Homemade Rugs

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The growing popularity of artistic and well constructed homemade rugs is richly deserved. Their durability, beauty and ease of cleaning recommend them for use in any room of the home.

Homemade rugs possess quaint charm and individuality, and because they may be made in any size, shape or combination of colors, they fit definitely into color schemes and types of rooms. Perhaps no other furnishing in a room has such possibility of lending interest and color. It is not difficult to understand why the art of rug making has been handed down through several generations to the homemakers of today.
BRAIDED RUGS

Choice of Material.—Braided rugs are made of new or used materials, cut or torn into strips of varying width. The same kind of material, all cotton, wool or silk should be used throughout the rug, and it should be of the same weight and strength if possible. Soft woolen rags, such as old blankets make excellent rugs. Cotton blankets, outing flannel, burlap and heavy domestic may also be used to good advantage. Old sheets, percale and gingham may be used if the material is firm. Cotton rugs soil more quickly than wool, but they are easily laundered. It is well to use cloth that is soft and pliable, even with the color slightly dulled and softened by use; yet care should be taken to avoid too badly worn materials and those which do not form braids. The wearing qualities of such rugs do not justify the work in making. Worn and new materials should not be used in the same rug, because of uneven wear. Old cretonne and printed linen make attractive rugs when combined with plain colored materials.

One should be sure that there are sufficient rags for the rug before starting work on it. For example, a rug 27 x 36 inches will take from 15 to 18 yards of cotton cloth.

Preparation of Materials.—The first step in the preparation of rug material is deciding on the colors to be used. Of course the colors chosen for any rug should harmonize with those of the room in which the rug is to be used, so with the aid of a few suitable dyes, just the right colors and tones may be given to the old materials. This process involves little trouble or expense and the result is well worth the effort.

The floor is the foundation of the room and should always have the appearance of stability. For that reason, fairly dark colors will be found most satisfactory for rugs. Aside from the artistic effect obtained, there are other advantages of dark tones in rugs; they show soil less readily than light colors, and if materials are to be dyed, it is easier to obtain a desirable deep tone.

Rugs should not be dull or uninteresting in color or design, nor too bright in color or striking in design that they do not seem to be part of the background. It is a safe rule to say that at least two-thirds of the rags for a rug should be neutral or rather dark in color. Tans, browns, grays and dull blue ordinarily make the most suitable backgrounds. Additional interest may be secured by using several tones of the same color; for example, one-fourth of the cloth for the background may be dyed medium brown, one-fourth light tan and one-half a light golden brown.

Contrast and variety are secured by the use of vivid colors in small amount. Even the intense colors to be used in small areas should be sufficiently "grayed" in tone to make them blend in well
the background. In a rug of the various tones of brown, shades of orange, crimson or bright green may be used for accent. The center and outside border edge of the rug should be of the darker colors. A few colors will combine better than many in a braided rug. Interesting patterns might be worked out in some of the following combinations:

- Light gray, black, old rose, lavender
- Brown, tan, burnt orange, green
- Gray, blue, old rose
- Sage green, dull rose, black
- Brown, gold, delft blue
- Gray, mulberry, dull yellow, black
- Tan, dull green, black
- Henna, gray blue, dark brown
- Dull blue, beige, brown
- Dark red, beige, black
- Black, dark green, light green, violet
- Rose, yellow green, dark green, tan

The design of a braided rug is obtained by stripes, therefore good proportion in spacing stripes and colors is important. First, there should be a center in good proportion with the rest of the rug—it will usually look better if made of an uneven number of braids, such as seven, nine or eleven braids wide. An odd number of rows makes the most interesting pattern. This principle should be adhered to in making the outside border also. Hit and miss rugs are very attractive when they are well made.

After cutting or tearing strips lengthwise of the material, and of the desired width, fold the raw edges to the center, then fold again. It is very important that no raw edges or ravelings show. Some material stays creased when pressed into fold, but if the cloth is wiry, the inexperienced rug maker will find it much less tedious to baste or blind stitch the folds together. The prepared strips may be wrapped around pieces of cardboard or piled loosely in a box or basket to keep the colors separate and in order.

Braiding and Sewing.—Three, four or five strand braids are most popular for rugs. Begin braiding with strips of different lengths, so that only one will be joined at one place. Strips about one and a half yards in length do not tangle readily and are best for braiding.

