

WHAT'S IN A LABEL?

By Pauline Hall

Some of the newer fabrics having widespread fashion appeal are now on local markets. In some, care labels are lacking while in others the information may be incomplete, misleading, and even confusing.

In Tucson, a few of the recent purchases of yard goods included a vinyl coated fabric and a fabric-to-fabric laminate. The vinyl coating is on 50 percent rayon and 50 percent cotton plain woven fabric and is available in colorful paisley patterns, solid colors and large polka-dots. The laminate has a face fabric of an Orlon acrylic filling knit in a houndstooth pattern backed with acetate tricot.

Similar fabrics are found in many ready-to-wear apparels and will appear in the array of fashions for spring. The vinyl coated fabrics are used for coats, jackets and young

Dr. Hall is an associate professor of clothing, textiles and related arts in the School of Home Economics.

girls' dresses. The end use of the laminates is limitless, and should depend on the fabrics making up the layers. These fabrics do not require linings and usually have better "hand" and body. Hand is a term to describe how a fabric feels, and is a subjective evaluation.

How Adequate Are Care Labels?

The vinyl coated fabric was labeled with the care information: "Do not wash or dry clean — wipe off with damp cloth." The cost of the fabric was high enough to expect to wear a garment made from it for quite awhile, in which normally more than a wiping would be needed to keep the garment clean. The laminated fabric carried the terse information of "Washable."

Both care labels appeared somewhat misleading and inadequate. Other research has indicated that vinyl coatings can usually be laundered satisfactorily, while the dry cleaning solvents attack the plasticizers. The plasticizers are one of the

components of the vinyl and give the soft pliable hand to the coating. The plasticizers are soluble in the dry cleaning solvent and, once these are removed, the vinyl coating becomes stiff and boardy and may cause some shrinkage.

The care of laminates not only depends on the fibers present in the layers of fabric, but also whether the adhesive usually used to laminate the layers is water-soluble or dry cleaning solvent-soluble. The fabric manufacturers of the laminates should consider the compatibility of the fibers in the layers of the fabric and the adhesive in terms of the expected end use of the textile.

Test for Care

In view of the information given on the labels for care of the two fabrics and reports of care for similar fabrics, some laboratory tests were made for launderability and dry-cleanability to determine the reliability of the labels. The tests were done in the Launder-Ometer which accelerates the conditions of cleaning normally done to fabrics.

Three different tests were made, including one dry cleaning and two washing conditions. Each of the accelerated dry cleanings equals five normal dry cleanings. One of the

(Continued on Next Page)

(Continued from Previous Page)

