

## Decorate windows easily with louvered shutters

When autumn's chilly breezes begin to urge people indoors, the colors and sights of the changing season are still as close as the nearest window. Now is a good time to take a fresh look at those windows, and consider new coverings to give the whole room an updated appearance.

Today's window decorating choices extend well beyond conventional curtains, and include a range of coverings

that are not only attractive, but provide ventilation, privacy and control of light.

If you like the warm, natural look of wood, louvered shutters are a perfect choice for covering windows beautifully, sensibly and economically! They're so versatile, you can use them alone for a casual look, or pair them with a stylish balloon valance for a more contemporary appearance.

Best of all, the home decorating ex-

perts at Minwax say you save money and create a perfect match to the room's existing woodwork by finishing the shutters yourself. With the innovative wood finishing products now available, even first time do-it-yourselfers can be successful just by following these simple steps.

• Choose a well-ventilated work area with plenty of light, then gather your materials. For this project you'll need protective gloves, a drop cloth or newspaper,

several soft rags, an inexpensive paint brush (foam brushes work well), sandpaper, and paint thinner for cleanup.

• Sand the wood thoroughly to ensure the most professional-looking results. Here's a tip for the shutters: Wrap sandpaper around a deck of playing cards. Hold the deck sideways while sanding in the direction of the grain, the cards make the sandpaper conform to the wood's surface to assure even sanding.

Test your sanding by running an old piece of nylon over the shutters—if it snags, that area needs more sanding. When sanding is complete, wipe the shutters with a tack cloth to pick up any remaining dust.

• If the shutters are made with pine, or another soft wood, apply a coat of a Wood Conditioner, before staining. Wood Conditioner, applied within 15 minutes of staining, helps assure an even coat of stain, especially on the end grain.

• Now, you're ready to stain! Using a foam applicator, apply Wood Finish in thin, even coats. After applying the first coat, wait five to 15 minutes, then go back over the area with a clean cloth to wipe off the excess stain and level any air bubbles.

Allow the stain to dry thoroughly (usually about four hours) and resand lightly. Wipe with a tack cloth and apply a second coat if desired.

• Because your shutters will be subject to daily use, you'll need to protect them. To simplify this step, Minwax makes a fast-drying polyurethane in a convenient spray can that is specially designed for fast application.

A coating of polyurethane in a semi-gloss sheen will enhance both the beauty and durability of your shutters by giving them an antique lustre while adding a protective topcoat. To use, allow stain to dry completely and spray on a topcoat of polyurethane.

Apply two or three thin coats, always recoating when the previous coat is dry to the touch. Allow shutters to dry overnight before hanging.

By finishing your own louvered shutters, you can enjoy the satisfaction of a simple do-it-yourself project.