Good firm braids about $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch in width work out most attractively in a rug. If the braids are wider than 1 inch, the rug may be loose and stretch out of shape, if narrower, the braids appear to be out of proportion in an average sized rug.

To start the three-strand braid: Take two of the folded strips, place one with the open side upward and with chalk or a pin mark one-third of the length of the strip (Figure 2A). Sew the end of the other strip at this point, at right angles to the strip and with the open side toward the right hand to insure covering the fold. This now makes three strands of different lengths.
Fasten this to a table top or chair back to make a firm, flat braid. Bring end 2 across end 3 (Figure 2B), fold end 1 across to the right side (Figure 2C) then cross 3 over 1 (Figure 2D). Continue in this manner until the braid is finished. In adding to the strips,
cut the ends on the bias and join to make an inconspicuous seam (Figure 3).

*Five Strand* braids make an artistic combination. This makes a braid about 1 1/2 inches wide. Braiding with more than three strands is only a process of weaving the strands together. Starting with the left hand strand or No. 1, put over No. 2, under No. 3, over No. 4, and under No. 5. Commencing at the left each time following the above order the braider will soon acquire the ability to braid from both sides. Care should always be taken to keep the braid as even as possible and this is done by folding the outside strand back over to start a new weave instead of pulling it around.

Sew the strips together and fasten firmly, hold the open end down, then braid with a straight, folding motion, turning the strips at about the same angle each time, so that the edge will be even and easy to sew. Be sure that the braid is tight, firm and smooth. When the end of the strand is reached, open the fold, cut on the true bias where it will be crossed by another strand, and make a smooth, flat seam, lapping the edges about 3/4 inch, being careful that the braid does not bulge. Never have two joinings in the same place.

When several yards have been braided start sewing. Oval rugs, because of their lines, play a part in the structural appearance of a room, but round rugs have a place especially in a colonial bedroom.

A good rule to follow in starting to sew the braid for the center, is to estimate the size of the finished rug, and have the first braid one-third as long as the rug will be when completed. For instance if the rug is to be 36 x 24 inches, the center braid should be 12 inches long. Another way to estimate the length of the center braid is to make it as long as the difference between the length and width of the finished rug. For example, in a rug 45 x 30 inches, the center braid should be 15 inches long.

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Fig. 4.—Sewing the braids together.
A short darning needle and heavy cotton thread No. 8, 10, 20, or 24, or linen carpet thread are the best for sewing the rug. Do not whip the braids together. Use a blind or slip stitch, catching the strips first on one side then on the other. The stitching should be invisible, which makes the rug reversible and also increases the wearing qualities, as there will be no stitches in contact with the floor.

By working on a table, the rug may be held flat, so that its weight will not pull it out of shape. Allow enough fullness for smooth curving at the turn of the coil in a round rug or at the end turn in an oval rug. In turning the row at the end of an oval rug, the inner strand of the braid may be eased a little to avoid cupping.

If the rug is to have each row finished completely, making a striped effect, the last row on the center should be tapered by cutting a small strip from the sides of each strand for at least six inches, then braid and sew to the braids, making a smooth, inconspicuous joining.

In sewing on each braid, pin to the last row, with the pins at right angles to the braid, which makes it easy to remove them as one sews. Leave the beginning and the ending ends open for about 4 inches.

Fig. 5.—Ending the striped rug braid.

When the braid is sewed on, pull the ends through the braid on the opposite sides, weaving as smoothly as possible and finally sew the ends securely under the crossing folds and cut off the ends.
To make the joining less bulky, cut some of the material out of the underpart of the folds and taper the ends.

It is very important to sew a rug carefully and firmly, so there will be no open spaces. Braid and sew alternately, this method enables one to work out the desired pattern. When the rug is finished, it should be covered with a damp cloth and pressed into shape. Press from the center out, and allow to dry thoroughly on a flat surface before being placed on the floor for use.

The appearance of the rug is the final test. A good braided rug should have the following qualities: Simplicity, beauty and utility. It should lie flat on the floor, be well constructed and neatly finished.

SEWED RUGS

By using a machine, these may be made, with a foundation of any durable material the size wanted, by stitching pieces of cloth to the foundation.

