

Here's how to maintain it Finishing embroidery is half the task

One of embroidery's stickiest problems is not the doing of it but maintenance when it's finished and on display. Everything gets dirty — eventually. When do you wash, when do you dry clean, and how on Earth do you know the difference?

Needlework has traditionally been a feminine do-it-yourself project and some of us are loathe to let anybody else touch it. When cleaning time rolls around, this philosophy can lead to disaster.

Stitcheries divide themselves into four categories. No. 1 can be removed, washed and re-blocked by traditional methods. Nobody has much trouble with No. 1.

No. 2 can't be removed from what it's attached to, but the canvas of the stitchery is accessible and you can clean and reblock No. 3 can't be removed from what it's attached to and furthermore you can't get at its back. You can't re-block this category.

No. 4 is constructed of plastic canvas and cleans like a breeze. Category No. 2 can be carefully sponged with soap or dry cleaning fluid as long as you don't let the solution touch what the stitchery's attached to. It can be gently blocked through the needlework at the stitch line, but only if you absolutely have to.

Category No. 3 must be dry cleaned, preferably by a professional. There are too many things that can go wrong for you to attempt the job at home.



the lively needle

Mary Kay Davis

Needlepoint on plastic canvas washes like a dream. Just dunk the needlepoint, minus any backings or trims, into soapy water: Wash it, rinse it, blot it and let it dry. Blocking isn't necessary.

Cloth and fibers — and that covers almost every imaginable type of needlework — are in danger from the moment they're started. Human skin oils attract dirt. You start soiling your stitchery as soon as you work it. Don't wear gloves, but do the best you can to minimize this by washing your hands before you stitch, waiting until after stitching to smooth on hand lotion, and keeping stitcheries covered when they're not actually being worked on.

HEAT COSTS MONEY and puts dirt in the air to boot. Houses warmed by oil or coal have the most greasy soot flying around, while gas and electric heat are cleaner. Don't throw out your furnace to protect your needlework, but do clean air filters

religiously. It makes a difference.

Textiles are in danger from sunlight and from fluorescent bulbs, especially the gro-bulbs that African violets love so much. Regular incandescent light bulbs should be used when needlework needs illumination. Don't place stitcheries in direct sunlight.

Slay away from windows for another reason, too. Hot air registers, windows, cold air intakes, radiators and air conditioners all attract dirt. The areas between these stay much cleaner. Choose your display spot with care.

One of the simplest ways to maintain clean needlework is to keep it from getting dirty in the first place. Slipcovers were invented to solve this problem. I put ours on in the spring when the kids switch from long to short sleeves. We keep them on until the process reverses itself in the fall. They look attractive and keep all those acres of adolescent skin away from my needlework.

Correction: A phrase was omitted from last week's Lively Needle which could foil your plans to make a Mother's Day pin cushion. The necessary items for the project are "a 5-inch square of 14 gauge interlock canvas, background scrol, a tapestry needle, a 10 gauge "twen" or quilting needle, two colors of seed beads, and waxed thread or waxed dental floss. Our apologies for the omission.

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How you find out about water quality

We live on a lake and are very worried about the health of the lake. Where can we go for help to determine the quality of the water.

H.M., Bloomfield Hills

The Department of Natural Resources has a cooperative program involving lake residents in determining water quality. The program, known as the self-help water quality monitoring program, involves taking transparency measurements weekly and water samples every other week, from the first of May through the middle of September. Lakes which show water quality problems might then be eligible for a limited assistance program involving the participation of lake residents and

consumer mailbag

associations in determining the reasons for their lake problems, including technical advice or to them on how to correct the problems. Programs are also available to help rehabilitate lakes with severe problems.

Associations or individuals concerned with the quality of any lake, large or small, are invited to participate in the Self-Help Program. For more information on this or other lake

problems contact the Division of Land Resource Programs, Inland Lake Management Unit, P.O. Box 30028, Lansing, 48990.

Is the booklet The Concerned Gardener still available from your organization?

Martha, Garden City

Yes, for a copy send \$2 plus 35 cents for postage to Concern Inc., Detroit, 1 Northfield Plaza, Troy, 48068. ECO-TIP: Michigan's growing season is well under way with rhubarb, asparagus and strawberries soon to be ready for harvest. The Michigan Department of Agriculture booklet Michigan County Carousal: "A Guide to Pick-Your-Own Farms & Roadside Markets." For a copy write to: Information Di-

vision, Michigan Dept. of Agriculture, P.O. Box 30017, Lansing, 48906

Women caucus

GOP women will meet in Ann Arbor May 9-10 for the annual meeting of the Michigan Republican Women's Task Force. Open to members and non-members, the meeting will be held in the Holiday Inn West Bank.

Call Ellen Templin at 626-5171 for details. The purpose of the task force is to gain equality for women in political, social and economic areas by supporting qualified women for public office and promoting issues of benefit to women.

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