



# CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

475 Park Avenue South New York, New York 10016

## HOUSEWARES TRENDS

### A Santa-sack Full of Holiday Gift Ideas

This Holiday season, harried shoppers need look no farther than their favorite housewares department for the perfect gift.

Time-starved consumers who are hungry for healthful meals will appreciate items such as juice extractors that quickly turn a favorite fruit or vegetable into a healthy drink. Non-electric stovetop grills, stir fry pans and woks are perfect for creating dishes low in calories but high in flavor. Almost-instant marinizers condense the overnight process of marinating meat down to just three minutes.

Health-conscious eaters and choco-holics alike will love the Greater Grater, a handheld appliance that can convert spices, peppercorns, cheese, nuts and chocolate to grated particles. And, while it won't add anything to the taste, the TaterTwister will certainly increase food's eye appeal. Vegetables can be transformed into spirals, twists and curls.

There's gift inspiration in the housewares department even for those whose cooking skills don't extend beyond boiling water. Teakettles are making a fashion statement, in styles that range from the functional to the fantastic. Art deco styling, bright colors, harmonica whistles and unusual handles are just a few of the innovations. In the lighthearted category is the Kettle O'Fish, complete with a fishtail-shaped handle and clear bubbles coming out of the spout. In a more serious vein are teakettles created by renowned architects and designers. The results transform a functional kitchen accessory into an art form.

Other holiday gift ideas gathered by The Soap and Detergent Association include home hair cutting kits, complete with video instructions, corrugated storage boxes in decorator patterns



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and colors, and picture frames, particularly those designed to display children's photos.

The discerning hostess who enjoys setting a table with flair can never have enough napkin rings. Many of the newest are designed to coordinate with dinnerware or table linens. Others duplicate the motifs of popular china patterns. Themed napkin rings, including Southwest motifs, fish, leaves, ducks, and holiday designs, add a touch of whimsy to the table. ■



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## POTENTIAL HAZARD OF OIL-SOAKED FABRICS

### Reminder about Proper Laundering Procedures

Everyone would normally use caution when storing fabrics soaked with gasoline or motor oil. Knowing that heat can cause such items to catch fire, they are usually handled with caution, kept away from open flames, and not stored in heated, enclosed areas.

The Soap and Detergent Association has received information that fabrics soaked with cooking oil may pose a hazard similar to that of fabrics soaked with motor oil.

If conditions are right---enough oil residue in the fabric and high enough temperature---oil-soaked fabrics can spontaneously combust and smolder or possibly catch fire. Even the temperature of fabrics after they are removed from the dryer may be high enough to cause this combustion. And, combustion has been found to occur hours after the laundry has been washed and dried. The precise conditions necessary for this phenomenon to occur are not yet well defined. However, the Association is actively seeking information on this subject.

Consumers should use precautions when using and laundering fabrics soaked with **any** type of oil, including cooking oil. Such oil accumulation can occur in restaurants where workers' clothes are splattered with cooking oils, or in homes where rags or towels are used to mop up cooking oil spills or to wipe out cooking utensils covered with oil.

When laundering oil-covered items, rigorous laundering procedures should be followed:

1. If there are only a few oil stains, pretreat stains with prewash stain remover. If oil stains are heavy, presoak items in a concentrated solution of liquid laundry detergent. Follow package directions.
2. After presoaking, wring out the items and discard the presoak solution.
3. Launder items using the amount of detergent recommended in the package directions. If staining is heavy, additional detergent should be added. Use the hottest water safe for the items being washed.
4. If oil residue remains after washing, immediately rewash using the above procedure.

5. If drying in a dryer, use a cycle with a cool down. After drying, separate and cool items in the air before folding or storing. Do **not** leave warm loads piled in a dryer or laundry basket. ■

## USE CAUTION WHEN SOAKING CLOTH DIAPERS

### Soaking Diapers in Pails Can Be A Hazard

The "Washing Cloth Diapers" article in the September/October 1991 issue of Cleanliness Facts (page 4) discussed using a five-gallon diaper pail to soak diapers before laundering. As a precaution, consumers should be alerted to the danger of young children drowning in such common household containers. Large commercial plastic or metal containers used for bulk products such as food, paint, spackling compound, etc., are most often associated with the drownings. However, this can happen in all kinds of containers, including bathtubs, toilets and diaper pails. And, drowning can occur in as little as 2 or 3" of water!

