

Billie's Threads

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It's the New Year and time to put all the Holiday Decorations away. While you are at this task we all hate to do, it might be best to think about those vintage quilts that your family has hanging around. Remember I asked you to "search" among your family to see if those "old" quilts are just sitting around? Now, it's necessary to learn how to take care of and store the quilt.

First of all, it's necessary to inspect the quilt. Does it have any tears, or soiled areas? Is the back and binding in good condition? It's best to try and ascertain what the age of the quilt is. Is this sentimental? Was it used as a wedding quilt or utilitarian quilt?

Suppose the quilt is in good condition with no tears? My suggestion would be to gently wash the quilt. You can put it in your bath tub and wash with a gentle soap. Quilt wash can be purchased at your local quilt shop, or just use a gentle soap, such as Dreft or Ivory brands. Use cup in the bath tub. Next put an old sheet in the tub and then put in the quilt. Let the quilt soak in tepid water and agitate by hand slowly. Next, lift the sheet and drain the water out of the quilt. Put in a new sheet and then the quilt again, and rinse. I use a new sheet as to eliminate the soap in the first sheet; you just want to rinse the soap out of the quilt. If I have a nice day outside I will lay a clean sheet on the patio, placing a heavy object on the sheet and put the quilt in-between the two sheets to dry. When the quilt is almost dry then I bring it in, and measure and pin the quilt on the carpet and stick a pin into the carpet to the correct size. Yep, I put it down on another sheet...and put straight pins in my carpet and measure it to square. THAT IS A LOT OF work!

What else are you going to do with those OLD sheets? Besides this is a good reason to buy new sheets, leave the old ones for this purpose. We are talking about a vintage quilt that you want to preserve for the future. It is worth it all! This quilt is now in need of a home. You can put it out on a frame, in a wall hanger...but remember no sun, or outside light.

For that quilt that does have some rips or spots you need to make some decisions. This quilt just might be left alone, and remembered as the quilt that was "loved". The best thing to do is to clean it gently. It's best to lay the quilt down on a (remember you are buying new sheets!) sheet and find some netting or a fiberglass screen and use a low suction vacuum to clean the dirt from the quilt. As a vintage quilt collector, I don't mind the spots but if I do want a spot removed I treat it gently with a natural spot remover or any of the quilt cleaner products on the market. I personally don't try to remove spots very often from my vintage quilts. I find that it gives the eye reason to love that quilt as much as it was loved for the years of its life. If you must, then let a professional quilt restorer do the work for you!

I display my vintage quilts. I have a film on my windows that takes out 99% of the sun's rays. I feel comfortable with that.

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I recently purchased a front end washer and dryer that have so many different speeds that I do use it for my new quilts. I never use a high speed spin or dry, but I do use the machines for my new quilts. Vintage quilts always get my gentle use policy as stated above.

I alternate my quilts for my walls and I use them and love them. You do the same, and enjoy the work of your friends and ancestors! The quilt and the fabric, was sewn together to keep someone warm. This is a gift of beauty to be loved by the next generation. Enjoy it.

Email me with any questions: Billiestitchingpost@comcast.net
Till next time, keep those quilts in tip top shape!