



Restoring Accessories

Hints and Ideas

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Prepared by

Katherine L. Habel, Extension Specialist, Home Furnishings

INTRODUCTION

Today its a return to the rugged individualism of an earlier day in America's history. Evidences of this re-awakening are apparent all about us . . . a taste for individuality that is refreshing and invigorating our nation's creative spirit. More people are looking for ways to express their individual taste by selecting and using old objects in their space for living. It is to this new spirit that this circular is dedicated—to make the home more attractive and comfortable through the choice and use of restored accessories.

First of all, find a place in which to work that is separate from your daily activities. The ideal workshop is a well ventilated basement, garage, or utility room that has year-round temperature control. If you are fortunate enough to have a cement floor with a drain, that would be the perfect place to set down your tools and go to work.

Many inflammable substances are used in restoring some accessories. Try to work in an area near a window that can provide ventilation as well as light. Avoid working near hot radiators or in the furnace room. Have a small shelf or cabinet nearby to hold such equipment as glue, small paint cans, turpentine, varnish and other substances that will be discussed later.

Protect your floor with layers of newspapers and a plastic or canvas dropcloth. Use gloves and safety glasses when working with caustic liquids. Throughout this publication an asterisk (*) is used to call attention to materials that should be used with caution (see page 6).

In the choice and use of accessories for your home, look around the house for things your forefathers had. Many articles no longer needed for their original purposes can serve other uses in your home.

Baskets made of native materials, splint, honeysuckle, and willow can hold sewing, magazines, firewood, fruit, plants, flowers, and other items.

Wooden articles such as churns, sugar buckets, fish buckets, coffee grinders, rectangular boxes with lids, bread trays and boards, butter bowls and molds, and benches can serve many diverse needs.

Pottery is opaque, has a nice texture and warmth. It can be secured in beautiful shapes and sizes to be used for flower arrangements, ash trays,

bowls, and for decorative objects. Do not paint or decorate pottery.

Metal objects are simple and uncluttered. Among the most useful and decorative are the brass kettle, the apple butter kettle, the chafing dish, teapot and stand, brass, copper, and pewter planters, trays, and coffee pots. Pewter is very attractive, especially if displayed on oak, together with a few pieces of blue china.

Among the most useful *tin articles* are the candlesticks, candle mold, big coffeepot, fireside and other canisters, trays, the rectangular planter, and large discarded commercial round and square tins.

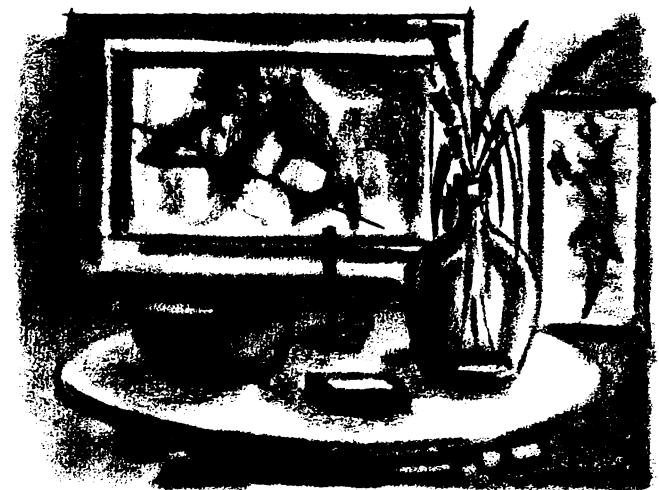
Old pieces of *wrought iron* are useful if restored. Sad irons can be used as bookends and door stops, and pots can be used for pine cones by the fireplace.

Some accessories have *gold trim*. Small gold boxes add interest to mini-art shelves or to the collector's display.