Accidents typically take place when someone is using a container with liquid for doing a household chore. The container is left unattended. A curious child reaches into it to play in the water or drops a toy in it and then falls in head first. Because a child is top heavy and many containers do not easily tip over, the child cannot get out.

At the time of the drowning incidents, most of the containers were being used to hold mop water, according to information received by The Soap and Detergent Association. Others contained liquids such as drinking water for animals, water with detergent for soaking clothes or wall paper stripper with water.

If using a diaper pail, it would be advisable to rinse diapers in the toilet, then put them in the pail without adding any water. Use a deodorizing tablet to help minimize odors. Diapers should then be laundered as soon as possible. If it is necessary to soak diapers in water, consumers should leave the diaper pail in a location not accessible to children, make sure the lid is tightly secured and never leave a child unsupervised if he or she is near the pail. Remember, young children should never be left unattended around **any** container of water. ■

**TODAY'S CERAMIC TILE****Beautiful, Practical, Durable and Decorative**

Once popular for bathtubs and shower stalls, ceramic tile has moved out of the bathroom into virtually every room in the house. It's the only surface material equally adaptable to floors, walls, tubs, showers and countertops.

Because it is available in an infinite variety of colors, textures and patterns, it is a beautiful design solution for any room in the house. Consumers can choose from a wide assortment of sizes, colors, shapes and patterns. Offerings include squares, hexagons, octagons and curved-corner pieces. Raised surfaces, faux finishes that mimic everything from granite to marble to wood parquet, fabric-inspired designs, mosaic looks and hand-painted motifs satisfy the design requirements of any decorating scheme. White and light-reflecting high gloss tiles can brighten dull spaces, while matte and irregular surfaces can help tone down brightly-lit spaces.

Ceramic tile is a non-absorptive, sanitary surface that will not retain fumes, chemicals or moisture. It is one of the few materials that can stand up to repeated moisture, steam, sunlight, and heat without fading, peeling or staining. Mildew, an old enemy to its beauty, can be held at bay by installing the tile with one of the new, specially treated silicone or epoxy grouts. Once available in white only, these grouts now come in a stunning range of colors, which further adds to the decorative possibilities of tile.

To keep tile clean and free of hard water deposits, soap scum, rust stains and discolorations from mold, use an all purpose cleaner or a tub and tile cleaner. If mildew has formed, use a brush to apply the cleaner to the grout. A solution of 3/4 cup of liquid chlorine bleach to one gallon of water or a special mildew stain remover helps in cleaning a badly stained or mildewed grout. The Soap and Detergent Association warns consumers to avoid mixing products containing chlorine bleach with products containing ammonia or acids. After any cleaner is applied, the surface should be rinsed with clean water. As the final step, the tiles should be buffed with a dry cloth to prevent water spotting. ■

**TODAY'S BATHROOMS****A Luxurious, Yet Practical, Retreat**

The bathroom of the '90's is a haven for the harried, a spa retreat to restore body and soul. However, points out The Soap and Detergent Association, many of the newest innovations also have a decidedly practical appeal.

Space, or the illusion of space, is a high priority for many consumers. Increasingly, people are willing to sacrifice closets, hallways and garages to achieve larger bathrooms. These expanded spas often house exercise equipment, dressing areas, saunas, steambaths, sunlamps and whirlpools. Space-enhancing details, such as pedestal sinks, frameless, beveled glass shower enclosures and large expanses of mirrors, make small rooms appear more spacious. These details also show off striking surfaces rich in texture and color. Ceramic tiles in vibrant tones and sculpted shapes, as well as marble, granite, stone and slate, create a sophisticated setting.

In households where everyone is on an early morning schedule, dual sinks, privacy walls that separate the toilet from the rest of the bathroom, double medicine cabinets and oversized showers with multiple body sprayers and shower heads are expedient features. Lever style facets, in sleek new finishes, are easy to turn and control, particularly for those with arthritis. Anti-scald devices protect youngsters from accidental burns. Accessories, such as wall-mounted hair dryers, towel warming bars, undercounter clothes hampers and makeup lights, combine pampering with practicality.

