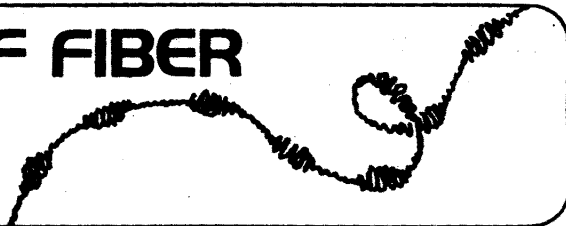


OF FIBER



by Cathy Ingebretsen

MERCERIZING

Mercerized cotton is a fairly commonly used term and I thought, that as weavers, you might want to know what this term means. Mercerizing is a chemical finishing process which "changes the chemical composition of the fiber, **STRENGTHENING** its cellular lines by causing it to swell in diameter and to contract in length; the gain in strength may be as much as 20 per cent."¹ Mercerizing also imparts a **LUSTROUS APPEARANCE** as well as making the fiber **MORE ABSORBENT FOR DYES**. Both linen and cotton are commonly mercerized.

Undyed yarns and fabrics "are mercerized by immersion in a specially prepared solution of caustic soda for about ten minutes under conditions of moderate uniform heat and tension. The caustic soda is washed out, the yarn or fabric is put through a heated acid bath to neutralize the caustic soda. It is then rinsed in clear water and dried. The combined action of the caustic soda, heat, and tension changes and strengthens the fiber cells, thus improving and strengthening the fabric or yarn."²

You might want to try some mercerized cotton or linen for your next warp, especially if you desire a smoother, more silk like appearance or if you'd like to try some warp painting.

BETTLING

Much less commonly known is a process for finishing table linens called Beetling. It might be a process worthy of some experimentation by some of you weavers. Beetling "gives the cloth a **FIRM, FLATTENED, LUSTROUS APPEARANCE**. In beetling, the fabric is hammered; the yarns are flattened by the impact of wooden mallets. This hammering actually closes the weave and creates a heavy and compact appearance."³ The impact **PERMANENTLY** flattens the yarn. "Cotton fabrics can be made to simulate linen by beetling, as the process gives cotton the firm feel and lustrous appearance of linen."⁴

It might be an interesting finish on some hangings, table and floor mats, and upholstery fabrics.

¹Potter, M. David, and Corbman, Bernard, *Fiber to Fabric*, (second edition), Gregg Pub., McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1945 & 54, p. 93.

³ibid., p. 102.

²ibid., p. 94.

⁴ibid.

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ON SUPPLIES:


All of the local, major weaving supply stores have ads in **THE MINNESOTA WEAVER**, so please check those ads for the names of places where you can purchase yarns and fibers to work with. Also, if you look up **YARN** in the yellow pages of your phone book, there may be a knitting store near you with yarns for your woven scarfs, clothing, hangings, etc. A current listing (by state) of supplies and equipment for weavers, spinners and dyers is available from:

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SWAP SHOP



WINDING A BALL OF YARN SO IT FEEDS FROM THE CENTER

Holding one end of the yarn against the palm of your left hand with all fingers except the thumb, and with the thumb held erect, begin winding around the thumb in a figure X. Once the yarn is anchored firmly, release the end and occasionally give the ball a little turn around the thumb as you continue winding.

When the ball is removed from your thumb, the yarn held against the palm becomes the lead piece to unwind the ball from the center.

Jean Stamsta
Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot

FIRE PROOFING

If yarn is lofted and crimp set it may be flammable fiber. Rinse it in a solution of one half cup of household borax to four gallons of water.

Glory Koehler
Rochester Newsletter
Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot