



University of Idaho
College of Agriculture
Cooperative Extension Service
Agricultural Experiment Station

USED FURNITURE CAN BE A GOOD BUY

Furniture is a major investment for most families. Buying the right furniture is important, since you must live with it, look at it, and use it every day. A good shopper will look for well-built pieces in a style that the family likes. Think about how long the furniture will last or be needed, how much care it will take, and the cost. Think about which pieces you need most. Buy them first.

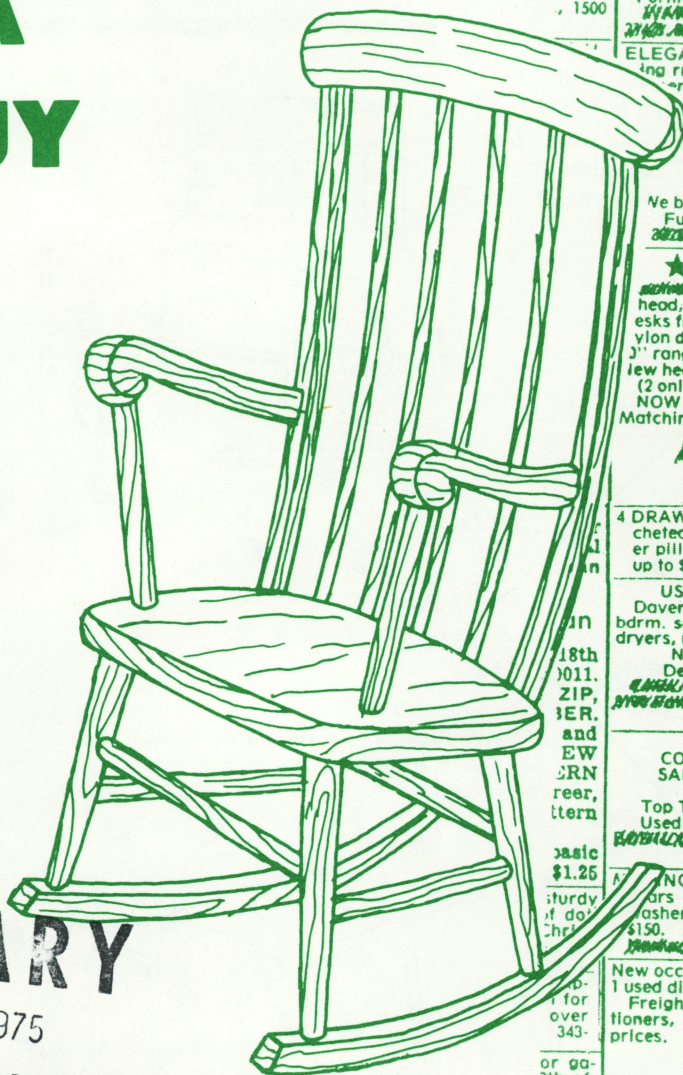
Used furniture can be a bargain if you choose it carefully. Auctions, "garage sales," Good Will, Salvation Army stores, and used furniture stores are good places to look for second-hand pieces.

Watch for bulletin board notices in apartment buildings, offices, supermarkets, and laundries. Read newspaper ads.

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Current Information Series No. 243
September 1974



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	FURNITURE 4 DRAWER chest, \$15; hand cro- cheted bedspread, \$100; feath- er pillows, pr. \$6; oil paintings, up to \$79. 244-1238 or 244-1238	12-C ni hi er
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Remember that extra large pieces of furniture may be a problem to move, especially if doorways, halls, and stairwells are small. (Fig. 1)

If your budget is limited, you can save money by using your time, energy, and skills. Can you refinish or repair some pieces? Upholster or slipcover others? (Fig. 2) With a little imagination, you may see a way to restyle some pieces. (Fig. 3)

Think About . . .

What will the furniture be used for? In a small apartment or house, you need furniture that has more than one use - a couch that can also be used for sleeping, or a table with extra leaves to make it bigger. (Fig. 4)

Your family may need a table for dining, for games, and for the children to study on. Think about how much storage room you need in chests and dressers. (Fig. 5)

Fig. 1. Large pieces of furniture may be a problem.