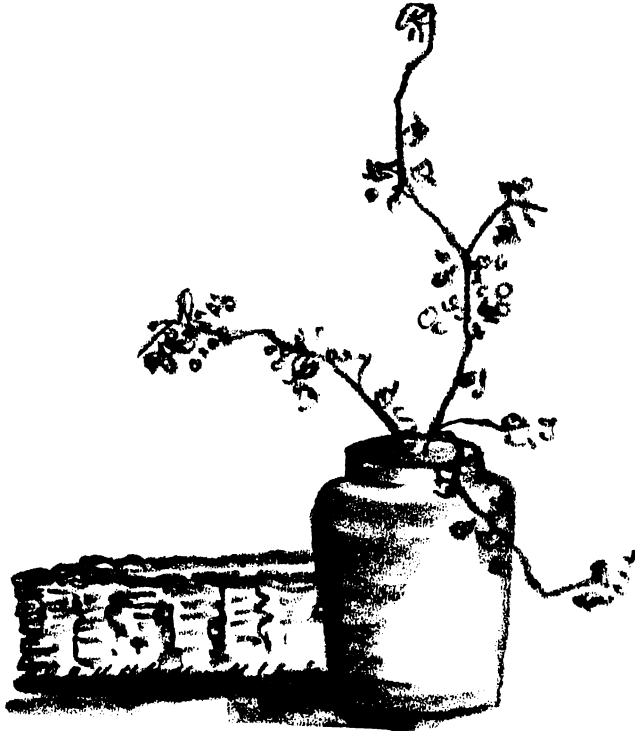
Old *marble tops* can be combined with old iron legs to make attractive tables or used for an extra decorative shelf.

Prints from the past are decorative and some are excellent to copy for stencil patterns or to use as wall hangings or to be displayed on an easel or stand.

A glass *bottle*, formed from a beautiful substance, can withstand many conditions and remain unchanged. Bottles can be displayed by themselves or used to hold dried grasses, flowers, or colored liquids. Today's bottle collectors are accumulating objects of increasing interest.



SUGGESTED METHODS



Baskets—Well designed baskets are simple, the bottom and sides made of a native material. The edge is tightly woven or braided.

Baskets of almost any shape have some use. Those we enjoy most are in scale with the use to be made of them.

Scrub soiled baskets in detergent; follow with a laundry bleach solution to brighten up. The unfinished, scrubbed look is one of the attractive features of a basket.



Wooden Accessories—All wooden articles are cleaned and finished much the same way:

1. Remove all the old finish with a paint and varnish remover and #3 steel wool.
2. Using fine sandpaper, sand smoothly with the

grain of the wood, if the surface is rough and there are lots of nicks. Follow with extra fine sandpaper until the surface is very smooth.

3. Wipe off the dust and smooth the surface with #000 steel wool.
4. Wipe the entire surface with a cloth moistened with turpentine.
5. If you need a mellow color you can darken the wood by mixing 1/2 turpentine and 1/2 boiled linseed oil. Go over the entire surface with this mixture. Add burnt umber to the cloth. Rub lightly for a little extra color. If you need more color, add a good deal of burnt umber and rub off the excess. If too dark, you can remove some color with a cloth dampened with turpentine.
6. Let the color dry over night. Then finish the surface with wood sealer.
 - a. Use all the sealer the wood will absorb in the first coat. Rub off the excess with a cloth. Let dry over night.
 - b. Rub the surface with #0000 steel wool until you get a dull satin finish.
 - c. Dust and apply a second coat of wood sealer. Let dry over night.
 - d. Rub with a soft cloth dipped first in linseed oil, then in pumice, to get a satin finish.
 - e. Wax or rub lightly with the boiled linseed oil and turpentine mixture.

This finish is quite durable. It can be patched without having to remove the finish, only the wax. There are special kits that can be used for restoring wood. Refer to literature on refinishing furniture.

