

Make Christmas Happy and Safe

By Joyce Champion

CHRISTMAS is a time for children . . . which means it is also a time for taking special precautions. For instance, one of the prettiest scenes at Christmas, the decorated family tree, can also be one of the most dangerous fire hazards and could turn a happy time into a tragic event.

It is customary to spread a layer of cotton under the Christmas tree to simulate snow, but this pretty picture can turn into a disaster if the cotton used is not fireproof.

Some stores in large cities now have fireproof cotton for sale, but it can be difficult to obtain and is more expensive than regular cotton. However, cotton can easily be fireproofed at home for only a few cents by following this method:



Prepare a solution by dissolving 7 ounces of twenty mule team borax, 3 ounces of boric acid and 1½ ounces of soap flakes or granules in 2 quarts of hot water. Place the cotton on a concrete floor or other non-absorbent surface. Sprinkle or spray the cotton with the solution while it is still warm then let the cotton dry thoroughly before using it. Do not dip the cotton in the solution as it will remove the fluffiness and spoil its "snowy" effect.

This method can also be used to fireproof other Christmas decorations such as pine cones, crepe paper, popcorn and store-bought decorations that are marked inflammable.

Even in this age of sophisticated artificial lighting there is nothing more Christmasy than candlelight whether it is at a party or used to light up the dinner table. This can turn into a problem however, if the wax drips on the table or cloth. Don't try to mop the wax up while it is wet — this only makes it more difficult to remove.

Let it dry and scrape off the excess wax with a dull knife. On a hard surface the wax will come off easily if you allow it to harden before you try to remove it.



In the case of washable fabrics, after you have scraped off the wax, place the item between two blotters or several thicknesses of paper

towels or tissues, and press with a warm iron. Repeat this two or three times then wet the area and rub or brush in Borateem and launder in the usual way.

Here's one hint you may find useful to make linen tablecloths and napkins look really crisp and fresh. After you have washed them in the washing machine, iron them while they are still wet; don't let them dry.

If you can't iron them immediately, roll them and place them in the freezer until you are ready to iron; this keeps them moist. If you adopt this method you can dispense with the use of starch.

I hope these hints will help to make your Christmas a happy and a safe one. Now to answer some of the queries I have received recently.



Mrs. D. Mooney of Regina writes: "While applying iodine to a cut, some spilled on my son's pants. Is there a method I can use to remove this stain?"

Yes, Mrs. Mooney. Wet the stain with cold water and rub or brush in Borateem until the spot disappears then launder in the usual way.

Mrs. V. MacMillan of Cornwall asks: "Is there anything I can use to remove the stale odour from my baby's plastic pants and crib sheets?"

These items can be washed in the washing machine — use the recommended amount of laundry soap plus one cup of Borateem. This borax-based product will remove any trace of odour from the baby's clothes. If the pants or crib sheet are badly stained rub or brush in a paste of Borateem and water before washing. Let it stand for 10-15 minutes but don't put them in the dryer unless you have a no-heat cycle on it.

Mrs. J. K. Wood of Burnaby writes: "I have three small daughters who are now wearing textured winter tights. Can these be washed in the washing machine or should I wash them by hand each night?"

You can wash textured tights in the washing machine, Mrs. Wood, but you should place them in a mesh bag before putting them in the machine. And you should pre-treat any spots or stains on the tights before you wash them.

HANSEL AND GRETEL



A tuneful operatic version of the children's fairytale, Hansel and Gretel, will be presented on CBC television during the Christmas season: Wednesday, Dec. 23, at 8 p.m. A program for the entire family, with its storybook sets and costumes, and its beautiful music, Hansel and Gretel stars Judith Forst (left) and Christine Anton (right) in the title roles, and Maureen Forrester (centre) as the Witch, seen here outside the gingerbread-and-candy house of the Witch.



"God Bless Us Every One"

All the blessed sentiments of Christmas dwell in these words of Tiny Tim.

Good will is there, gratitude to God, the soulful sense of the brotherhood of man, that divine spark of unselfishness which glows supreme in the Yuletide, though it may be smothered with ashes in all the rest of the year.

"Every One" allows no exceptions. The rich, the poor, the kind, the cruel, the good, the bad — all are included. All

do not deserve the divine blessing equally, but all need it equally, and in their several ways may be touched and purified and lifted up, for the moment, at least, to a realization of the spiritual meaning of life.

And if we are so unwise as to fail to see any cause for the thankfulness, let us remember that it was the little lame youth, who had no material blessings at all, but a great and courageous soul, who pointed the way to the Christmas Blessing.