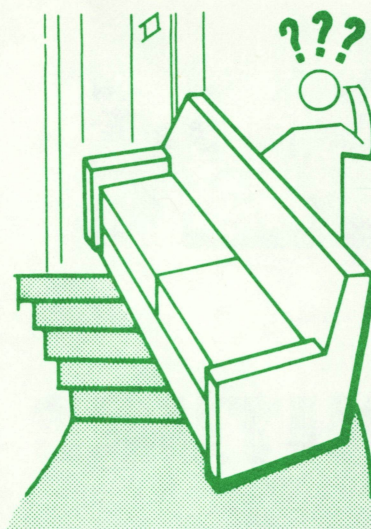


Fig. 2. Slipcovers give new life to upholstered furniture.

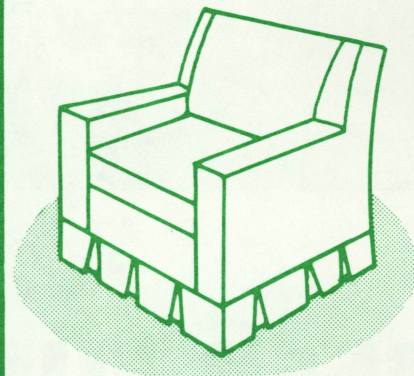


Fig. 3. Restyling gives old furniture a modern look.

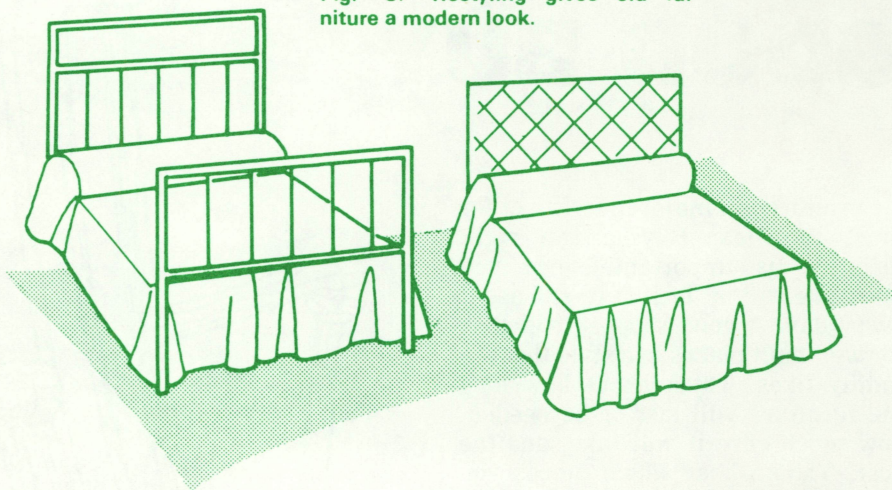
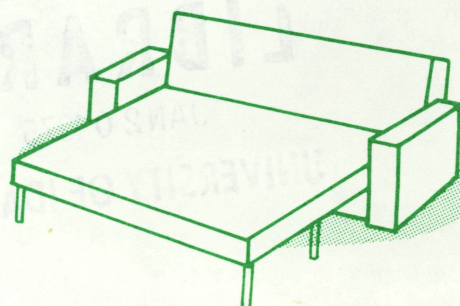
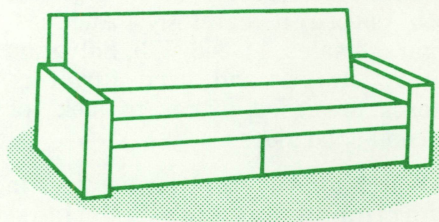
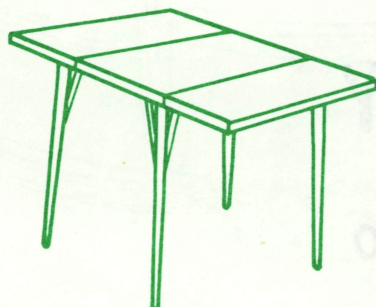
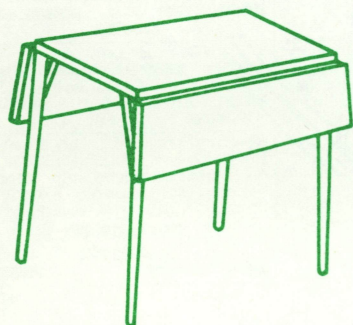
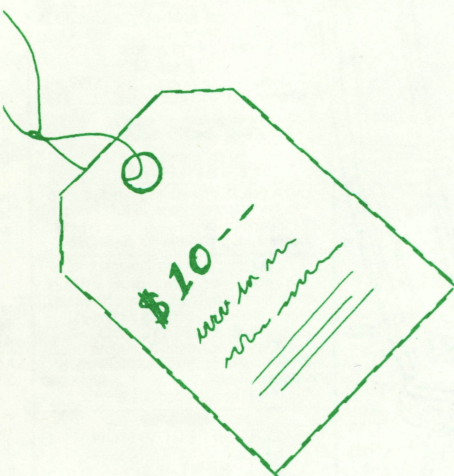


Fig. 4. Furniture with more than one use saves money and space.



