

MAKING FELT TOYS

Suede, kid, or chamois leather may be used for paws and other details. American cloth can be used for washable toys, but it is not so cuddly as an ordinary woven material.

Cured lambskins or sheepskins with the wool on them make delightful woolly animals, but they are harder to work and this is really a craft on its own, though for anyone who has cured skins and knows how to handle them the toy-making directions given would be useful. Fur also needs special treatment, but the results can be very good if it is handled properly.

Stuffing

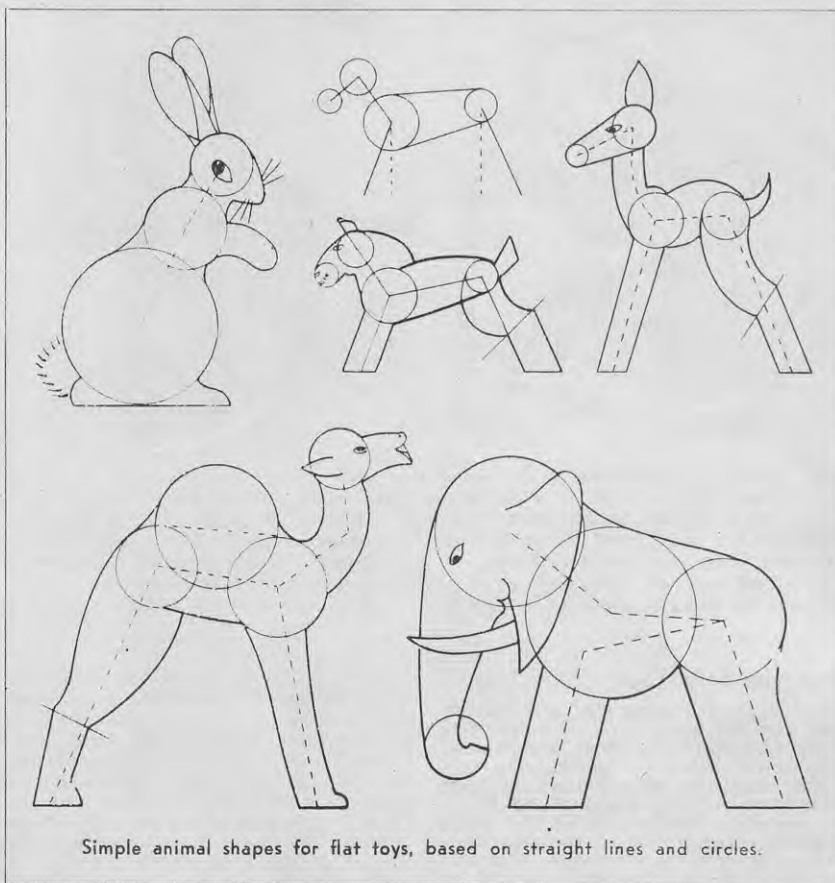
Clean teased sheep's wool is probably the best all-purpose stuffing; it is light and springy and easy to obtain in most country districts. For people not so fortunate as to have wool available grey flock is probably the next best; it is obtainable cheaply from an upholsterer. Kapok is excellent for small animals, though difficult to get new at present. Old woollen garments cut up very small, scraps and ends of knitting wool, or wool waste from the mills are fairly good substitutes for raw fleece wool.

Other stuffing materials, in order of preference, are: Fine wood-straw or shavings (springy, light, and washable; it should be rolled into small balls for use); wood shavings from a carpenter's shop (suitable only for really large toys); white cotton wadding (better than grey flock for light-coloured toys covered with loosely-woven material); and cotton waste from factories.

If a white or light-coloured felt has been used and the stuffing is dark or messy, the opening should have a piece of white cloth tacked round to prevent the outside of the animal from being discoloured while the stuffing is being inserted. This covering should be retained until just before the opening is sewn up.

Flat Toys

Very simply made from quite small pieces of felt, flat toys may be trimmed



with gingham or other bright cotton materials. A child can make them just as a toy; an adult can turn them into a kettle holder or needle book. Very simple animal shapes should be used and are not difficult to make up, being based on circles and straight lines.

Before drawing a new animal, study a realistic drawing or a photograph

and try to reduce it to these two basic geometric forms. Once the right proportions and relationships have been obtained and drawn with compass and ruler the rest of the details to make up a simplified form of the whole animal come easily. For all animals illustrated except the elephant and giraffe the centre of the chest circle is lower than that of the hind quarters circle. The simplest order for drawing is: Chest circle; back line up to hindquarters circle; line for angle of neck; head circles; leg lines; filling out and expression lines. An advantage of these "circle animals" is that their shapes are easily stuffed and look well in material. Too many details and awkward corners are avoided.

To make a flat toy cut two pieces, a back and a front, and oversew, machine, or running stitch them together along the animal's back. Embroider a face and possibly details of the paws. To make them slightly padded (as for a kettle holder) cut four thicknesses, sew them together in two pairs, and stuff them a little before sewing all four together along the back. The two parts of a standing-up tail may be left separate except at the tip to form a loop for hanging up.

