



the lively needle

Mary Kay Davis

First try at felting is a real experience

Mail is marvelous. After I'd fluffed felting, a letter arrived from the Detroit Handweavers Guild. They were having a felting workshop and invited me to participate. I accepted in no time flat.

Our hostess greeted me warmly and led me to her backyard. A table was loaded with piles of wool and a peculiar machine that looked like a cross between a bed of nails and a mimeograph machine. Every weaver seemed to know what to do with the thing. This embroiderer didn't have a clue.

Not wanting to appear too stupid, I stalled and observed. The weaving ladies were running wool through the spiky rollers like wash through a wringer.

Eventually I learned that they were carding so that all wool fibers would line up in the same direction. I followed suit. My wool wasn't as well-regimented as theirs, but the fibers did stand in line, sort of.

Colored wools were piled on another table. I chose a few hunks, grabbed by carding, and cut a sheet of fiberglass window screening twice as large as the upcoming felt.

Then creativity took over. Everybody was flat on the grass, arranging

colored wools on fiberglass screening. Scenes, sunrises and trees emerged, along with other designs — mine was one of them — which could charitably be called nonrepresentational. One woman worked her cat, complete with emerald green eyes.

When the designs were finished, we folded excess fiberglass screening over the wool, basted the sandwich together, and headed for hose and driveway. To the casual observer, here's where the party really got going.

Two hoses were available. One gurgled cold water and the other led to a hot water heater. You sprayed one temperature on the wool in its fiberglass envelope, and then stamped all over it.

Next came a spray with the other temperature and more tramping. Fifteen women were joggling, jumping, stamping and giggling. The neighbors must have thought we were bonkers.

By the time we finished tramping wet wool, everyone was in hysterics. The felting process gets rid of aggressions and feels very peculiar if you happen to be stomping with bare feet. It also moves green eyes around on pictures of cats. Those eyes shifted with each spray of water. I hope they ended in place, but the last view I had was of a very confused feline.

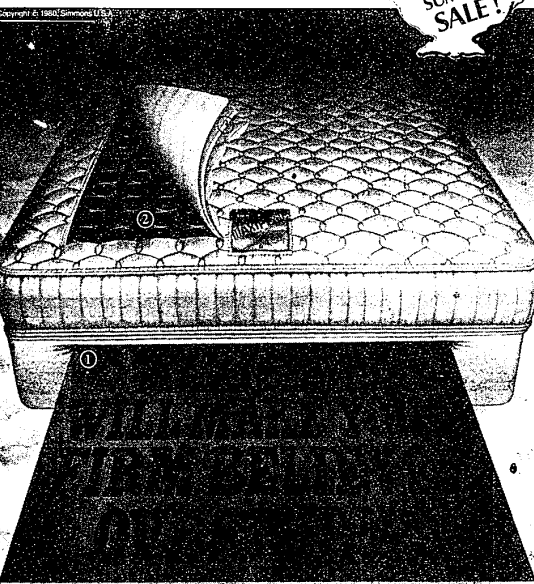
Finally it was all over and I said my farewells. The wet wool in its fiberglass envelope dripped quietly on the back seat as I headed home. Eventually it dried and, amazingly enough, really is felt. It's no work of art, but not bad for a first try. Thank you, weavers.

Medical history

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consumer mailbag

How can I attract birds to my yard? I know I would have less of an insect problem if I had more birds.

E.S., Detroit

It is easy to attract birds to your home by providing them with food, water, cover and a good nesting spot for reproduction. Birds love variety. Create habitat patterns by mixing different sizes, shapes and kinds of plants to

serve their needs.

Birds of all varieties are not only a delight to watch but also a control of unwanted pests. Cardinals and sparrows eat weed seeds; wrens and warblers eat insects; owls and hawks eat mice; starlings and flickers eat grubs; Baltimore Orioles eat caterpillars; all woodpeckers help control tree borers and moth eggs; yellowthroats and warblers control webworms and other caterpillars; and brown thrashers and

other ground feeding birds control click beetles and larvae.

For food choose from the following trees and shrubs:

Trees: dogwood, crab apple, hawthorn, cherry, holly, red cedar.
Shrubs: American cranberry, autumn olive, elderberry, blueberry, cotoneaster, blackberry.

ral foods are available, install bird feeders stocked with sunflower seeds, cracked corn, peanuts, oats, wheat and rye.

Consumer mailbag answers your questions on consumer and environmental issues. Address questions to Concern, Inc., Detroit, 1 Northfield Plaza, Troy 48068.

Eco-Tip: In winter when fewer natu-

Get to Know
the
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of

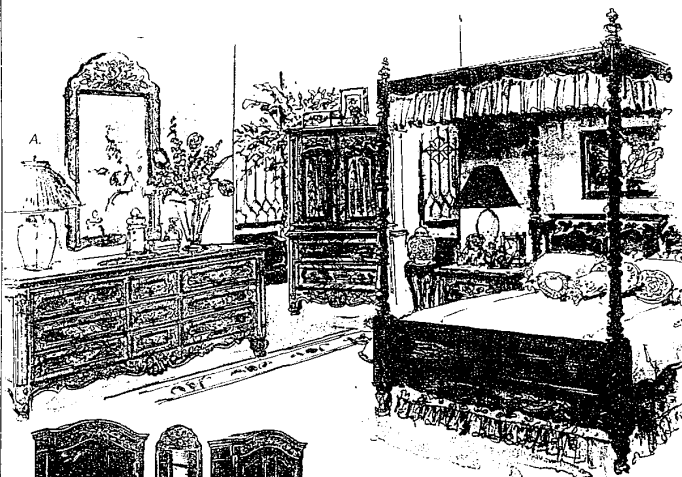
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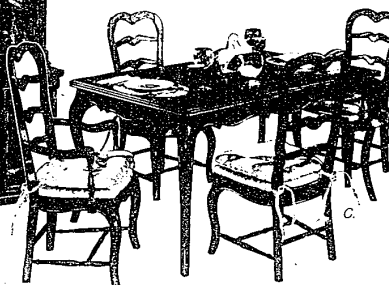
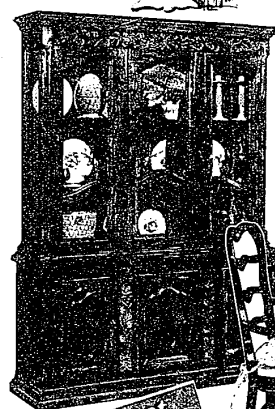
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