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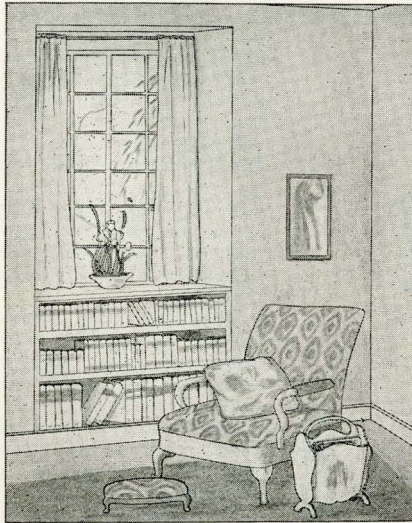
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Accessories

Their Selection, Making and Placing



*"Brighten the corner where you are by
making the most of what you have."*

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE
EXTENSION SERVICE
A. E. Anderson, Director
Brookings, S. D.

Accessories--Their Selection, Making, and Placing

By

Mary A. Covert

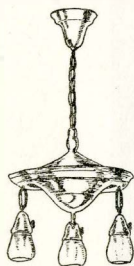
Extension Specialist in Home Management

Accessories are those supplementary things which go with or belong to the major furnishings of the home. Carefully selected, correctly placed and well cared for accessories add much to its comfort, convenience and charm.

Types of Accessories

Accessories may be thought of as permanent and movable.

Permanent accessories include household hardware, lighting and heating fixtures, and built in furniture such as wall cupboards and cabinets, wall tables and sets of shelves. Where rooms open into each other the effect is more pleasing if door knobs, locks, hinges, drawer pulls or knobs, and lighting fixtures are of the same style. Where rooms are detached, hardware and fixtures may be selected to correspond with the woodwork and furnishings of each room. For a room of warm coloring—sand, tan, or taupe—the fixtures should be dull brass, green bronze or wrought iron. For a room in gray coloring, dull silver fixtures with crystal knobs are effective. In bedrooms, fixtures are often enameled ivory, gray or some delicate color to harmonize with the furnishings.



Whatever the finish selected, both hardware and fixtures should be simple and good in line. Registers and radiators should be painted to match the wall. An exposed radiator may be covered with a frame or grill inconspicuously painted. These covers can often be made to fit into the room as an accessory piece of furniture.

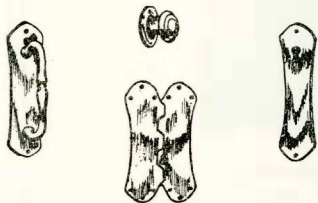


Fig 1. Hardware should harmonize in style and finish.

Accessories of the movable type are small pieces of furniture, ornaments, pictures and certain fabrics. Our problem with this type of accessory more often is what to discard rather than what to add. Our homes are often cluttered with things which do not "belong," individual

things bought or given to us without thought of their relative value as an accessory. This accumulation of unrelated articles tends to destroy, rather than to add comfort, convenience, and charm to our home. They overburden us with care. Too frequently their care is neglected and their unkempt appearance detracts from the desired artistic effect. Often they are of material and construction which defies cleaning. What we need is fewer and better things placed where they belong. "Do not have in your home anything which you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful" is a good safeguard to follow.

Selection and Arrangement

The best plan in regard to accessories is to strip each room in turn of all but its fundamental and major furnishings. Each major piece has its specific use which helps to determine where it should be placed. With the large pieces of furniture correctly placed, attention should be

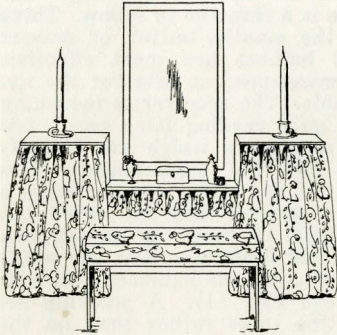


Fig. 2. Formal balance and rule of three.

turned to the accessories on hand. Often they need repairing, refinishing, renovating or cleaning. This having been done, the matter of their placing is of utmost importance. The first thing to be determined is: With what major piece of furniture does each accessory article belong? Having grouped them with the thing to which they belong, the next problem is to place them in proper relation to it.

There should be balance in arrangement. Balance is either formal or informal. Formal balance gives an air of dignity and order, while informal balance gives a sense of ease and grace. A room is most pleasing where both types of balance are used.

Accessories arranged in formal balance must be alike or very similar and placed on either side of some object or point of central interest, and in the same relation to it—like chairs placed on either side of a window equidistant from it; a pair of candle sticks placed on a mantle equidistant from a clock or bowl which is the center of interest.

