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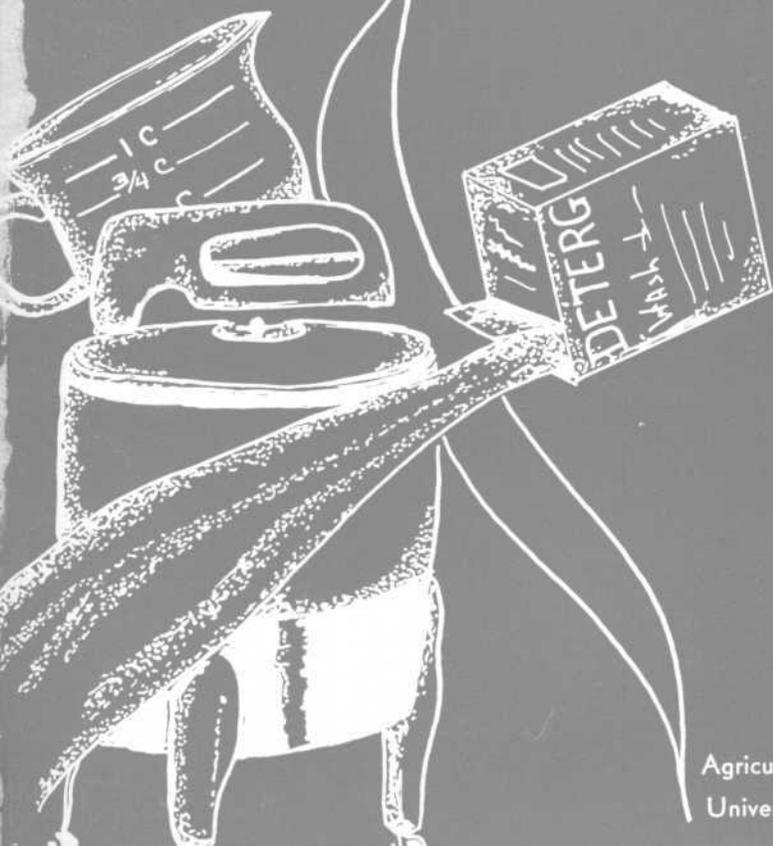
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# Help Yourself to Laundry Aids

Circular 212



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# Help Yourself To Laundry Aids

By Grace Ryan  
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When you shop for laundry aids you are sure to find old and new friends among the items on the grocer's shelves. Are you confused by the number? Or by the new tricks claimed for certain brands?

Just remember that facts can still be facts and that each laundry helper is manufactured to do certain jobs on wash day. There is no one best buy. Learn brand names and study labels. That is one sure way to reach sound conclusions about the goods you buy and use.

Some laundry items are meant to help with heavily-soiled washings. Some do their best work on

delicate materials. Still others solve hard-water problems, and some do bleaching and brightening as well. There are excellent compounds in all classes and for all uses.

## Detergents

Let's take detergents first. A "detergent" is any cleansing agent or solvent.

Soap is a detergent, although most people apply the name "detergent" only to the synthetic, non-soapy cleaners. Either soap products or synthetics will clean badly soiled clothes. Likewise in either

group are products to clean fragile fabrics.

All brands fall in one of the following classes:

**1. Built Soaps, Built Synthetics—**

(Do general washing. They brighten and clean heavy soil. They are "heavy duty" workers.)

**2. Non-built Soaps, Non-built Synthetics—**

(Do light laundry, protecting fine fabrics. They are the "light duty" aids.)

There are countless brands. Read the labels well! Usually they tell what kind of washing can be done by the product. Labels also tell whether products are mixed with special, helpful chemicals. If you find the phrases "makes your wash sparkle" or "gives your washing that brighter look," you may be sure that the products are built to do extra work because cleaners, "wetting agents," and softeners have been added.

## Facts About Soaps

Soaps are still good cleansers and will do excellent work when water is soft. However, soap forms scum in most hard water. No amount of mere preference for soap can change that chemical fact. Mild soaps continue to be popular for fine woollens and cottons but cannot do their best work until water is softened.



Look at the labels when you buy washing powders. Know which kind you want to use.

## Claims for and Against Synthetic Detergents

There are certain claims against detergents. They are said to cause allergic reactions on skin, to dry it and to cause destruction of tissue. Dyes are said to fade when detergents are used. This was disproved where good dyes had been used in the fabrics.

It is true that there are individuals allergic to certain synthetics. Experiment personally with small amounts of several brands before settling down to the use of one, either for dishwashing or laundering. Detergents have the power to free grease and oil. This explains why they extract oil from the skin.