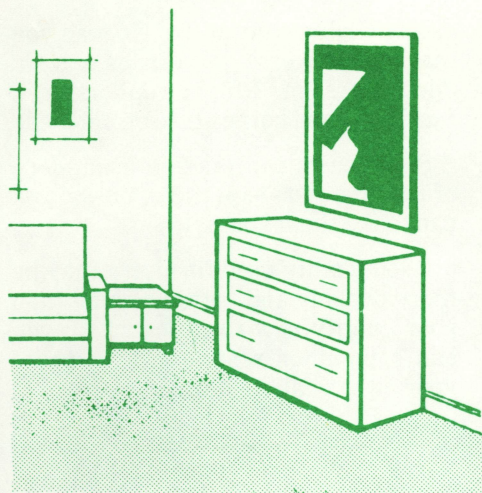
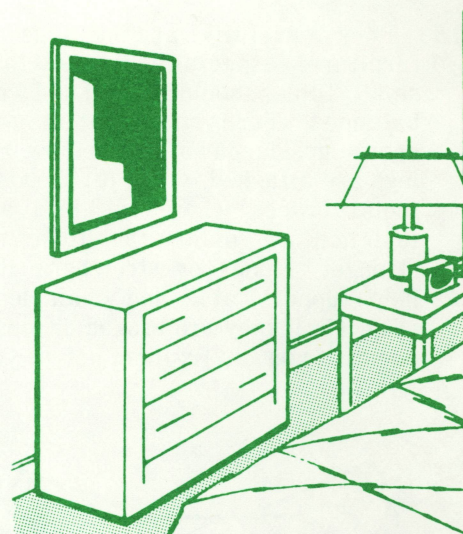


Fig. 5. One simple piece of furniture can serve in different rooms.



What to Look FOR . . .

Some furniture needs only a good cleaning or a bit of repair to be useful again. Look below the surface - always!

Check the framework to see if it is well put together. To check the quality of a chest, for instance, take out one or two of the drawers and look at the inside corners of the chest frame. Wood corner posts are a sign of good quality. (Fig. 6) A good frame will not give or creak when you push against it.

Drawers should pull out smoothly and easily. Handles should be smooth and easy to grasp. Drawer pulls should be fastened with screws or bolts that go all the way through the front of the drawer.

While you have the drawers out, see if the sides and bottoms are in good condition. The center guide - the wood strip going from front to back along the underside of a drawer - adds to the strength of the chest and helps keep the drawer from jamming. (Fig. 7)

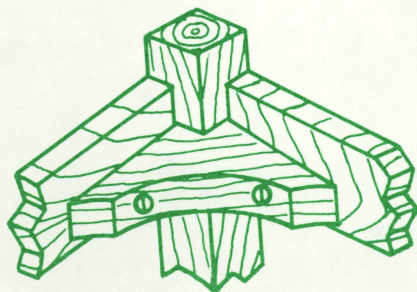


Fig. 6. Look inside furniture for a well-constructed framework.

Very old furniture may not have this center guide on drawers. Dust panels between drawers add strength as well as protect against dust. (Fig. 8)

Now put all the drawers in place and step back to see if they fit squarely in the openings. If the drawer sags in front because of wear where the drawer slides in and out, try raising the drawer slightly. If this helps, you can correct the problem by a thumbtack or two on the frame. (Fig. 9)

Are the drawers painted or varnished? Unfinished wood swells in damp weather. This causes drawers to stick. If furniture has been made of green wood, the drawers may get loose as it dries out and will fit poorly. Edges of drawers should be smooth.

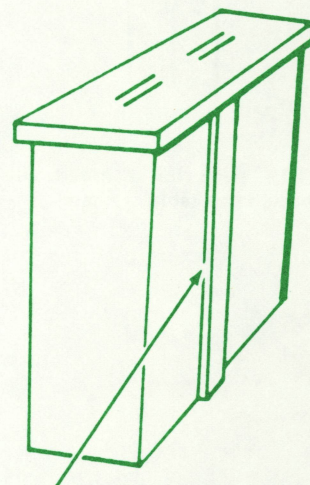


Fig. 7. Check for a glide on bottom of drawers.