Accessories arranged in informal balance are unlike and form with the thing to which they belong a triangular arrangement. A desk may be the center of interest; the chair and waste paper basket placed in natural position complete the group. The center of interest may be an easy chair with a magazine holder or end table at one side and a foot stool in front.

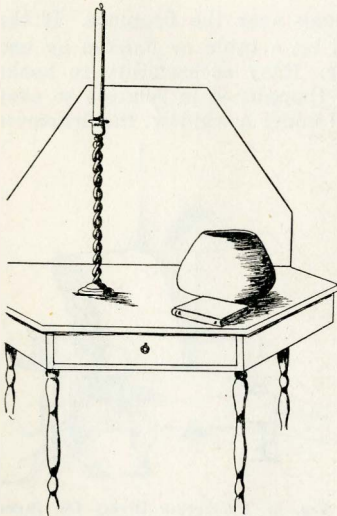


Fig. 3. Informal balance and rule of three.

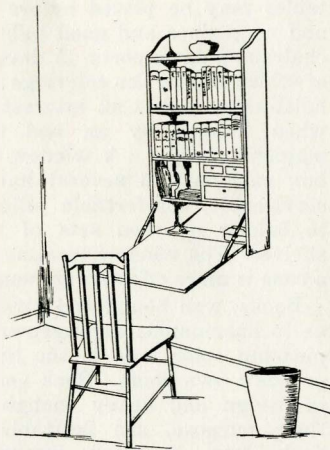


Fig. 4. Things belonging together naturally grouped in informal balance.

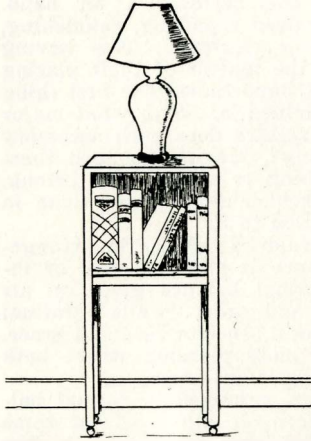


Fig. 5 Lamp base and shade should conform in shape and size.

There must be no over-crowding. The rule of three is a safe one to follow. Three articles on the mantle, buffet, or dresser in informal balance are most effective. Informal arrangement is best for the living room table. The accessories belonging there are a good reading lamp and a few books and magazines which are actually being read—not the accumulation of a month past. If the table is quite large, a low bowl of flowers may be added but great care must be taken in the selection of the bowl and flowers so that the whole harmonizes in color and balances well with the lamp (see Fig. 11). A smoking set belongs on the table rather than on the mantle, though a small table or smoking stand is the better arrangement for it. The piano should be left free from all accessories unless it be a piece of interesting colorful fabric which can be easily removed. Objects do not belong on a piano as they tend to deaden the tone or produce vibrating sounds.

Small Pieces of Furniture

Small pieces of furniture are important types of accessories. They must not be so numerous as to give a restless or over crowded atmosphere to the room. A small table, magazine holder, or smoking stand and a foot stool belong with an easy chair. The foot stool, however, must be truly usable, of such material and construction as will stand the wear of usage and cleaning.

The easy chair and fireside bench belong near the fireplace. If the room is quite large the davenport backed by a table or flanked by end tables may be placed before the fireplace. Easy accessibility to books and magazines and good light are always thought of in relation to easy chairs and davenports. A davenport placed under a window, the draperies of which repeat the colorings of the upholstery, makes an interesting group when flanked by an end table and magazine holder. A window seat with box cushion and several harmonizing, serviceable, comfortable pillows seems to belong between sets of book-filled shelves. The window treatment in such a case is more effective in neutral tones.

Books, well bound and given thought as to harmonious arrangement, form a pleasing color note in the living room or one's own room. Book ends, simple in design and heavy enough to serve their purpose, are desirable to keep books from disorderly arrangement on the reading or end table (see Fig. 7).

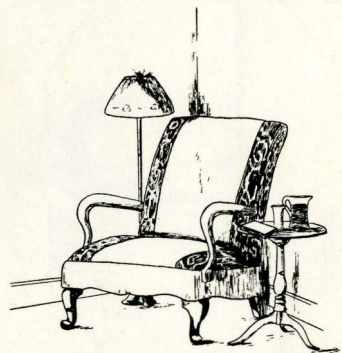


Fig. 6. Protecting covers for furniture should be right in texture, style, coloring, and tailoring.

Lamps

Too many lamps, like too many small pieces of furniture, clutter a room. Whatever the type of lamp, the base should be of good shape with little ornament and there should be conformity and harmony between the base and shade in form, size, and color. Shade and base should harmonize with the furnishings of the room (Figs. 5, 11).