Cleaning emulsion for dirty wood:

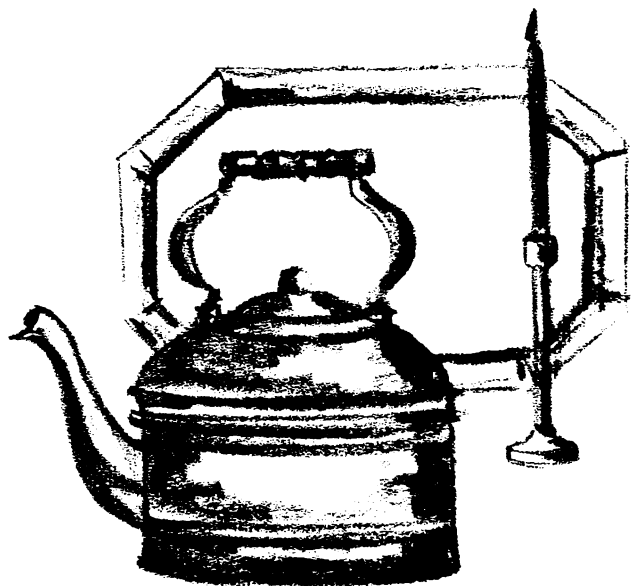
Linseed oil	1 part
Vinegar	1 part
Turpentine	1 part
Methylated spirits	1/4 part

Method: mix together by shaking vigorously, apply with a soft cotton cloth and rub thoroughly.



Pottery—Large stone crocks serve as excellent umbrella holders. They are ornamental when used on the porch, stoop, or by the fireplace.

Unglazed pottery sometimes leaks. This can be corrected by pouring hot paraffin into the container. Roll the container to allow the paraffin to coat all the inside surface. To remove paint from the outside of pottery, use lye.* Handle lye with *extreme* caution.



Metals—Copper objects often acquire a bluish-green coating. To remove this, make a paste of powdered chalk and methylated spirit and rub it on with a soft cloth. Polish with fine whiting and finish with a metal polish. A weak solution of oxalic acid* rubbed onto spots of corrosion with a soft cloth will loosen them. If fiercer abrasive methods are used to clean copper, they will scratch the metal, and the scratches in turn must be polished.

Remove water spots on copper with whiting and spirits of turpentine made into a paste.

The old fashioned method of cleaning copper was to rub it with half a lemon dipped in salt and this is still good as it does not remove the patina from the metal.

Thoroughly cleaned copper objects can be lacquered.

To preserve the finish you may wish to lacquer brass or copper after they have been buffed to a high gloss. Use 1/2 lacquer, 1/2 thinner; flow it on with a soft brush. Do not rebrush. Handle article with cloth or gloves; fingerprints tarnish.

Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin, and because it is a very good metal for casting there are many bronze statuettes. The colour which bronze has achieved by patination is often very attractive. If you want to remove the patina use a brass brush, not a steel one. A ten percent solution of vinegar in water will take off the harder constituents leaving a

red discoloration. Remove by rubbing with soft cloth.

Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc. Wash dirty brass with ammonia solution* to remove grease and dirt, then clean it with a solution of vinegar and salt - one heaped tablespoon of salt and two tablespoonfuls of vinegar to a pint of water. (Oxalic acid* and salt will remove dirt also). Polish with a metal polish (commercial brass polish). Brass can be lacquered to avoid the necessity for perpetual cleaning.



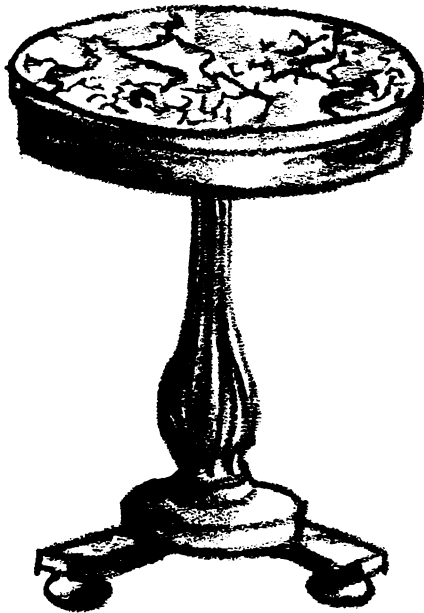
Pewter is an alloy of various metals but tin is its principal component. If the object has a dull gray oxidation that is unattractive, rub it with a light abrasive powder; either crocus powder or whiting added to a cloth dipped in linseed oil. It can be washed off with soap and water. As with all metals, oxidation can be prevented by a protective coat of spray fixative.