Burlap sacks make a good material to use. These are cut into strips approximately 2 inches wide, each strip fringed back ½-inch on each side. To start the rugs, two strips should be folded lengthwise in the center, held together and stitched through the fold to the foundation around the outer edge to form a fringe. The other strips are not folded, the stitching going through the middle
of the unfolded strip and the foundation at the base of the first two folded rows and close enough that the fringe covers the unfringed edges of the preceding rows. This will leave a fringed end extending toward the outer edge of the foundation and the other towards the center. When the next row is stitched to the foundation, the row extending toward the center is folded over toward the outer edge of the foundation. This is continued until the foundation is completely covered. The rug is finished by turning in the end with the final rows so close that the fringe conceals the end.

A similar rug of burlap sacks may be made without the foundation. This is done by cutting the strip 1 1/4 inches wide, folding lengthwise in the center and stitching each along the fold, at the width of the presserfoot. Then several threads are raveled from each edge, the result being a firm, fringed strip, 5/8 of an inch wide.

Fig. 7.—Showing process of sewing fringed sewed strips together to make a rug.

In making a rug of these strips, three harmonizing colors may be used such as tan, brown, and orange, the three folded edges of the strips placed flat against each other with stitched edges even. Using a darning needle and coarse thread, these should be sewed through from side to side making a three-fold strip for the center as long as desired. Then the three strips should be turned back along the center foundation and sewed with a back stitch to it. This is continued round after round, until the rug is the size wanted. Strips of uneven length should be used in the beginning so that all of the additional strips will not be added at the same place. The added strips need not be sewed to the preceding once, only placed in position, the sewing through the strips holding them in place.
CROCHETED RUGS

Cotton, silk, or linen materials are most suitable for making crocheted rugs. Hose and underwear may be used very satisfactorily. Strips should be torn in uniform width from one-half to one inch. They should be folded and pressed so the raw edges will be concealed. Sew them end to end and roll into balls.

A bone or wooden crochet hook is usually used, the size depending upon the materials for the rug. Crocheted rugs can be made more durable if the material is crocheted over strong twine with firm, close stitches.

When the thread or material is thrown over the hook in crocheting, it makes a loose open rug, which permits the dust and dirt to sift through to the floor. A common mistake in crocheting is to pick up only half of a stitch made in the previous round. This results in a ridge around the rug, and is not such a firm product as when, in making a new stitch, the hook is inserted under both sides of a stitch made in the previous round. In providing the fullness necessary to prevent cupping, two stitches are crocheted in one of the previous round. This widening should be done opposite the end of the center chain, and at the curves on either side, never along the side which should be kept perfectly straight. The rug should be placed on a flat surface occasionally and if it puckers,
it needs extra fullness, if it ruffles, the worker has widened too often. The rug should be perfectly flat at all times.

To make an oval rug, a center chain the necessary length is crocheted, then a complete round is made by making a single crochet in each loop on each side of the chain. A round rug is made by making a chain of five or six stitches into which 12 single crochet stitches are made. In widening, in making a round rug, the extra stitches should be put in quarter division points, and halfway between.

To prevent an irregularity or jog in the lines, especially noticeable when several different colors are used, each round should be made complete, the end of the rag sewed down, and a new round started in another place, and made complete as was the previous one. This requires a little more time but the finished article is more pleasing.

WOVEN RUGS

The equipment necessary for making woven rugs without a loom consists of an oblong frame made from four boards, medium sized cord or strips of strong material for warp, and rags torn one and one-half inches wide.

The best results will be obtained in weaving if the frame is suspended from strong hooks or nails because it is necessary to pull on the warp cords while working.

If a frame is to be used, it should be "warped" in the following manner—drive shingle nails one-fourth inch apart at each end of the frame and one-half inch apart in a perfectly straight line along both sides. The side nails are to keep the margin straight.

Then tie the warp material (strong strips of muslin or cable cord) around the first nail on one end of the frame, carry the warp down
the length of the frame and around the first two nails at the opposite end, bring the warp back to the first end and around two nails. Continue this until all the nails at both ends of the frame have been covered, fastening the cord to the last nail on the same end on which the warp was started.

After the material is cut the desired width, it should be folded and pressed so that no raw edges will be seen on the surface of the rug. All joinings should be sewed on the bias and folded in to insure a good appearance in the finished rug.

