbing away on it. It takes considerable care and "know-how" to do the job correctly.

Using carbon tetrachloride on a grease spot is right. Or you can use gasoline or benzene. Although...as you know...benzene and gasoline both are highly inflammable. So you have to be careFUL and keep them away from any fire. Carbon tetrachloride isn't an easy name to remember. But once you do have it...I bet you don't forget it soon. There's something sort of rhythmic about the sound... carbon tetrachloride.

The trick in getting out a grease spot from wool is to lay it face down on a dry cloth pad and, using light brushing motions, sponge from the outside of the



spot toward the center with another cloth soaked in the cleaning fluid. Work from the outside in... and try to spread or "feather out" the liquid around the stain. That'll keep the ring from forming.

Of course...you want to make your treatment fit the spot. Cold water will often do the job on fruit or other food stains. All those stains take is a quick sponge with plain cold water. But if the stain is persistent...it'd be wise to try lukewarm water with a little mild soap next.

Finally, a couple of general rules to follow in "spotting out" wool. Whatever the stain...you'll want to follow these for good results. Any stain comes out best when you start work on it quickly...while it's fresh. But if you can't work on it immediately, remember...do not press over the stain before you take it out. Pressing spots with a warm iron will often "set" them. Another thing: always test the effect of water or a chemical remover on a hidden seam or hem. Otherwise, you may end up with a worse spot than you started with. Well...so much for the spots.

Turning to the question about repairing hooked rugs, the next homemaker asks..."Is there anything I can do to keep the edge of my hooked rug from getting frayed? It's beginning to show wear and since it's in the hall...I'm afraid it'll get pretty raggedy looking before I can afford a new one."

The U. S. Department of Agriculture's home management specialists say indeed there is something you can do to keep up your rug's appearance. What's more... they say...it's smart to do it now. Rugs are expensive household items... and a repair job on them done in time saves a lot of money.

If the hooked rug is barely showing signs of wear at the edges...the simplest way to keep it looking fit is to sew a new facing right over the old hem. That'll reinforce the edge and will probably be all that's needed. It's not a hard job... and it's one that will repay you amply.

But if the rug is torn or damaged...you'll have to take a little more time and do some actual repair work. For a step by step description of how to do it...write your name and address on a post card to the U. S. Department of Agriculture... Washington 25, D. C. Ask for Farmer's Bulletin Number nineteen sixty. The name of it is "Carpet and Rug Repair." I'll repeat that. The new bulletin is Carpet and Rug Repair. Be sure to give your name and address. You can get a free copy from the U. S. Department of Agriculture...Washington 25, D. C.

Our third question today comes from a woman who's had a fairly common experience with her ironing. It seems her electric cord had been poorly mended. She blew a fuse. Now...all of us have had that happen at one time or another and we know it's troublesome. What's more, if it happens often, there's danger of damaging your electrical appliance. But whether or not you're worried about that, the fact remains -- we want to keep our household equipment in good repair. Especially equipment made from vital war materials. And electric cords contain copper and rubber--well...that's enough said.

This homemaker asks how to attach a new plug to an old cord. I'm not going to give the steps in doing the job because the Department of Agriculture has an illustrated folder showing how it's done. There's a picture of each step. The little folder, How to Make your Electric Cords Last Longer, has many more tips on the care and repair of electric cords and if you're interested in keeping yours in tip-top shape, I'd suggest that you drop a card to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C. for your free copy. Just ask for directions on how to make your electric cord last longer.

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