Tin items are versatile. Some can be used with their natural tin color; others may be colored and stenciled.

To clean rust from tin, use #0000 steel wool dipped in kerosene and rub the surface. Before painting tin, under-coat with a metal rust-preventive paint. Remove paint from tin with paint remover. Metal polish will help to restore tin color to surface.

Iron accessories should have a dull finish. For removal of rust, use a commercial rust solvent; or prolonged immersion in a 10% solution of oxalic acid*, aided by some rubbing, will be effective. Avoid using enamel on iron. If you must darken it, use black stove polish.

Gold is the most indestructible of metals. It does not tarnish or corrode. Small gold articles and gold trim are on many old accessories. To clean, wipe with water and mild soap or pure detergent. If the gold has tarnish that will not come off, then it is not pure gold but is alloyed with other metals. Ammonia solution* will clean off the tarnish. Finally, use a gold polish with a soft cloth or chamois. Remove any scratches with jeweller's rouge.



Marble—Marble accessories are particularly attractive in the home, but they require special care and attention. Some of the specific materials needed to clean marble are:

<u>Materials</u>	<u>Usually available from</u>
Tin Oxide (polishing putty powder) 3 or 4 oz.	Marble Supply House Marble Finisher Chemical Supply House
Amyl Acetate* 1 oz. bottle	Drug Store
Acetone* 1 oz. bottle	Drug Store
Hydrogen Peroxide* (hair strength)	Drug Store

If marble surface is pitted or roughened beyond surface dulling, consult a marble finisher. Do not use acids to clean marble. Protect marble by covering when painting. In cleaning marble walls or marble figures, wet the marble first with warm water, then sponge off the surface with soapless cleaner solution. Work from the bottom up in small overlapping sections. Rinse and dry

thoroughly to avoid streaking and spotting.

With simple care, marble will retain its original beauty and luster under normal aging and wear.

Immediately wipe up spilled substances just as you do from wood. Clean surfaces frequently to prevent dullness and griminess.

Wash marble surfaces frequently. Use clean cloths and warm water. Wipe dry with a chamois or soft dry cloths to prevent streaking and spotting. If dirt is ingrained, scrub with a fiber brush, warm water, and a mild detergent solution. Rinse; wipe dry.

If marble is dull, polish surface with tin oxide powder (also called polishing putty powder). Buy only a small amount, about 4 ounces. Wet the marble and sprinkle putty powder over dulled surface. Dampen a folded coarse cloth or a piece of felt or short-napped carpet. Rub. Keep cloth damp to prevent spotting. It takes vigorous, patient rubbing over a small area (3 or 4 square inches at a time) to produce a shine.

To remove stains from marble, first of all try to determine what caused the stain, and remove the source. Be certain there is a stain. Many "stains" are really dull spots in the polish caused by acid-bearing liquids or foods.

Unpolished marble does not look the same as polished marble. Look at an unpolished area (bottom); compare its appearance with the spot. If the spot is dull, it is an etch, not a stain. To remove dullness, re-polish with tin oxide.

Follow two steps to remove a stain. Bleach it out; then, if necessary, polish the surface to restore the finish.

Grease and oil stains are the most difficult to remove from marble. Give them immediate attention. They sink in, spread out, and leave a soft tan stain that will not come out entirely. Even oil from modeling clay will sink in and stain if left on.

To remove grease and oil stains, first wet marble with water to surround stain so it won't spread. Then cover stained area with a cloth or white blotter. Pour equal parts of acetone* and amyl acetate*, or lighter fluid*, directly on cloth until saturated. Keep moist for about 12 hours by placing a thin piece of glass over cloth. Then, bleach with hydrogen peroxide* and household ammonia.*

To remove tea, coffee, and tobacco stains, wash the marble surface with warm water, then bleach out the stain. If the surface is flat, apply hydrogen peroxide* (hair strength) to stained area; add a few drops of household ammonia*. For vertical panels, saturate a blotter with hydrogen peroxide* and apply to stain; add a few drops of household ammonia*.