The great value of *synthetic detergents* lies in their ability to break water and prevent the formation of curds which settle back on clothes. In time, these curds form grayish deposits around the fibers of all fabrics. By hardening, these deposits weaken the fibers, and give a permanently grayed appearance to white or light-colored fabrics.

## Water Softeners

Water has a tightness or "tension" on its surface. Minerals cause the tension, and if much mineral substance is present the water is said to be "hard."

Water must be softened to produce a clean, white washing. Do this by using proper softeners in proper amounts. Learn the correct amounts by testing water for hardness with the assistance of your Home Demonstration Agent.

## Kinds of Softeners

A home water supply can be softened by a softening system or tank. Such a system works on a plan of mineral exchange or a change in the chemistry of the water. It has to be regenerated frequently.

Package softeners for sale at your grocer's also change the chemistry of water. There are two kinds with many brands to choose from.

One kind leaves a deposit in the water, which may or may not be harmful to clothing or other fabrics. The second kind leaves no deposit and makes a harmless chemical change. The resulting water is soft and clear. These are thought to do a better laundering job.

If poor washing is done in hard water, gray curd is deposited on clothes, one layer after another. Such clothes can never be really clean and "white" unless the old curd is "stripped out."

## "Stripping Out" Old Soap Curd

Fill your washer with water of temperature and amount for a regular washing. Add *twice* as much softener as usual. The amount will depend on the test you gave for water hardness.

Add no soap, but pour in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of mild alkali such as household ammonia, borax, or a mild washing soda. Add the clothes you wish to strip of old scum. Run the automatic machine a full cycle or the regular machine at least 30 minutes. Rinse as usual, and dry.

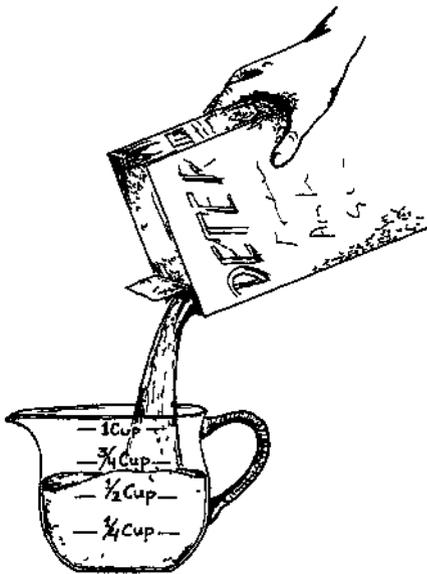
If the clothes are still gray, repeat the process until all old soap deposit is out. Only careless washing will put the curd and grayness back into the fabrics.

## What About Sudsing?

Some synthetics do not suds. This does not mean that their work

is poorly done. Some non-suders are as good or better workers than some of the heavy sudsing mixtures.

Too much suds is wasteful, must be washed out, and may slow the motor on regular machines. A heavy "bank" of suds can hold dirt down against clothes. Excess suds flowing from an automatic washer may cause damage that will lead to extensive repair of mechanical parts.



Measure your washing powder accurately so you won't use too much and cause excessive sudsing.

## Bluing Clothes

Bluing was a necessary laundry aid in old-fashioned laundry work. Water was hard, there were few softeners and homemakers knew little about their use. Bluing was also necessary when homemade soap was the only known laundry soap.

White cloth appears "white" only if a slight blue is added to the final finish. In the light, the cloth "seems" whiter. Bluing operates on the same principle.

Modern laundresses know that if clothes are well washed in *softened* water with good detergents (either soap or synthetic) no bluing is necessary. The gray of deposited soap curd is only covered by bluing—never removed by it.

## Kinds of Bleaches

There are two kinds of bleaches. They are *powdered* and *liquid*. Here are facts about each.

### Powdered Bleaches

- Powders give excellent whiteness under correct washing conditions.
- They do not affect dyes.
- They do not weaken fibers.
- They are safe for all fabrics.

- They are slower in action because of ease on fibers.
- They operate best at 150° Fahrenheit.

### Liquid Bleaches

- They are not good for all fibers (avoid them on silk and wool).
- They are harder on fabrics and dyes.
- They are useful for *extreme* soil and *stubborn* stains.
- They are more rapid than the powders.

### Points to Know About Bleaching

- Bleaching is no substitute for good washing. Bleaches remove color (either as a stain or a dye) but do not remove soil. Bleaches can whiten dingy fabrics damaged by poor washing and rinsing.
- The regular use of bleaches is not good. All bleaches (even sunshine) will weaken and rot cotton, linen and some rayons, if left on too long. Bleaches may affect the permanent finish of some cottons. Liquid bleaches will discolor white woolens or pure silks.
- Leave bleaches on only short periods of time. Rinse thoroughly. Frequent, moderate washing is easier on clothes than bleaching.