

SACHETS

One of the simplest and sweetest-smelling crafts from Elsie's time is a sachet. The word comes from the French and literally means "a small sack of fragrance, often used in drawers or closets." Remember, during the mid-19th century in the American South there was no air conditioning! Long, heavy dresses and hot, humid days could be the recipe for a stuffy, not-so-fresh odor on a young lady's clothing. Anything at all that would provide help from this situation -- from tussie mussies to sachets -- was a welcome and necessary relief! And, because this era was a time of great dignity, beauty and attention to the smallest detail, something as ordinary as a sachet could become a lovely treasure.

You have probably seen sachets in stores before - you may even own one or two. But it is really fun and easy to make these little items, and they are great gifts! There are so many uses for sachets - from lining a dresser drawer (they are especially nice for lingerie!) to hanging in a closet to freshen your clothes, and many other ideas. We are confident that you will think of some creative and thoughtful ways to use your homemade crafts.

There are many ways to make a sachet. Use your imagination and creative flair and have fun with this simple project. Basically, all you will do is fill a small pouch or pillow with some fragrance. We'll give you a couple of ideas but you take it from there. Now let's have some fun!

SACHET POUCH

Materials needed: Scraps of fabric (like silk, velvet, satin, or some pretty floral pattern), ribbon or lace or braiding scraps, needle and thread (or access to a sewing machine), iron, scissors, safety pin, cotton balls, potpourri or small bath soaps, fragrance cards from magazines or department stores, or free perfume samples.

If you like to sew by hand, or can use a sewing machine, make a simple square pouch with a drawstring. It's really easy. First, cut two pieces of pretty material into 8" squares. Place them together - pretty side facing in - and pin three sides evenly 1/2 inch from the edge. That will leave one side open. Now, sew or hand stitch following the three sides and be as neat as you can with your stitches. You want them to be tight and even, but imperfection is perfectly acceptable with handmade treasures!

When you have sewn the pouch together, turn it inside out and you should have a 7" square pouch with an open top. At this point, you will probably want to iron the pouch smooth, so that it looks nice and is easier to work with. The top needs to be folded down about 1 inch (tuck the material inside itself - just like a pocket) and ironing that part will help you a lot, too.

To finish the top and add the drawstring, all you do is sew that 1 inch flap all around. This will create a nice neat "casing" for your braiding or ribbon to go through. But wait! That's right, you can't put the drawstring through without an opening . . . so, you'll have to make a tiny cut or slit in the outside layer of fabric of the "casing" with your scissors. The center is a good place for this opening.

Next, attach the safety pin to one end of your drawstring (whatever you think looks best with the fabric you have - lace, ribbon, braiding - be creative!) The length of the drawstring is up to you, but you will need at least 18 inches (1/2 yard) to make it work well and look really pretty. Now, starting with the safety pin end, thread it through the slit until it comes out the other end. This requires a bit of patience. But take your time, bunching up the fabric as you go along, and you will be excited when the safety pin comes poking through the casing. As you will see, you can then pull the drawstring together evenly and tie it in a knot with a pretty bow! This closes up the pouch.

Now, open the pouch again and fill it with a few cotton balls at first. Then add the fragrance. You might use some potpourri, or several tiny bath soaps, or a fragrance card or even soak a cotton ball with perfume and stuff it in the middle of some more cotton balls (you don't want an oily stain on your sachet.) Pull the drawstring together, but not too tight! You want the fragrance to lightly fill the air. Scent-sational!

SACHET PILLOW

Materials needed: scrap fabric (like silk, velvet, satin, or some pretty floral pattern), ribbon or lace or braiding scraps, needle and thread (or access to a sewing machine), iron, scissors, cotton balls, potpourri or small bath soaps, fragrance cards from magazines and departments stores, and free perfume samples.

You will follow many of the same steps for a tiny pillow as you would for a drawstring pouch. Here's the difference. When you sew your squares together (still leaving one end open, of course) and turn it inside out and iron it flat . . . you will NOT make a casing at the top. That's less work right there!

Simply follow the same method of "stuffing" the pillow with cotton and fragrance until it feels plump and soft and smells wonderful. Sachet pillows can be used in the same way as pouches - but they cannot be refilled. So, you may want the scent to be a little stronger than the other type.

Once your sachet pillow is filled and fragrant, you will turn the open end underneath and stitch or hem it closed. Tiny, neat stitches will hold well but here's a nice trick to hide your work - whether you are especially proud of it or not - take some pretty ribbon or braiding or lace trim and glue or stitch that all around the top edge. It will make the pillow look really pretty and finished! You might even want to add a tiny ribbon bow or a sweet little button or silk rosette or a small seashell - use your imagination and what you have on hand! You'd be amazed at how many "crafty" things are just waiting to be used - ask your Mom for help in finding these hidden treasures.

As a final touch -- and a very special one for a gift -- you might want to take some nice, sturdy paper or heavy flat ribbon (about 3 inches long and a 1/2 inch wide). Take a hole punch and put a neat hole in the corner and then personalize your sachet. Attach the ribbon or paper strip with another smaller ribbon or glue or stitch it in place with a button or something else you think would look pretty.

Then, write your message. You might want to write your name and date with a short message with a metallic pen or laundry marker. Or a Scripture could be especially meaningful to your friend or loved one. Some verses that might be appropriate are 2 Corinthians 2:14-15 or Ephesians 5:1-2 (look both of those up and you will see why!), or Philippians 1:3 which says "I thank my God for every remembrance of you." Every gift you give can be a blessing if that is what is in your heart!

We hope you enjoy making and giving these sweet-smelling sachets!