

Craftnotes

Braided rugs are making a comeback

By KAREN GRIMES AND LINDA CONDE

Don't throw those scraps of fabric away! Thrifty crafters know that just one more project can be made from them — braided rugs.

Possibly the first textile technique mastered by primitive man, this process is still used widely today.

Early settlers in the Markham-Stouffville area were adept at recycling old fabric, discarded clothing, used blankets, curtains, and even worn stockings to make their floor mats.

Materials are cut or torn into strips 1/4 to 1/2 inches wide. Fold the raw edges together to meet in the middle of the wrong side of the fabric, and then bring the folded edges together.

Stitch three ends of fabric strips together and begin to braid. As you near the end of a braided strip, sew a new piece on to the bias.

Turning the braided length into a rug is easy. Decide on the shape of your rug, whether it be round, oval, or heart-shaped.

Begin stitching the shape in the centre and work your way out. To stitch, use a blunt tapestry needle and strong thread, weaving the thread through one loop of the upper braid to the corresponding loop of the lower braid.

Make sure your rug stays flat. If sewn too tightly the piece will buckle; if sewn too loosely the piece will separate. The finished size of the rug is up to you.

Braided rugs are ideal accents for the front entrance or patio doors. You can make them in colors that will coordinate with your furnishings.

With "country kitchens" rising in popularity, braided rugs are enjoying a revival in interior design.

Braided rugs also make excellent seat cushions, and can be used as tablemats as well. Fashionable belts are made using this technique. Enjoy braiding!

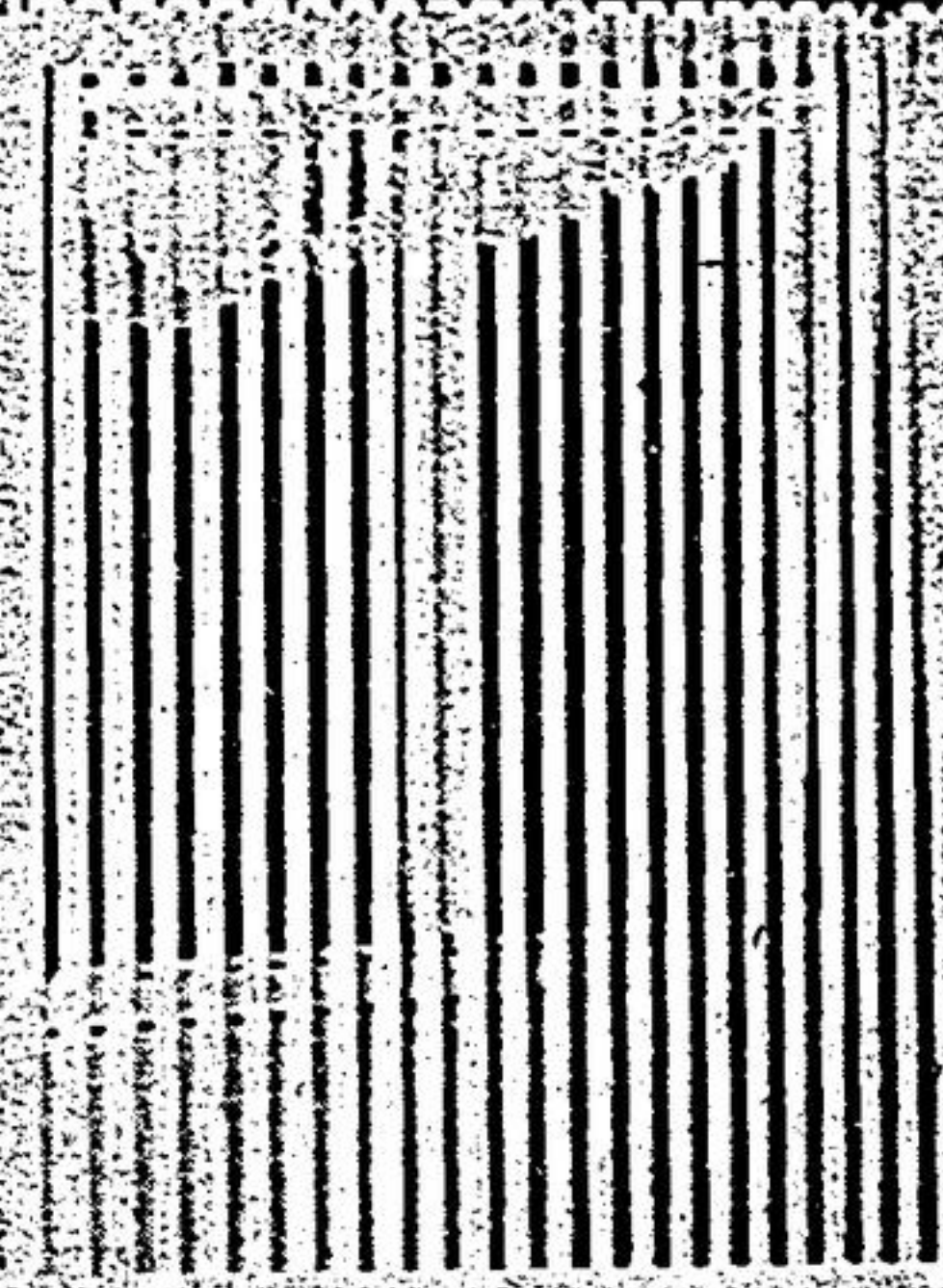
Crafti-Tips:

1. You may wish to attach a non-slip fabric to the back of your braided rug. Simply cut the material to the same size as the rug, turn under half an inch, and slip-stitch it to the underside of the rug.