Rinse the entire surface with clear water. Dry with a chamois. Polish the surface, if necessary, using tin oxide powder.

To remove paint from marble surfaces, carefully cut and scrape it away with a razor blade or knife. Apply paint-and-varnish remover to stained area; scrape off gently with a wooden paddle. If an oil stain is left, treat as for grease and oil. Wash with mild detergent and warm water, rinse, dry with chamois.

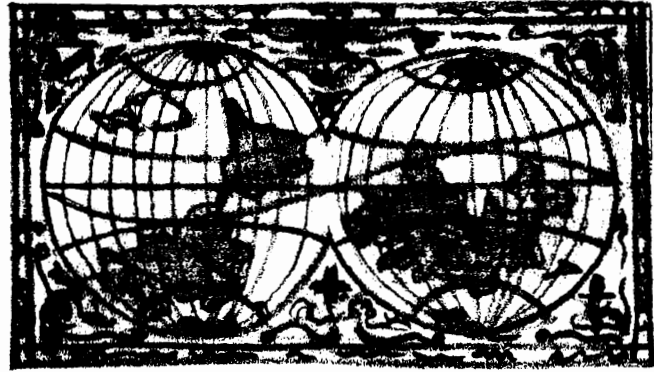


Glass—Glass objects can be free from nicks or chips but the surface may appear cloudy or frosted. This may have been caused by poor formulation of the glass from which the piece was made, or the piece has oxidized from chemical action.

To clean old glass bottles, flasks and plates, you need a green twig, cotton swab, colorless mineral oil, vinegar, washing soda, and soap and water.

Old flasks and bottles, because of their shapes, are hard to clean. A way to clean these is to take a pliable green twig and attach a swab to one end; dip the swab in a good grade of clear, colorless mineral oil; patiently work the swab around inside of the bottle. Rub each cloudy spot until it disappears. A bottle or flask so treated must then be tightly corked and kept so because the cloudiness will return as soon as the oil has evaporated.

Mild vinegar and washing soda solutions, both inexpensive and mild, are excellent for cleaning dried sediment from old glass plates. Wash the cleaning solutions off with soap and water.



Prints—Old prints may be cleaned and repaired by using a kneaded eraser for cleaning and photographic mounting tissue to repair tears.

Prints, especially valuable ones, should be turned over to experts for careful treatment. However, surface dust and grime can be removed from prints quite easily by anyone. Take light strokes with eraser; this will clean the surface. A very dirty margin can be whitened by rubbing lightly with powdered pumice, but this should never be done to any part except the blank margins.

Slight tears on the margins of prints can be repaired by backing them with other paper. For this, it is best to use photographic mounting tissue and to cut the patches as small as possible. Do not use library paste; it wrinkles the paper when it dries.