Weaving is started by first making a selvage of plain, strong material or cable cord at one end. Allow a length of material about four and a half times the width of the rug for the selvage. Hold four or five inches of the end in the left hand and with the right hand weave the material over two and under two warp cords from left to right. When the right hand margin is reached, stop and weave the four inch end in and out between the first row of weaving and the frame. Then push the woven strand up to the frame or stick and draw the warp cords tightly to insure an even, firm weave. The turn on each row should be caught around a nail. This keeps the margin straight and helps to shape the rug.

Start weaving the materials by passing the long strip of material around the first warp cord at the left, thus dividing the strip in two weavers. In weaving, one weaver is passed behind the warp and one in front, then they cross and are reversed in the next stitch. Continue until the rug is the desired length. When it is necessary to add another strip, it should be lapped and sewed as for a braided rug. Finish with a selvage like the one with which the rug was started. The rug may be taken off the frame and left plain or finished with the fringe of material, heavy cord, or binding.

**KNITTED RUGS**

Knitted Rugs are made by using large needles and knitting the material into strips or squares which are then laced together by using a bodkin and heavy thread. If a round rug is desired, wedge-shaped sections are knitted and laced together. Knitted rugs are not so firm as other kinds because the material is usually cut narrow so it can more easily be handled in knitting, which makes a light weight product when finished.

**HOOKED RUGS**

Beautiful hooked rugs may be made at home with little expenditure of money. The first thought of the early American homemakers in making a hooked rug, was that of usefulness, to make a practical floor covering. But in time, this handiwork developed into an art, and the rug makers found real joy in converting otherwise useless materials into artistic rugs. Rug making is particularly fascinating
since it affords the worker an opportunity in combining colors and creating designs of her own fancy.

There are three types of hooked rugs made in the home, the looped, the clipped and the tufted. The looped rug is the type most commonly made. In it the material is pulled through the foundation to make a loop on top, the strip of material being held tightly under the foundation material, so the next loop will be the same height and firmly placed. The type of material used, determines the length of the loops. It is well to draw the loops through just far enough to produce a firm, even surface.

It is better to make a clipped rug of wool as it does not fray badly and the pile has more weight. In making a clipped rug, the loops or stitches are drawn through longer than in a looped type and are clipped off with sharp scissors as the work progresses, or the entire surface is clipped when the rug is completed.

A tufted rug has the material used in the design drawn through high enough to permit being clipped at an angle, so it will gradually taper into the background. Tufting is effective for some patterns such as leaves, scrolls and bow-knots, but for a rug which is made for hard service tufting should be used only in combination with loop stitches for the background.

**Choice of Materials.**—The same materials and colors used in making braided rugs, work to very good advantage in hooked rugs. Each worker must decide for herself whether the rug shall be made of old or new materials. But regardless of the type of materials, one should be sure that it will wear evenly and make a firm but pliable rug.

The width of the strips used in hooked rugs depends upon the weight of the material. Heavy, firm, material is cut not more than ¼ inch in width while light weight materials should be cut wider so they may be folded at least twice to give weight.

Silk hose and underwear should be cut from ½ to ¾ inch in width and satisfactory results may be obtained by cutting them spirally or lengthwise. It is well for each rug maker to try using strips cut both ways so that she may decide for herself before cutting silk material for a whole rug.

**Equipment.**—Of equal importance with the materials for making the rug are the frame, burlap or heavy mesh materials for the foundation, and the hook.

There are a number of good commercial frames on the market but a homemade rug frame may be constructed much like a quilting frame. Four pieces of lumber that will not warp should be selected. Wrap the pieces with two inch strips of heavy domestic or other firm material. Make the joinings of the strips flat by sewing the ends securely together. If the corners of the frame are not mortised, it may be held together at the corners with metal clamps, which
will hold the foundation very tight for working. This is important in having a well finished rug when completed.

The Design.—Burlap or heavy mesh material with sufficient dressing in it to insure easy adjustment in the frame, but pliable enough to give slightly when the stitches are pulled through, makes the most desirable rug foundation.

A large variety of commercial stamped patterns may be purchased, but many rug makers prefer to make their own designs. Careful measurements are essential in working out a motif for a
rug. The first step is determining the center of the foundation, folding first the center lengthwise, then cross and mark the fold. The width and shape of border may then be indicated with a soft pencil or crayon. The design, either conventional or geometric, should be worked out on paper before being transferred to the burlap. The design should be appropriate, balanced and adapted to the space in which it is to be used.