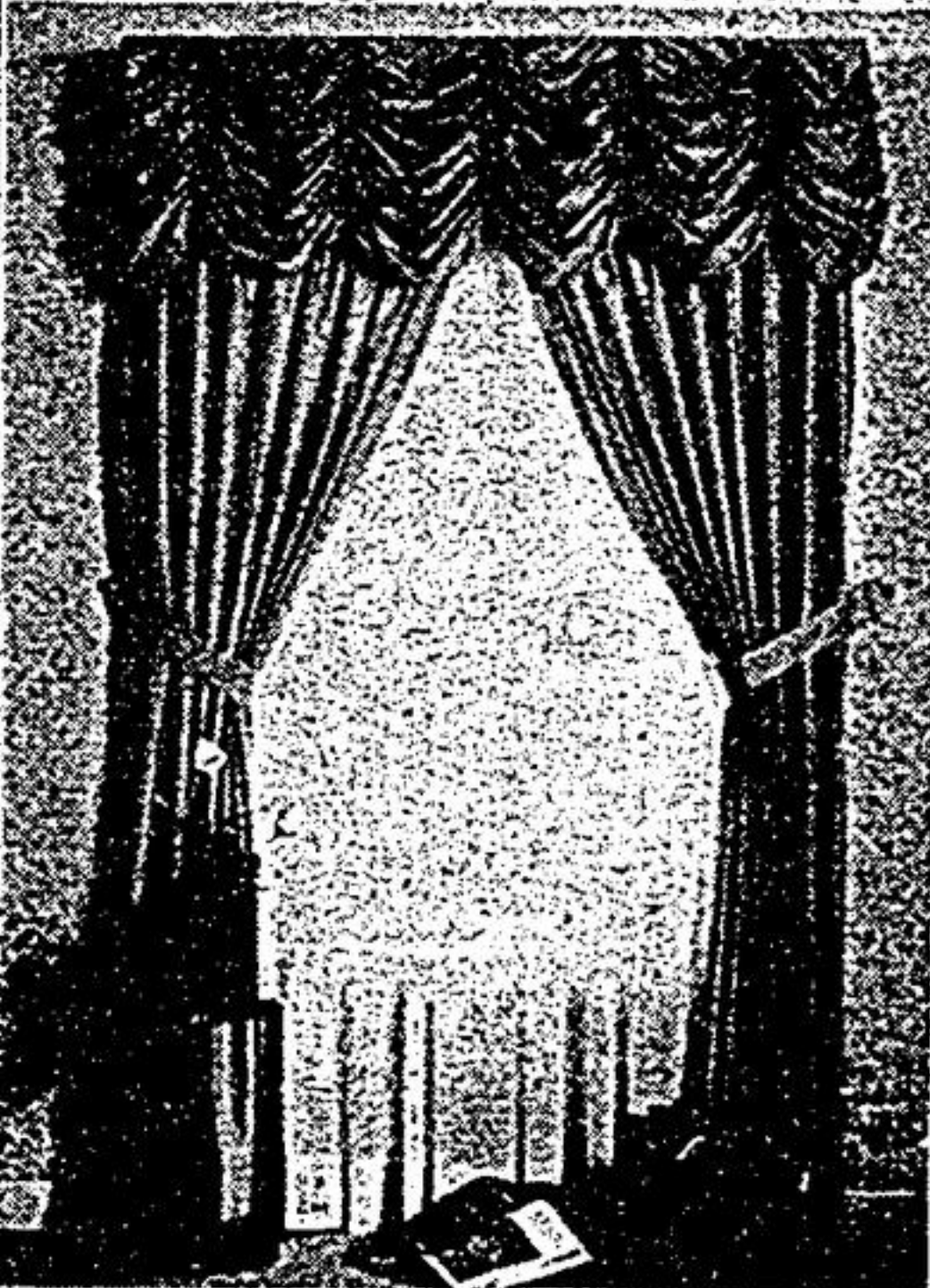
2. Linda Conde's grandmother always braided rugs with one of the three strips in the braid made from old stockings. This gave the rug some elasticity and it lay flatter on the floor. It's interesting to note that well-made rugs can last years and years with proper care.

3. You can achieve various visual effects in braided rugs by alternating the colors and textures of the fabrics used.

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