To eliminate the problem of soap and mildew trapped in the frame, many new models of the clear shower enclosure are trackless. For the ultimate shower, consider the stand-up Jacuzzi with electronically programmed controls.

Tubs are important, too. Whirlpool tubs, shaped to fit the body, have sculptured head and arm rests, as well as lumbar support. Look for features that provide comfort, convenience and easy care, such as flush-mounted overflows, center faucets and molded construction. Free-standing tubs are encased in redwood, marble or tile creating a dramatic focal point for the bathroom. ■





## ULTRA-LOW FLUSH TOILETS

### Keeping Water Usage to A Minimum

The average household toilet uses 3.5 gallons of water per flush, making it one of the largest sources of water consumption in the home. While this is a vast improvement over toilets made before 1970, which used 5.5 gallons per flush, it is still not efficient enough to match modern concerns about water conservation.

As a result of new technology, several manufacturers are now offering ultra-low flush (ULF) toilets that require only 1.6 gallons of water per flush. One version operates on a gravity-fed system, another utilizes an air pressure system. In terms of removing waste and leaving the bowl clean, these new versions are somewhat less efficient than the high water capacity fixtures. However, the manufacturers stress that they more than meet the standards set by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). What this means, explains The Soap and Detergent Association, is that consumers may simply have to clean the bowl a little more often.

Conservation-minded consumers who own the larger toilet fixtures have tried such ploys as adding a brick or a carton full of sand to the toilet tank. Because the object displaces water in the tank, it reduces the amount of water going into the bowl with each flush. However, it presents two problems. The first problem is reduced efficiency in terms of waste removal and cleanliness of the bowl. The second is more serious. Sand or decomposing brick can damage porcelain or clog the pipes causing plumbing problems.

The new ULF toilets are more expensive than most conventional toilets. However, the extra cost can be recouped in water savings over the lifetime of the fixture. As concerns for water supply and sewage treatment increase, it is anticipated that some local building codes will mandate ULF toilets. When obtaining building permits for renovation or construction, consumers should check with their local building regulations. While ULF toilets are currently offered in a limited number of styles and colors, improvements are expected as consumer demand and manufacturer awareness increases. ■

## MISCELLANY

### New Hues for the Holidays

People celebrate the holidays around the dining room table, points out The Soap and Detergent Association. And, when it's time to dress their homes for the holidays, consumers can look forward to new variations on traditional red and green color schemes. Hunter green and burgundy lend a whole new dimension to familiar Christmas motifs, giving them a richer, more sophisticated appeal.

In some parts of the country, retailers are reporting that green is outselling red as the color of choice for table linens and other textile accent pieces. Gold as a strong accent color is also gaining in popularity. It's a versatile choice. A white and gold or black and gold color scheme adds a festive touch for Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's and Hanukkah. Metallic accented geometrics, such as stripes and checks, or more fanciful patterns, such as roses and tropical birds, add an air of celebration without denoting a specific holiday.

### The Warm Alternative

Fashionable bed linens are going flannel. On cold winter nights, more consumers are finding the warmth of flannel a welcome change from the cold sheet syndrome of percale. And the basic pastel colors and tiny floral patterns long synonymous with flannel sheets have been replaced by a full range of geometrics, florals, jewel colors and dark tones. In reports gathered by The Soap and Detergent Association, yarn-dyed plaids, in hunter green and deep navy, are a popular choice.

In addition to their tactile appeal, many manufacturers attribute the increased interest in flannel sheets to the fact that consumers perceive them as an energy-efficient product. Sales first began to climb about ten years ago, in the midst of a severe recession at the tail end of a Mid-East oil crisis. Last winter's events in the Persian Gulf intensified their appeal. Today, even the most upscale lines of bed linens include flannel sheets.

## Caring for Furs

The fur that stays beautiful longer is the one that is treated with tender loving care. The Soap and Detergent Association advises consumers to take the following precautions. Never pin anything, e.g. jewelry, flowers or a nametag, to a fur. It will flatten the fur and damage the pelt. Don't apply perfume while wearing a fur. The alcohol will dry the leather and stiffen the guard hairs. Beware of anything that causes friction against the fur, such as shoulder bags, abrasive upholstery fabrics and rubbing or stroking. Don't leave a fur near heat, especially if it is wet. Air dry it where air can circulate. After it is dry, fluff it by shaking it out. Never brush or comb a fur.