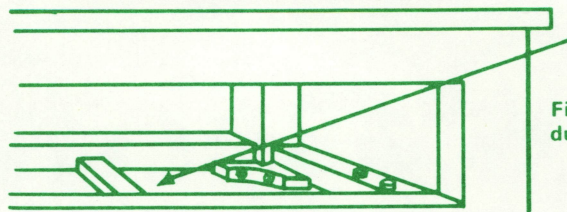


Fig. 8. See if furniture has a dust panel.

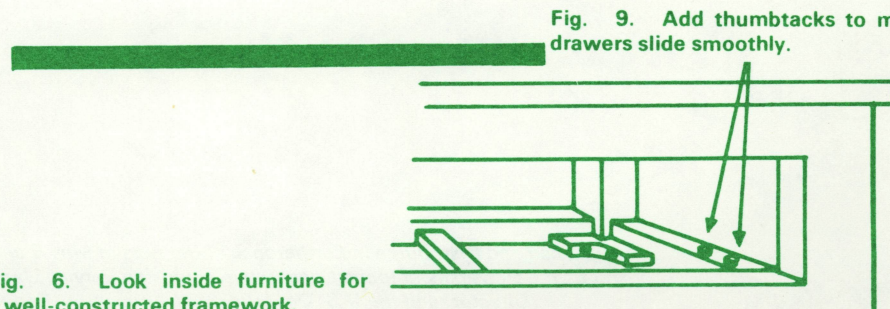


Fig. 9. Add thumbtacks to make drawers slide smoothly.

Look carefully at the legs of furniture, especially if they are small. Tables should be rigid and well-balanced. Turn small tables and chairs upside down to see how the legs are attached. (Fig. 10) Wood or metal braces where the legs are fastened on make the furniture stronger. Rungs or stretchers also help support table and chair legs. (Fig. 11) If they are broken or loose, decide if you can fix them before you buy.

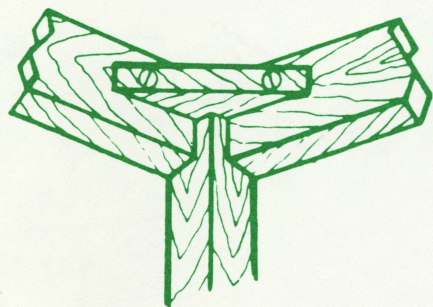


Fig. 10. Look for a brace where legs attach to a table or chair.

Sit on a chair or sofa to see if it's comfortable. Check the underside of upholstered furniture to see that the frame and springs are sound. Springs should be evenly spaced.

Look at the cushions and back. Lumpy cushions can be replaced, but if the back is bumpy and uneven, the fabric will have to be loosened and the springs and padding reworked. (Fig. 12) Can you make the repairs? Notice the shape and find out if you

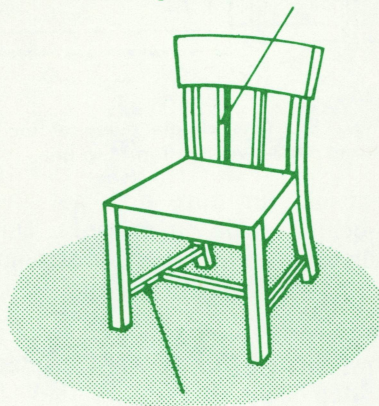


Fig. 11. Note rungs and stretchers that give extra support.

can buy slipcovers to fit. Or, can you make slipcovers? Well-fitted covers add years of life to upholstered furniture, and come off to be cleaned.

Big repairs can make a used piece of furniture too expensive, unless you can make them yourself.

Good quality used furniture may be more durable and better looking than poor quality new furniture. And, you can repaint or restyle it to express your own creative ideas.

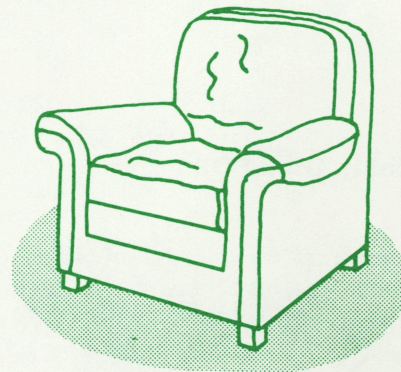


Fig. 12. A chair or couch with lumpy, uneven upholstery may be hard to repair.