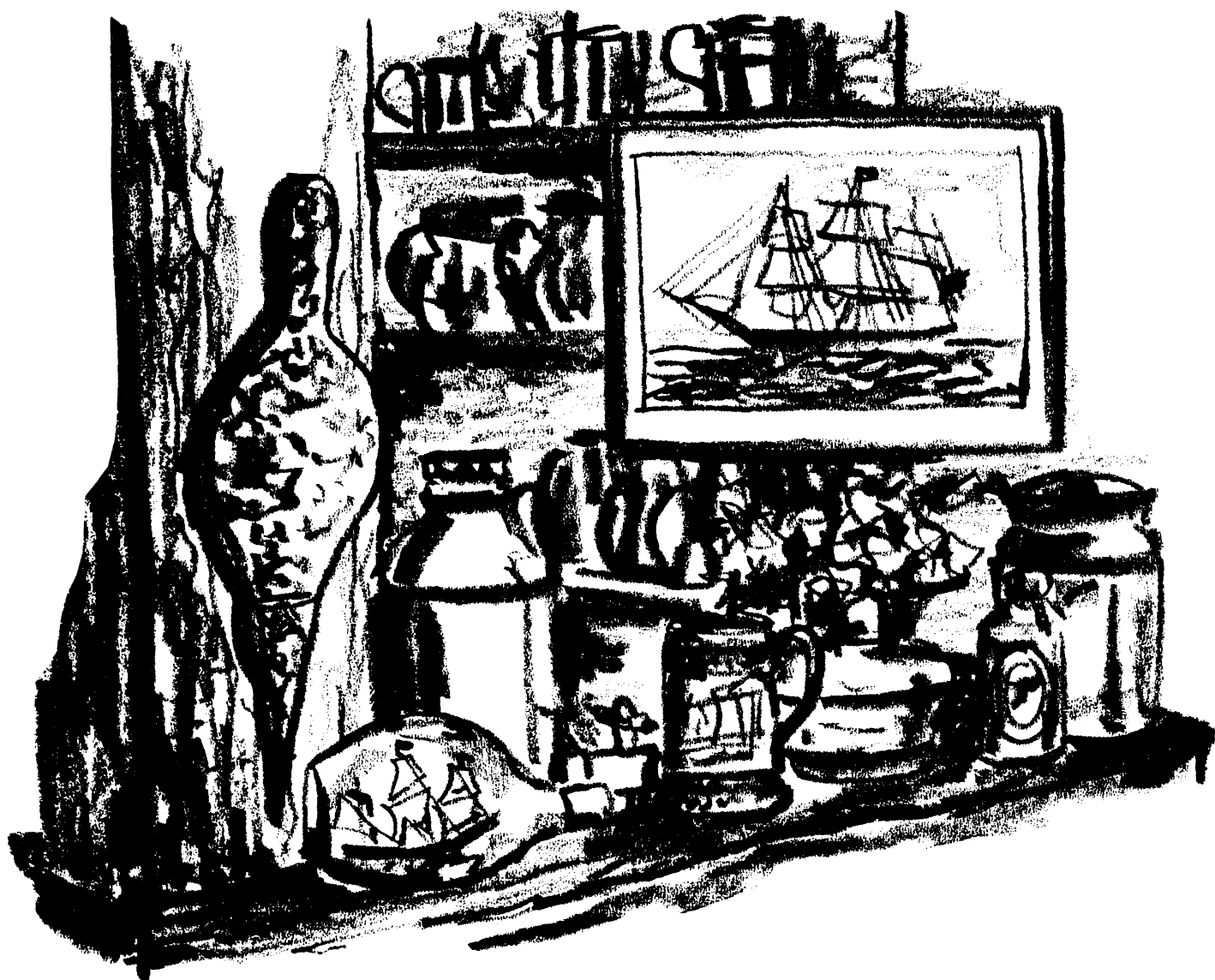
Prints should never be kept rolled. When one is acquired in this condition, the best way to take out the curl is to place it face down on a table, weight it with books, or heavy boards and leave it for several days. In doing this, work cautiously since the paper is brittle and may crack if not handled gently.

CONCLUSION

No one family would own or need all these accessories. Because of the scarcity of such articles, few of your neighbors will own or use the same accessories in the same way. You can use your imagination to get the effect you want with restored accessories that are in scale with your rooms and other furnishings, in harmony with your surroundings, and are useful.

If you own a valuable antique that you may one day wish to sell, the slightest structural change or excess refinishing may reduce or eliminate its market value. If you have such a piece, and wish to refinish, restore or repair it, let an expert antique restorer do the job for you.

Remember, every object has its own particular characteristics so that a treatment may have to be modified to obtain the best results. If there is any doubt at all consult a specialist.



***CAUTION**

Read all labels carefully when using any household chemical. An increasing number of cleaners contain a variety of chemicals, many of which are dangerous if improperly used.

Keep all cleaners tightly covered in the original containers, out of reach of children. Never mix household chemicals not specifically recommended for use together. Some cleaners are flammable.

Dry cleaning fluid is both poisonous and flammable. Use in well ventilated room or out of doors.