The first purpose of a lamp shade is to adequately tone and shade light. Any color or decorative feature which interferes with this purpose is decidedly out of place. For this reason lamp shades should not be made a special decorative feature. Color accent must be otherwise attained. There is a tendency to forget that lamp shades should be of such material and construction as permits easy and thorough cleaning.

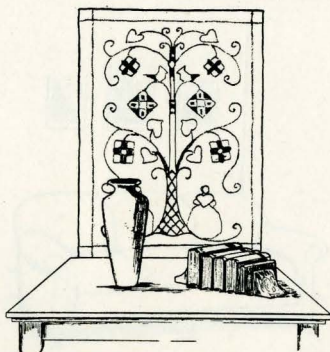


Fig. 7. Wall hangings used as a background should not be conspicuous in design.

Textile Accessories

Color may be introduced in the room through accessories fashioned from textiles—draperies, portieres, upholstery, small rugs, bed spreads, table runners, and cushions.

The first purpose of a cushion is to give comfort. Its second purpose is to add charm to the room. Living room cushions should be square, oblong or bolster shape and without lace, shirring, ruffles, or raised decoration. They should be few in number, comfortable, usable, easily cleaned and should always harmonize in color and design with the piece of furniture on which they are used. Cushions for the bedroom may be more elaborate in shape and style, but their covers should be comfortable for use and easily laundered. Nothing shabby or soiled can be a true accessory to any room.

Slip covers rightly designed may be classed as an accessory but unless just right in texture, color, style and tailoring they mar the atmosphere of a room rather than lend charm to it. Their use should be limited. They belong to the bedroom and dining room rather than to the living room. Large pieces of living room furniture dressed in all-over covers stand out conspicuously instead of blending themselves with the room to form a pleasing whole (Fig. 6).

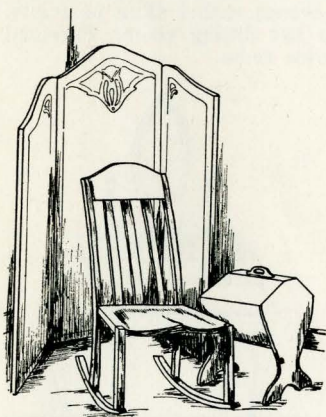


Fig. 8 The size of screens varies according to their use and the space into which they fit.

Mediums Used in Textile Decoration

The decoration of household textiles by plastic painting, wall paper transfer printing, crayon painting, batik, tie and dye and air spatter painting have all been treated elsewhere. There is need only to recall them and their application in the making of accessories. The same is true of gesso-craft, lacquer painting, bronzing, drawn work, cross stitch, and other embroidering. Lovely accessories which truly "go with" and "belong" can be created through these mediums, but one must be most careful as to color harmony, conformity of design, and the utility of the articles. A few such articles

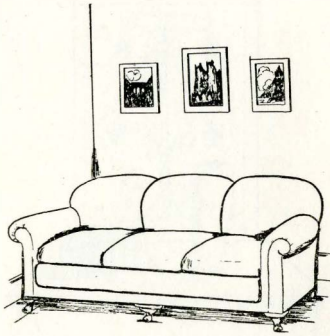


Fig. 9 Group pictures should be similar in subject, similarly framed and hung in formal balance.

their selection that they be not over conspicuous. They should harmonize perfectly in color, line and design with the piece of furniture over which they are used and blend with the wall and floor covering. Wall hangings are most effective used against plain walls or walls of small all-over design (see Fig. 7).

Decorative Screens

Screens in limited number are useful accessories. They may be an effective background for an interesting group of furniture or hide some unattractive, yet useful, household furnishing. They may be used to give privacy, or to shade and temper light. The precaution concerning wall hangings applies to screens. The size of screens varies according to their use and the space into which they fit (Fig. 8).

Pictures

Pictures have a real place on the list of accessories. They are needed to break wall space and to lend interest through their coloring and subject. Pictures for the living room should be of such type as to please generally, both the family as a whole and the public. The subjects should be of formal or semiformal nature, scenes rather than portraits. The same is true in regard to pictures for the dining room. Personal choice of pictures is appropriate for one's own room.

The frames of pictures should harmonize with the picture and the furnishings of the room. They should be unobtrusive. Pictures with white or light colored mats seldom fit into any room as they appear too spotty. Such pictures should have a frame matching the mat in color. They are best suited to bedroom decoration. A picture to be effective must have a center of interest, be well proportioned and have a good balance. Whatever the subject, it should not appear crowded in the frame. This is true of any picture but especially so of the portrait class.

Pictures should conform in size and shape with the wall space which they occupy and the furniture over which they are hung. Round pictures are difficult to place as they require a special

well designed and well made belong in each room to give it personality. But in numbers they change the atmosphere of the home into that of a gift shop. Geometric and conventionalized floral design are adapted to living room and dining room. Design should never obstruct itself; it should form a well balanced part in the whole decorative scheme.