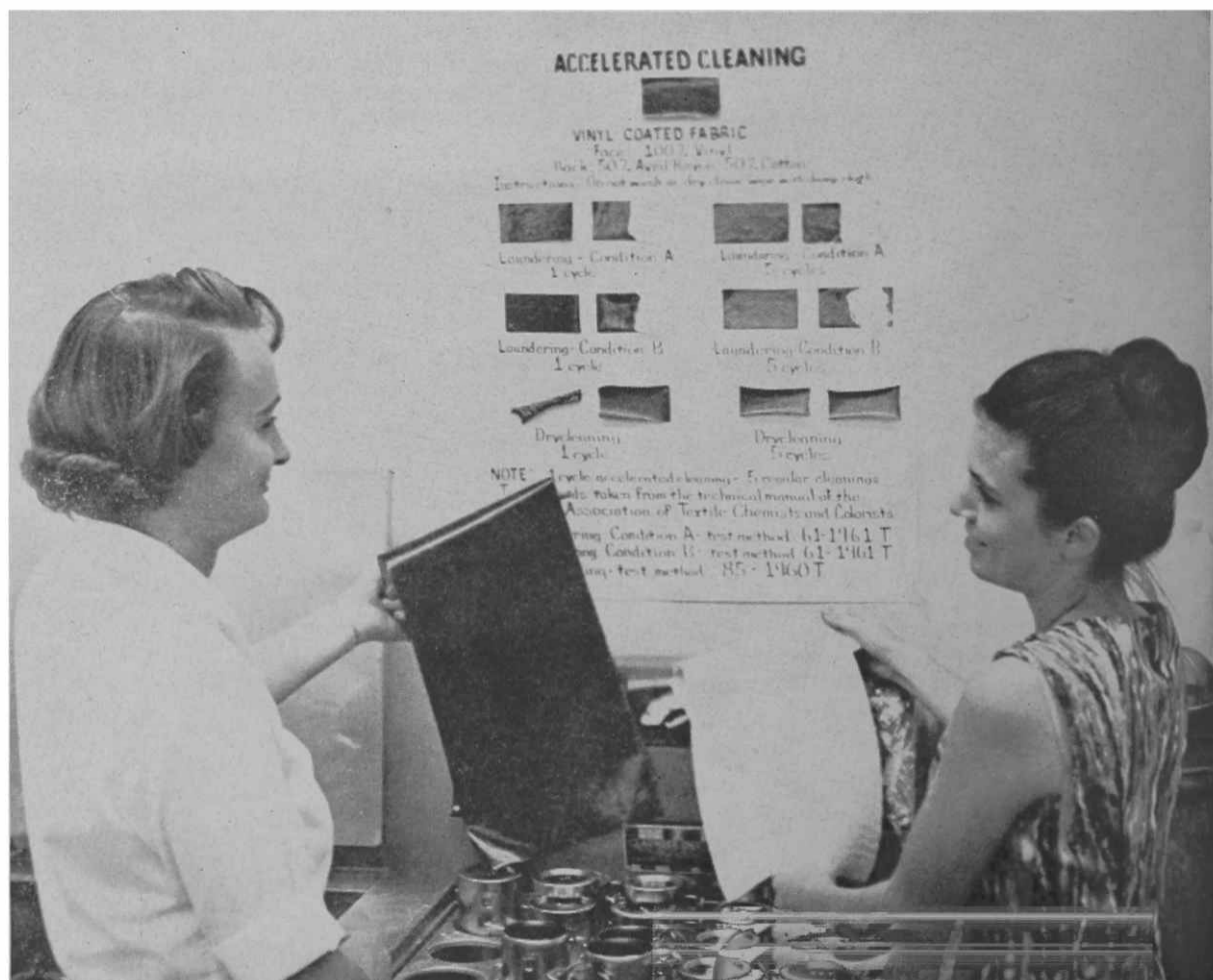
ination is the most important chore of the bee. The pollinating activity of the honey bee is an important part of a national production of two to three billion dollars worth of over 50 different crops in this country. Cotton, cantaloups and alfalfa, the citrus industry, the flowers which grace our gardens and homes, these and many more depend upon insect pollination.

No Surpluses in Future

The world itself is realizing that the day of food surpluses — surpluses only in a few commodities and in a few nations in a perennially hungry world — has ended. Growing populations face hunger and actual starvation.

The faithful little friend which pollinates our food and fiber crops — the honey bee — is more crucially important to man today than ever before. The new \$500,000 laboratory, dedicated to learning more about bees, dedicated also to increasing cooperation with this University and its College of Agriculture, is an asset to the community and the nation.

LABORATORY TESTS of various new fabrics are made by Dr. Hall, left, and a student, Connie Mitchell of Phoenix. Each of the round containers (between the two women) holds a fabric sample for testing. Above, on the chart, can be seen the small samples of fabrics which have undergone the accelerated cleaning test. Note how some curl up, some shrink, others change color, denoting probable results in actual usage.



(Continued from Previous Page)

washing conditions simulates average hand washing, while the other washing is comparable to low temperature machine washing. Both of these accelerated laundering conditions equal five of the respective types of normal launderings. Each of these accelerated cleanings was done one time and five times on replicate pieces of fabric to give results comparable to five and 25 cleanings of the three cleaning conditions.

Not to be Dry Cleaned

Results of these laboratory tests showed as was expected that dry cleaning was totally unsuitable for the vinyl coated fabric. The fabric became stiff and boardy and excessive shrinkage and loss of color was noted. Machine washing conditions result in a more limp hand and a greater color loss than hand washing conditions. The comparable five hand washings showed no noticeable change in color, shrinkage or hand, while the comparable 25 hand washings produced some color loss and a limp hand. It was concluded that garments made from the vinyl-coated fabric probably would not require frequent laundering, and up to five hand washings would not produce excessive changes in the fabric.

The laminated fabric showed no visible changes in hand and appearance after the dry cleaning tests. Slight shrinkage was noted but not a sufficient amount to be objectionable. Both laundering conditions produced excessive shrinkage in the fabric. The simulated hand washing conditions produced little change in color of the laminate; however, the acetate tricot became rougher, which might be attributed to degeneration of the fabric.