If the entire pattern is not satisfactory, a section of it may be used effectively.

The Autumn Leaf design is an example of this, as it may be applied to make a continuous border, or only parts of it used with interesting spacing.

**Hooking the Rug.**—Neatness and accuracy are important factors in hooking a rug. Work from right to left and with a plain hook, holding the material between the finger and thumb of the left hand beneath the frame and material. Insert the hook with the right hand and catch the strip of material pulling it through in a loop of the desired height. Set each stitch as close to the last one as possible, leaving perhaps one or two strands of burlap between stitches. The ends of each strip should always be pulled through to the top of the rug so they will be inconspicuous.

If a needle type of hook is used, it should be threaded according to the directions and started flat side down from the wrong side of the rug, pushing the needle into the burlap as far as the gauge, then pulling out, thus forming loops on the under side. Lift the needle only to the level of the foundation material. In turning corners, turn while the needle is in the material, keeping the grooved side up.

It is well to outline the design before starting to hook the background. It is not necessary to use a contrasting color for the outline, the color to be used in the design or even one row of the background color may be used. The purpose of this is to make clean-cut edges on the design. The rug may then be hooked, from the center of the design to the outside to insure a smooth surface.

When the rug is finished, it should be carefully examined and all ends pulled through to the right side so there will be no loose ends or threads of the material on the wrong side of the rug. If the loops are to be clipped, the rug should be held firmly while the clipping is being done with even strokes with sharp scissors.

Finish the rug by turning back the margin of the burlap (about two inches should be allowed) and shaping it to the border of the rug. All joinings and corners should be mitered to prevent a knotted appearance. Baste the margin or facing to the back of the rug and hem it down with a catch stitch or hemming stitch.

The back of the rug should then be dampened and pressed before being placed down on clean papers on the floor. If it is walked on
this way first, the stitches flatten and remain in place nicely.

If a rug becomes limp it may be sized by placing it right side
down on a flat surface and brushing the back lightly with a regular
rug sizing. Allow it to dry thoroughly before being placed on
the floor.

**Fig. 12.**—A well made hooked rug.

**SMALL ARTICLES ADD BEAUTY**
Small hooked, braided or woven mats, footstool tops and chair
seats add a decorative touch to a room.

**Fig. 13.**—Table mat and chair seat made from old materials.
The same principles of design, color and workmanship for rugs should be applied to these articles. Silk material and hosiery especially, may be utilized for mats. When knitted material is to be used, it should be cut lengthwise and held firmly, so the raw edges will curl in and the strip become a smooth tube.

CARE OF HOMEMADE RUGS

If not too heavy or large, rugs made of cotton fabrics may be laundered successfully at home. Rugs made of materials which have been repeatedly washed will not require special treatment to prevent fading but those made of new or re-dyed materials should be soaked in a solution to "set" the colors before laundering by the ordinary method. Soiled spots may be scrubbed lightly with a soaked brush. Rinse as many times as necessary, squeeze as dry as possible and hang straight on a line or dry on a clean flat surface. Press on the wrong side with a hot iron before the rug is entirely dry.

SCORE CARD FOR RUGS

1. Workmanship ......................................50%
   1. Type of material combined
   2. Smoothness of surface
   3. Detail work of design and background
   4. Neatness of finish, joinings and seams
2. Combination and spacing of colors ...............30%
   Balance of design
3. General Appearance of Rug ........................20%
   Size, weight, shape and proportion of rug
   Total ...........................................100%

SUMMARY

1. The predominating colors in the rug should be subdued and harmonious with other furnishings in the room. Small accenting notes of bright color add interest to the rug.
2. Conventional and straight line designs are pleasing and decorative.
3. The rug should be of such weight and thickness that it will stay in place.
4. An uneven number of rows on border stripes, in braided, crocheted or woven rugs is always more effective than an even number.
5. The shape of the rug depends largely on the floor space in which it is to be used but an oval or oblong rug is generally more desirable.
6. A good rug is made of all the same kind of material (wool, cotton, silk or yarn).
7. A well made rug is smooth, firm, with colors well blended and neatly finished.