

antique·harvest

unique linens and chateau silver

Flax is also called Linen

The fibre is obtained from the stalk of a plant (*Linum Usitatissimum* - A literal translation is "linen most useful.") which grows 80 to 120 cm high.

Common flax was one of the first crops domesticated by man. Flax is thought to have originated in the Mediterranean region of Europe; the Swiss Lake Dweller People of the Stone Age apparently produced flax utilizing the fiber as well as the seed. Linen cloth made from flax was used to wrap the mummies in the early Egyptian tombs.

France is the world's major flax producer, growing 64,000 tons annually on 55,500 hectares of land. It is ranked number-one for quality. Second for quality is Belgium, coming in with 15,300 tons of flax grown on 13,300 hectares. Holland is third with 4,600 tons grown on 4,000 hectares.

70% of flax is composed of cellulose, it cannot provoke allergies, absorbs humidity and allows the skin to breathe: therefore it is very popular in the manufacture of summer articles. Very resistant, above all if wetted it can be washed many times without alteration, rather it becomes softer, something very important for articles of clothing and for daily use which require frequent washing such as shirts. Having very low elasticity, linen cloths do not deform themselves.

European linen fabrics today are luxurious, elegant, comfortable and practical. Linen is thermo regulating, non-allergenic, antistatic and antibacterial. Because it can absorb up to 20 times its weight in moisture before it feels damp, linen feels cool and dry to the touch. It is not by accident that the world's oldest and most useful fiber is still in great demand.

How to treat articles in linen

White articles should be washed in the washing machine at 60° C, whilst colored ones at a lesser temperature. White articles should be ironed damp with a very hot iron, even steam, first on the inside, then on the right side. Colored articles, above all if dark, should be ironed only on the inside. Starching is not needed as with ironing linen returns to being stiff. If you hang the articles folded in a suitcase over a bath of hot water, they will return to their original state: the steam will help to soften the folds.

Glossary of Linen Fabrics and Weaves

Butcher's Linen was originally a heavy, sturdy linen fabric used for French butchers' aprons. This type of heavy fabric was also used for interfacing.

Damask, a jacquard weave, is a reversible rich weave, patterned in satin or plain weave.

Venise is a very fine damask table linen consisting of large floral patterns

From: Flax yarns from Europe through Swicofil - the noble linen fiber - <http://www.swicofil.com/products/003flax.html>