The acetate fiber is noted for its chemical breakdown in laundering with a detergent or soap. The machine washing conditions proved most unsatisfactory, since the layers of fabric became completely separated, in addition to the excessive shrinkage and degeneration of the backing fabric. In conclusion, the label carrying the information that this fabric is "washable" was considered most erroneous. Not even the mildest condition produced acceptable results, since the shrinkage was excessive and the acetate backing was damaged. Only the dry cleaning tests proved satisfactory for this fabric.

Instructions May Mislead

From these isolated yet typical cases, consumers may be misled or confused by the care instructions

given to fabrics. With the vinyl coated fabric, mild hand launderings would be appropriate for cleaning even though the label had stated that neither dry cleaning nor laundering should be done. The laminate fabric was labeled as being "washable" but not even the mildest laundering conditions were satisfactory. Only dry cleaning of this fabric was acceptable.

In view of these tests, the consumer of textile products has two choices in care of these new fabrics. First is to actually test a fabric for care. With yard goods, the home sewer can purchase a small amount of fabric and test it by laundering under various conditions and noting any changes. Dry cleaning conditions may be somewhat duplicated by placing a small piece of fabric in a jar with some spot removing agent and some small items such as marbles, screws, etc. By shaking the jar, the agitation and abrasion usually found in dry cleaning will be simulated.

The second choice would take more time to accomplish. This is to promote more explicit and permanent labeling from the textile industry. The Industry Advisory Committee of Textile Information, a private voluntary group, has devised a new labeling system. The members of the textile industry who agree to conform to this system will, starting this spring, provide sewn-in labels in items requiring special care. This is a step in the right direction. However, fabrics which can be cleaned by obvious or traditional means will not carry labels. This new system still leaves the consumer with many questions such as:

Still Many Questions

Does this item require special care even though a label is not sewn in?

What are the best obvious or traditional means of cleaning an item?

What provisions are made to adequately label yard goods used by the home sewer?

Such care labels should utilize words and phrases in common use to describe conventional washing and cleaning methods. The term "washable" does not give any indication of the conditions — such as hand or machine washable and temperature of the water. Permanent labeling of ready-to-wear apparel is easily provided by sewn-in fabric labels. Yard goods could also carry this information.

It's foolish to worry about confused, miserable teenagers. In a few years they'll be confused, miserable adults.



Cochise County

KAWT, Douglas — 6:15 a.m.
Mon. through Fri.

12:20 p.m. Monday through
Friday

KHIL, Willcox — Mon. thru
Fri., 6:05 a.m.

Coconino County

KCLS, Flagstaff — Tues. and
Thurs., 8:45 a.m.

KCLS, Flagstaff (Home Agent)
— Wed., 10:15 a.m.

Gila County

KIKO, Globe-Miami
Monday, 12:45 p.m.

Graham County

KATO, Safford—Sat., 9:30 a.m.
Mon. thru Fri., 12:45 p.m.
(daily)

Maricopa County

KTAR, Phoenix—Mon. thru Fri.,
5:55 a.m.

KOY, Phoenix—Tues. thru Sat.,
5:40 a.m.

KOY, Phoenix—Sunday Garden
Club of The Air, 8:35 a.m.

KPHO, Phoenix—Mon., Cotton
Report, 12:40 p.m.

KPHO, Phoenix—Thurs., Dairy
and Livestock Report, 12:40
p.m.

KUPD, Phoenix—Mon. thru Fri.,
5:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Mohave County

KAAA, Kingman — Mon., 9:06
a.m. (Extension Home Econ-
omist)

Navajo County

KDJI, Holbrook — Tues., 1:00
p.m.-1:15 p.m.

KINO, Winslow — Sat., 12:15-
12:30 p.m.

Pinal County

KPIN, Case Grande—Mon. thru
Sat., 6:55 a.m.; Mon and Fri.,
9:30 a.m.; Tues., Thurs. 11:30
a.m. on Monday and Wednes-
day and Sat., 12:20 p.m.

Yavapai County

KYCA, Prescott — Mon., Wed.,
Thurs. and Fri., 3:45 p.m.

KNOT, Prescott — Mon., Wed.
and Fri., 6:25 a.m.

KVIO, Cottonwood—Mon. and
Fri., 8:15 a.m.

Yuma County

KVOY, Yuma — Mon. thru Fri.,
5:45 a.m.

KYUM, Yuma — Tues., Thurs.
and Sat., 6:25 a.m.

KYUM, Yuma — Saturday, 4-H
Program, 10:05 a.m.