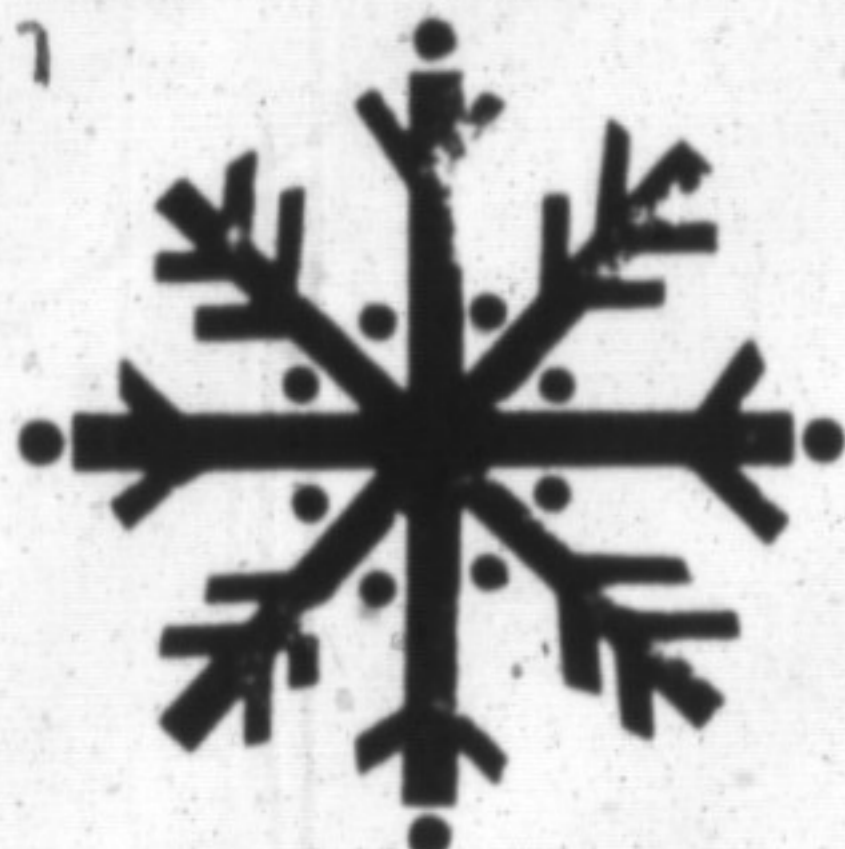
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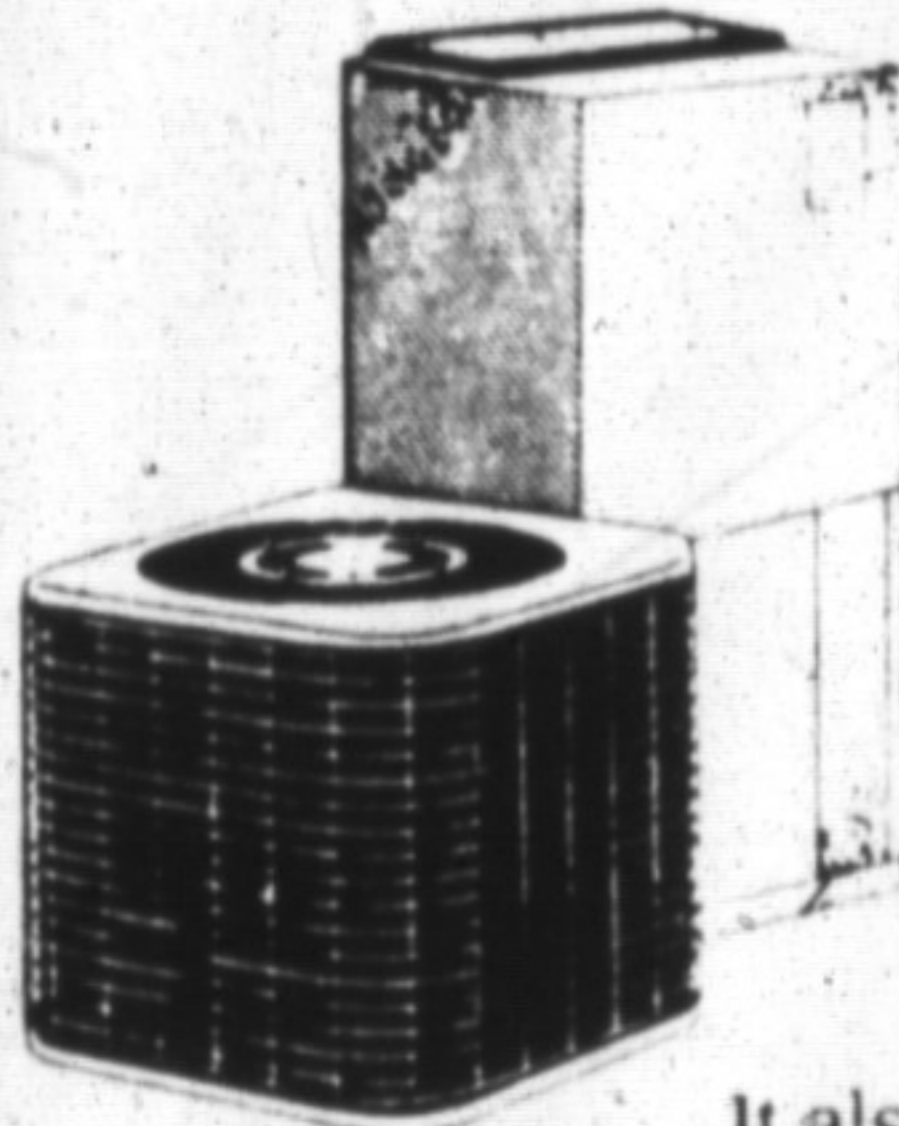
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