

Spring tablecloths can brighten just about any room

I suppose Alfred Lord Tennyson was right when he said that in springtime, a young man's fancy turns to love. But for the rest of us, it's time to consider spring house cleaning. For lovers of old things,

that means more than "deep dusting" and polishing: Now is the perfect opportunity to rethink and refresh, and maybe even start a new collection.

Looking for a breath of fresh air, I got in touch with Teresa Stone, an avid collector of vintage linens and secretary of the Vintage Tablecloth Lovers Club. As I suspected would be the case, she suggested that a vintage tablecloth might be just the thing to brighten up any room (and not just the dining room).

"Tablecloths are the best way to 'fast forward' into spring," the Pacific Northwest resident told me. "A pretty cloth and spring flowers, from your garden or the store, are a quick 'spring clean' to chase away the winter blues."

As it happens, there is a spring-y table-

Below: So many vintage tablecloths, so little time: One good way to display a collection of springtime florals is on a ladder.



VINTAGE STYLE



BY
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cloth for every color scheme, every taste. Although many of them feature floral designs, Teresa pointed out that there is even a tablecloth depicting colorful seed packets ("a hard one to find"), as

well as one that illustrates spring cleaning chores.

I hear you, though: "Do I really want to take on something else that's going to require a lot of maintenance?" Beginning in the 1960s, many of the cloths had permanent press finishes. Even without that, the quality of older fabrics is often such that if you machine wash and dry, or line dry, your cloth, all that's required are a good shake and maybe some hand smoothing. No need to set up the ironing board.

But what if the cloth is in less than pristine condition? Ah, that's where hints from the VTLC come in. Thanks to club president Jimmie Bucci, I had placed in my hands (just about) everything you need to know about tablecloth care, tips gleaned from club members over the years. But before getting into the details, be advised that the club is not responsible for any suggestion that does not work.

That said, the first step is to determine the fiber content of the cloth and then to act accordingly. Above all, it's best to keep it simple: You can always advance to a more invasive solution, but you can't undo any damage inflicted by acting too rashly from the start. And it doesn't get much simpler than this: To freshen a vintage tablecloth, treat it to a long soak in room temperature water, adding no cleaning agents. Change the water and repeat until the water runs clear. Go gently. If you notice any fading or disintegration of the fabric, stop immediately and lay the cloth out flat to dry.

In the case of stains, try soaking the cloth overnight in warm water with non-chlorine bleach or Oxy-free products. Repeat if necessary. Crofting is a natural solution to the problem of stains: Lay a wet cloth outside on the grass, print side down, and let the sun dry it. If you're not satisfied, advance to Oxy products, but only if the cloth is 100 percent cotton or linen. Or try liquid chlorine bleach, a decision many consider to be risky.

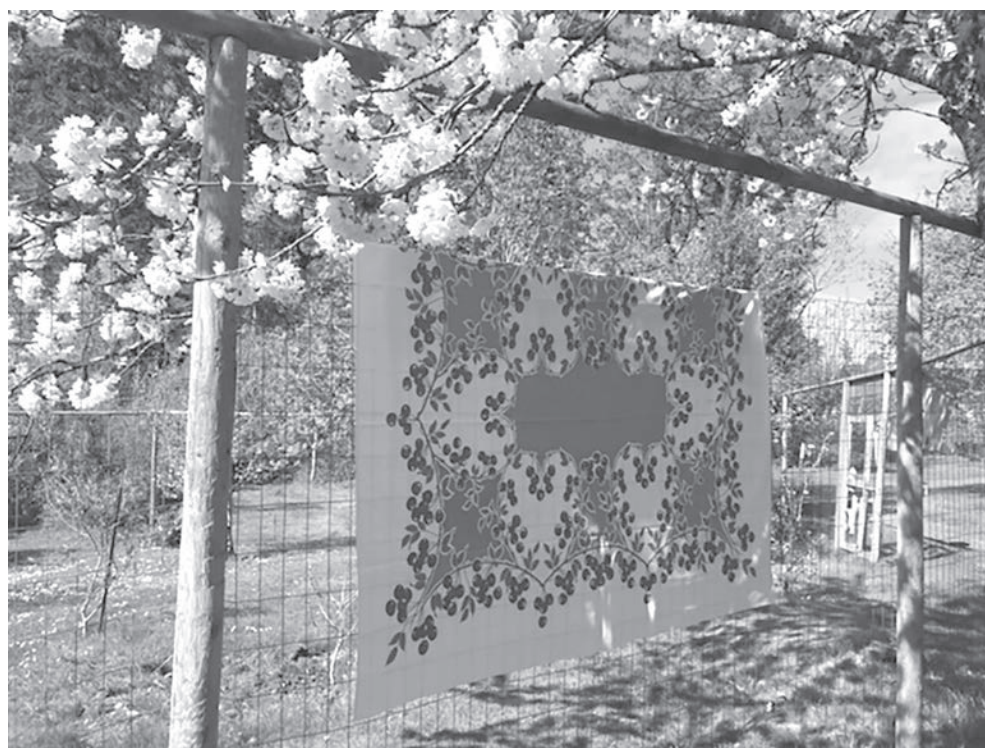
Some causes of damage are more severe than others. Mildew is a real enemy of old textiles, and rust is particularly challenging. In addition to commercial rust removers, which can damage porcelain finishes on appliances and sinks, there are homemade remedies such as lemon juice and salt, as well as a bit of cream of tartar in boiling water. A cloth that has been burnt or scorched might be a lost cause, but if the cloth is washable, it might be worth laundering it. Patching any holes might be another option. On the other hand, if a tablecloth doesn't pass the "sniff test," soaking it overnight might do the trick.