Wall Hangings

Tapestry and printed, painted, cross stitch or applique wall hangings are in vogue and have their place in the decorative scheme. They are used to break broad wall expanse above a large piece of furniture such as a davenport, bed, or table. Special care must be taken in

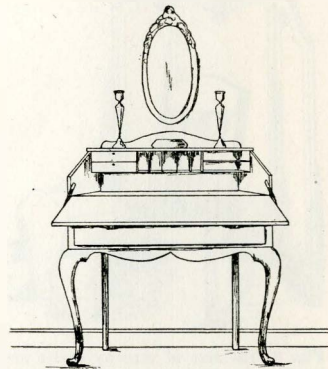


Fig. 10. Mirrors reflect light and color and give spaciousness.

setting. They look best placed as a center of interest above a piece of furniture having curved lines (see Fig. 10).

Formal balance is used in picture arrangement, both in relation of the pictures to each other and to the piece of furniture over which they are hung. Small pictures may be effectively grouped to break a large wall space. Pictures hung together must be similar in subject and similarly framed. They should be uniform in size and shape. In a group of three, the middle picture is made the center of interest and the other two balanced on either side. The central picture may be larger than the other two. In such case, the most effective arrangement is to hang them with their lower edges on the same level. (Fig. 9) If the middle is smaller they should be hung with their corners on the same level.

Pictures are hung with their centers at standing eye level unless the relation of a picture to a piece of furniture requires that it be hung higher or lower. Pictures placed above a piece of furniture should be hung in close relation to it, appearing to rest upon it or to be supported by it. The exact placing of the picture above a piece of furniture depends upon the relative size of the two. It should not be placed close enough to interfere with the use of furniture. Pictures are hung flat against the wall. If small, they are hung invisibly by small brads or hooks at the back. Larger pictures are suspended by parallel picture wires from the ceiling moulding. Care should be taken to hang each picture where it will receive the light which it needs. Pictures are most effective hung against a plain or small figured background. A few good pictures well placed are sufficient. The number of pictures needed for a room depends upon the relative size of the room, size of design in wall covering, size of pictures, and the extent to which the room is filled with furniture. They should not give a crowded effect.

Mirrors

Mirrors as accessories are used to reflect light and color in a room and to lend perspective to it. Rightly placed they make a room seem lighter, brighter, and more spacious. Bevel-edged mirrors, plain in design, serve these purposes most effectively as they do not call attention to themselves. Too many mirrors in a room are confusing since they reflect and seemingly repeat objects. Framed mirrors should be well proportioned and the frame should conform in line and finish with other furnishings of the room. Mirror frames may be painted to match the walls in kitchen, bedroom and bathroom.

Flowers and Their Containers

Flowers vary in texture and form. Some are heavy textured, stiff and almost conventionalized in form. These go best with heavy decorative fabrics and room furnishings. When selecting flowers, keep in mind the coloring of the room in which they are to be used. Flowers and containers used together should harmonize with each other and with the coloring of the room in which they are placed. The plainer and more harmonious the immediate background the better is the effect. A mirrored background reflecting their color is lovely.

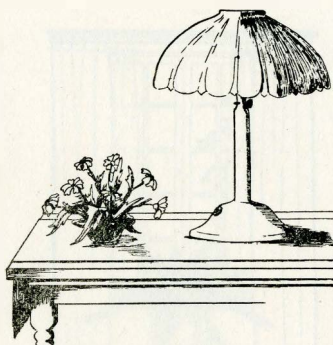


Fig. 11 Flowers should be arranged consistently in their growing position—short stemmed ones in a low bowl.

they should be hung with their

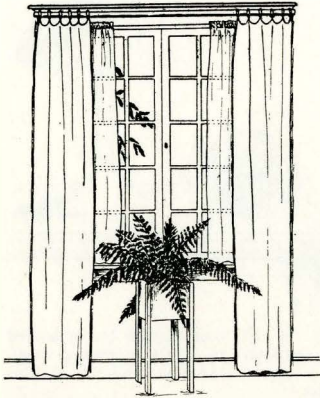


Fig. 12. Plants are most effective when few in number, well cared for and thoughtfully placed.

vase of bowl may belong in place because of its own decorative merit. Some bright and harmoniously colored textile or pottery accessory may need to be added to the room during the winter to replace the color of cut flowers (Fig. 3, 7).

A few blossoming plants are desirable accessories. Select those whose blossoms best fit into the decorative scheme of the room. The containers and stands for growing flowers should have little other than structural design. Their line of coloring should harmonize with the plants which they hold and the furnishings of the room in which they are placed. Plants are most effective when few in number, well cared for and thoughtfully placed.

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