

MARTHA
STEWART

Living

decorating with **linen**
peppers and chiles
summer harvest party
frankoma pottery
outdoor lighting
zinnias

A quick cure for the dog days: Revive a tired bed with linen pillowcases in ripe shades of watermelon and tangerine. A shaped linen cover slipped over the headboard keeps the room feeling quiet and cool; it's laced up at the sides (opposite, right). Linen comes in an array of juicy colors (opposite, left).





Daffodil-yellow curtains are made of panels of sheer linen voile to filter summer's relentless light, and wide borders to undulate in its breezes. A handful of box pleats along the top gives them movement and grace. When working with loose-weave linen, baste first to prevent stretching. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: To keep yourself from wilting in the heat, take cool summer showers hidden in a three-layer curtain inspired by the colors of an Indian painting. Linen to go: A double-thick tote bag carries a day's worth of supplies to the beach; since linen is strong and inelastic, it will hold its shape no matter how heavy the load. Hints of color and unexpected texture dress up a trio of picture frames; the mats are covered in fine linen, stretched tight, then glued to the back. Boudoir pillows step out into the sun, covered in striped-linen "envelopes" held closed with covered buttons at either end.



A pair of linen coverlets tells an exotic bedtime story. The borders are edged with orchid piping weighted with buckshot to keep the fabric flat and smooth. These spreads are cool against the skin, since linen's fibers wick away heat and moisture. OPPOSITE: Three linen panels are joined into a tablecloth with sherbet-colored rickrack sewn into the seams. Matching napkins have fringed edges.





CONTINUED FROM PAGE 114 Decorating your house for summer feels as liberating as exchanging your wool coat for a T-shirt, and boots for flip-flops. But unlike your wardrobe, your house doesn't need a total overhaul every season. A single swath of lively, bright fabric is all it takes to shift the mood of a room.

The idea of a slip-on summer wardrobe for household furnishings is nothing new. In eighteenth-century England, loose linen covers were used to protect upholstered velvets, silks, needlepoints, and brocades from seasonal wear and tear. Before long, people had grown as fond of the coverings as they were of the materials underneath, and the slipcovered English country-house look was born. The ideas on these pages have inherited that spirit but left its rumpled, overstuffed appearance behind.

Interiors done in sherbet-colored linen look fresh and new, because they are. For centuries, people avoided decorating with colored linen, since the vegetable dyes would inevitably bleed

and fade. White and ecru were safe, sedate, and always proper. Today, most dyes are fast and pure. All the same, you should examine labels carefully, and wash all fabrics before you sew; check the water a few minutes into the cycle to make sure colors aren't bleeding. If in doubt, pair fabrics in colors from the same family, which won't spoil each other even if they do run.

Although most modern dyes are trustworthy, color itself still feels risky to many people. Combinations that nature uses with aplomb—the purple and yellow of a pansy; the orange, pink, and green of an autumn maple—often look garish when imitated indoors. But with linen, colors don't suffer in translation. Even the brightest color looks soft and mellow. That means you can take chances with linen that you couldn't with other textiles. So go ahead and slip your house into something comfortable. Linen is cool, and its colors are delicious. Try some on before the summer runs out.

OPPOSITE: Cool, leafy blues and greens make a contemporary silver-leafed daybed the perfect place to seek an afternoon's shade. The mattress is covered with pale-green linen. Pillows in assorted colors, shapes, and sizes, all made of linen, can be rearranged for reading or napping.



TABLECLOTH To make the linen tablecloth shown at left and on page 118, you will need two panels of white linen voile, each 28½" wide and 94" long, and one panel of ecru linen voile, 14" wide and 94" long. Baste around outside of all panels, ¼" from edge. Fold hems inward along baste lines; press flat. Fold all four hems on ecru panel inward again, press, and topstitch. Fold, press, and topstitch three hems on each white panel, leaving one long side of each panel unstitched. Fold the fourth hem of each white panel inward by 4"; press. To create pockets for pebbles to weight the cloth on breezy days (far left), topstitch a seam perpendicular to fold, beginning 4" in from either corner. Topstitch hem between pockets. To join the panels, pin a 93½" length of prewashed peach-colored rickrack along the long, narrow-hemmed side of one white panel, overlapping the rickrack onto the front side of the panel by no more than ⅛", and folding it under ¼" at each end. Topstitch. Pin and topstitch other edge of rickrack to the ecru panel. Repeat with other side.

NAPKINS The napkins, above left and on page 118, are made from 20" squares of pale- and dark-peach linen. Before unraveling fringe, mark inside boundary by pulling out a thread along each side of the square, 1" in from edge. Zigzag stitch along this line. Unravel weave of fabric beyond it.

TWO-COLOR PILLOW The two-panel pillowcase at right is made from two rectangles of fabric, each 9½" by 25". Sew together, right sides facing, with ½" seams along one long edge. Open and press flat. Fold this two-color rectangle in half crosswise, with right side inward. Sew ½" seams along two sides. Insert a boudoir pillow; slip-stitch closed. **BUTTON PILLOW** The striped pillow, at right and on page 117, is made from a single rectangle of fabric, 24" by 26". Zigzag stitch along raw edges of both long sides to prevent unraveling. Fold fabric in half crosswise with right side inward; stitch ½" seam in side opposite fold, leaving ends open. Fold and press 2" hem in each end, then topstitch a seam 1¼" in from fold. Turn right-side out; lay flat. Make ½" fabric-covered buttons using a button kit, available from sewing-supply stores. Sew buttons at either end, spacing them 3½" apart and 2½" from sides. Sew buttonholes opposite buttons. Insert boudoir pillow; button closed.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS, SEE PAGES 160 TO 162
SEE THE GUIDE FOR SOURCES**