If this has been helpful (or inspirational), might I suggest joining the Vintage Tablecloth Lovers Club? Go to www.vintage-tableclothloversclub.com and connect with kindred spirits.

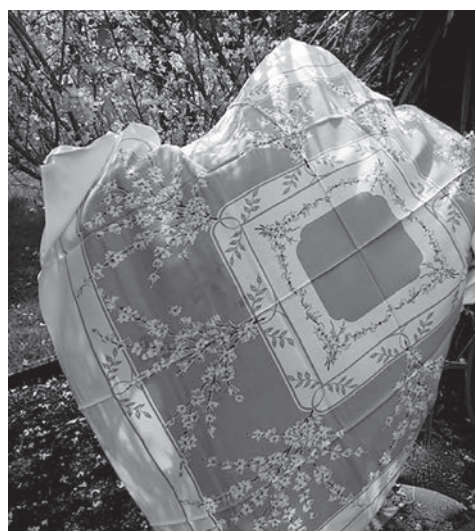


Above: This hard-to-find tablecloth is sure to inspire backyard gardeners.

Below: . . .with a cherry on top! Check out the heart patterns on this cloth: Stone says that "collectors love their cherries!"



Below: As sunny as a forsythia bush is this breezy tablecloth. Display it on a table and it's "instant spring."



Right: Nothing heralds the arrival of spring quite like pussywillows. Images courtesy of Teresa Stone



Tri-State Antique Market gears up for 2021 season

LAWRENCEBURG, Ind. -- The Tri-State Antique Market will open for its first show of 2021 on Sunday, May 2 at the Lawrenceburg Fairgrounds. The event has become an important regional destination for collectors, home decorators and renovators seeking that next great treasure to add to their home or collection.

During a typical year the event features an ever changing line up of 200+ vendors selling a wide array of antique, vintage and retro merchandise from a variety of time periods and price points at a series of six dates held the first Sunday of each month through October.

The 2020 season saw the Market marred due to the pandemic and resulting concern for public safety, but was still able to proceed in a limited capacity due to the mostly outdoor setting and adherence to social distancing and safety guidelines which will continue in to the 2021 season for as long as necessary. One of the unintended consequences of 2020 was an increase of free time for cleaning and home improvement projects which resulted in an influx of quality merchandise at the Market. Many such projects continued through the winter with the anticipation that 2021 may be one of the best in recent years

for availability of rare and collectible antique merchandise.

The Lawrenceburg Fairgrounds is conveniently located in southeast Indiana, approximately one mile west of exit 16 off I-275. Full of quaint, country charm complete with shaded groves and large open-air pavilions. The five acre park also offers many modern amenities including paved walks, contemporary restrooms, free parking, and a variety of food vendors at all four corners of the midway.

Official Market hours are from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. "Earlybird" shoppers are admitted during vendor set up at 6 a.m. A walk-in \$4.00 adult admission is charged at all times. Attended pets and children are welcome. Over half of the Market's vendors display indoors or under cover, so the event is held "rain or shine."

For more information visit www.lawrenceburgantiqueshow.com or call Aaron Metzger at (513)702-2680.

Later 2021 Market dates include Sundays June 6, July 4, August 1, September 5, and October 3.