When it comes to daily storage, hang the fur on a padded, broad-shouldered hanger. Be sure there is plenty of room for air to circulate around it. Never crush the fur, store it in a plastic bag or hang it in a lighted place. Light can cause the fur to oxidize or change color.

## Pepper Mills Are Hot

Interesting new designs, coupled with the fact that dieters and gourmet cooks alike are interested in perking up meals with fresh ground spices, have resulted in increased sales for pepper mills.

Unusual shapes, mills that can be operated with one hand, battery-operated models, better quality and a creative array of materials have pushed peppermills out of the utilitarian category and into the decorative arena. In addition, many come stocked with peppercorns that are a far cry from the usual basic black. Green, white and pink peppercorns are just a few of the more upscale offerings, reports The Soap and Detergent Association.

Many industry sources predict that peppermills indicate a rosy future for spice grinders. One company currently offers two models of spice grinders and 21 different spices. ■

## WHAT'S NEW?

Fresh pepper fanatics can carry it with them wherever they go. Just 2" long, the Mr. Dudley Pockit peppermill is slender enough to fit into a pocket or a purse. It's fully adjustable for a fine or coarse ground pepper and comes complete with a royal blue, velvet-like drawstring bag. (Dudley Kebow, Inc.; 2603 Industry Street; Oceanside, CA 92054)

CoasterStones are the answer to a hostess' prayers. These decorated disks are made from a porous sandstone that soaks up moisture, preventing glasses from sticking. A cork backing further protects the furniture. There are over 400 designs available, covering every motif from wild flowers to licensed college and university logos. Newest patterns include burlwood, marble, red and green onyx and walnut.

(Hindostone Products, Inc.; 6355 Morenci Trail; Indianapolis, IN 46268)

Children can be the key to getting the whole family to recycle. The Can Catcher and the Canosaurus are inexpensive cardboard recycling centers decorated in bright colors and graphics designed to appeal to kids. The black and white cartoon dinosaur motif comes with a set of crayons so youngsters can personalize it.

(Home Recycling Products, Inc.; 5206 McKinney Avenue; Dallas, TX 75205)

300 YEARS OF KITCHEN COLLECTIBLES is the perfect holiday gift for trivia buffs and collectors. This book includes a history of the evolution of housewares products, as well as a description and current value of more than 7,000 kitchen items. There's also a patent-date chart and over 1,800 photos and illustrations showing more than 5,000 items and more than 100 old-fashioned cooking recipes.

(Books Americana, Inc.; P.O. Box 2326; Florence, AL 35630) ■





## "KEEP IT CLEAN" BRIEFS

Clean up is easy in the microwave oven because the oven cavity does not get hot, therefore, spills and spatters don't get cooked onto the surface. Most spills will wipe away easily with a damp cloth, sponge or paper towel. Storing and cooking food in the same microwave-safe container also helps with clean up by eliminating extra dirty dishes.

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Some washable silk, washed silk and sanded silk garments may not be colorfast to either home laundering or drycleaning. To keep garment pieces the same color, it is recommended that all pieces be cleaned at the same time. If some pieces are cleaned more often than others, they may lose color and appear lighter than the remaining garment pieces. This will be especially noticeable the more often the garment is cleaned.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Some garment care labels state: "Use A Mild Detergent". In this case, use a light duty detergent (one formulated for hand or machine washing lightly soiled or delicate garments). A general purpose detergent may cause light spots to appear on the garment, especially on pastel-colored cotton fabrics. Should such spotting occur, soak the entire garment in a solution of 4 parts water and 1 part general purpose detergent. This lightens the entire garment and evens out the color.

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Empty pockets before laundering garments to avoid leaving coins that can damage your machine or tissues that can deposit lint onto clothes. If lint does occur, re-rinse the laundry and use a fabric softener in the rinse.

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Use a mesh laundry bag to avoid tangling pantyhose. This allows you to machine wash hose in dark loads safely without snags. ■

