

For Long Life in the Home

# Rubber Needs Proper Care



**R**UBBER is one of the most durable and labour-saving materials used in the home today.

It is resilient, dust free, silent, hygienic, moth-proof, vermin proof, mould-proof, and easy to keep clean. Beside its numerous uses in solid form it also appears as foam rubber (latex foam) in mattresses, pillows, cushioning material for upholstered furniture, and underlay for carpets, where its self-ventilation, shape retention, freedom from dust, comfort, and long life make it ideally suitable. However, rubber has a few enemies which can rob it of all its usefulness and destroy it in very short time.

**T**HE factors causing deterioration of rubber are:

**Heat:** Excessive heat quickly weakens and de-natures rubber, making it sticky and lifeless. Shoes with crepe rubber soles should never be placed near a hot fire, as the heat can soften and distort the rubber. Boiling water consistently used in a hot-water bottle softens the rubber so that it finally splits under pressure.

**Light,** especially sunlight, which is a combination of heat and light, is damaging. It hardens rubber and deprives it of its resilience. The damage is noticed more quickly if sunlight falls on rubber that is stretched and rubber goods made for use or wear outside are specially made to resist sunlight.

**Oil, grease, and tar,** if left on rubber for any length of time, are absorbed and make the rubber swell and become weak. Castor oil is an exception.

**Dry-cleaning fluids** damage rubber if left in contact with it for more than a minute or two.

**Copper** or other metallic compounds are also harmful. Rubber gloves worn while brass or copper is being polished, or when a scouring ball of copper turnings is being used, eventually become soft and sticky, then hard and brittle.

## Cleaning

Mild soap and warm water are all that are necessary to clean rubber goods. Soapless detergents are not advisable unless specially stated by the detergent manufacturer to be suitable.

## Removal of Spots

Oil, grease, and tar spots should be removed quickly. Usually mild soap and water will be sufficient. Stubborn stains may be removed with a soft cloth slightly moistened with carbon tetrachloride, which should be wiped off immediately with soap and water. The rubber should be treated gently.

## Storage

Rubber should be stored in a cool, dark place, but not in the hot-water

By MAUD B. STRAIN,  
Home Science Instructor,  
Department of Agriculture,  
Dunedin

cupboard or any place where it is likely to come in contact with hot-water pipes or any heating devices. If there is no dark place in which to store the rubber, it should be wrapped in heavy paper and kept in a covered box. It should lie flat and not be folded. If it must be folded (rubber sheeting for instance), talcum powder or French chalk should be sprinkled freely between the surfaces that touch.

## Gumboots and Galoshes

These should have the dirt washed off them, soap being used if necessary. They should be dried with a cloth or in a cool, airy place and when stored they should be stuffed loosely with crumpled paper and kept in a cool, dark place.

## Hot-water Bottles

These should never be filled with boiling water and never overfilled. Water should be poured in slowly so that air can escape. The bottle should not be more than two-thirds full and the air and steam should be pressed out before the stopper is inserted.