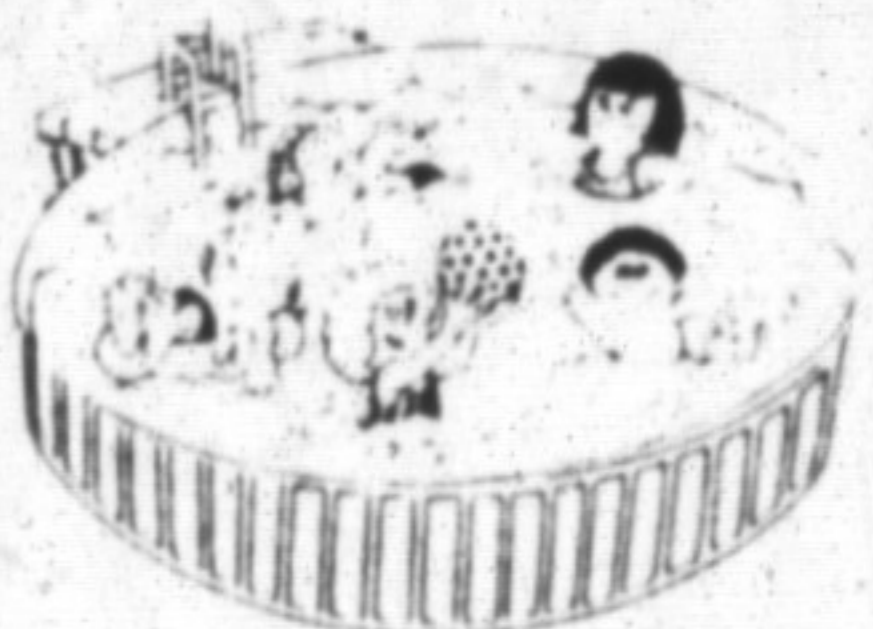
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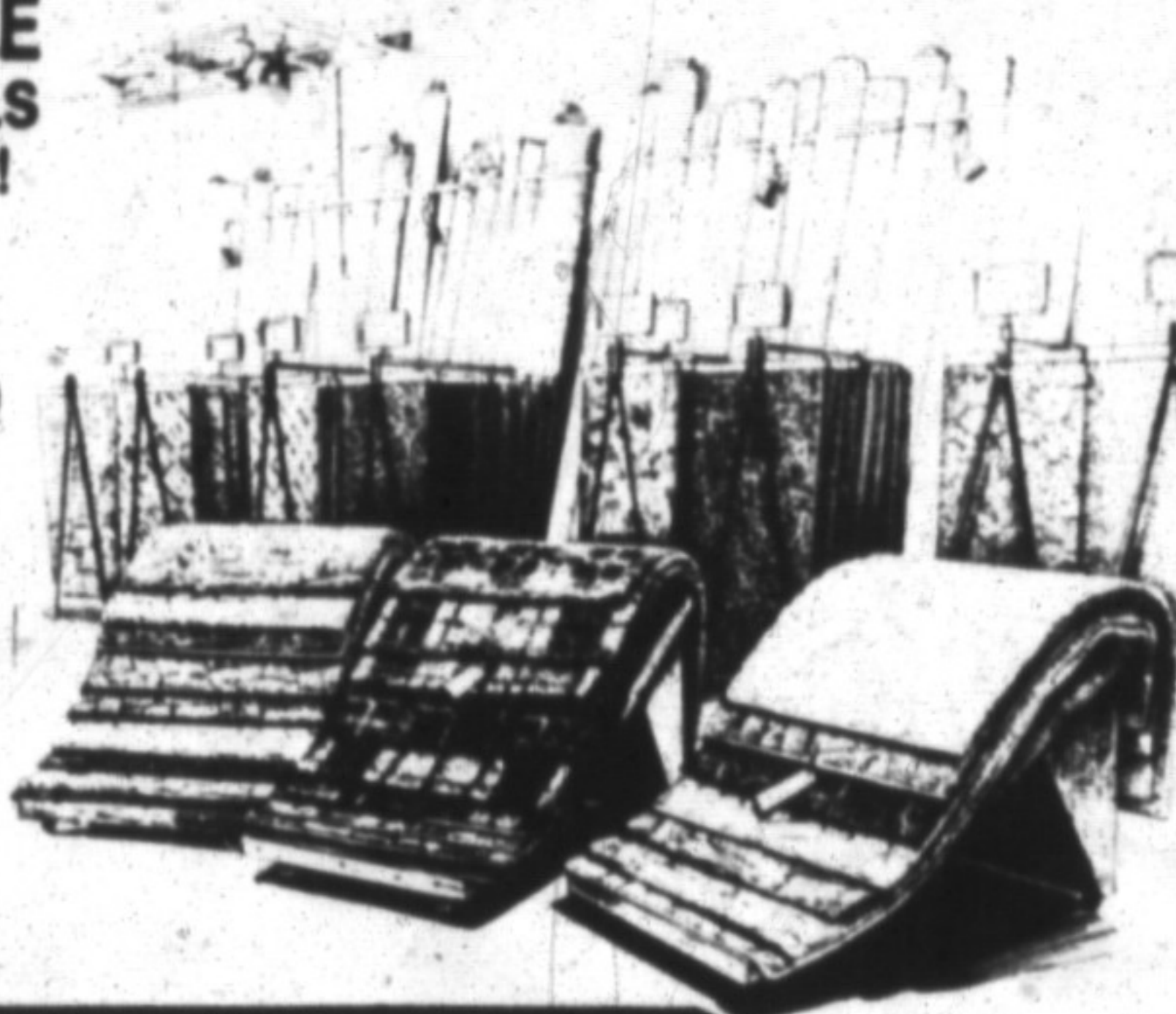
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