

Plan ahead before shopping for carpet

NEWARK, Del. — Carpeting represents a significant investment. Most people shop for carpeting so infrequently that the experience can be somewhat overwhelming. There are so many

options in terms of color, style and price that it's easy to get confused. Consumers can prepare themselves for a carpet shopping trip by following these guidelines suggested by University of

Delaware extension home economist Sally Foulke.

With a steel tape measure, carefully measure the longest dimensions of the room or rooms to be carpeted. "Pacing off a room is

never a good way to measure when buying carpet," Foulke says. "And don't forget to measure hallways and closets as well as jogs in a wall.

Next, note the size, number and exposure of windows in the room to determine exactly how light will play on the color of the carpet being considered.

Once you start to shop, be ready with answers to the questions salespeople will ask, such as: Will the carpeting go in a room or rooms used primarily for play, entertainment, study or sleep? How many children will use the room and how often? Will your family eat and drink in this room?.

Also ask yourself, how important is elegance? How important are cleanup and maintenance?

How much of a financial investment can you make? Don't forget to figure in the costs of padding and installation.

If there's an outside entrance to the room being carpeted, walk-off mats for soiled shoes and boots may also be needed.

"It's essential that the carpeting you select be suited to the use and

wear it will get," Foulke says. For example, carpeting in a family room with TV and toybox will get more traffic and require more frequent cleaning than carpeting in a bedroom or study.

Buyers concerned with durability should consider nylon carpet of Anso IV, Antron or Enkalon. These fibers resist soil, stains and static electricity, and with proper maintenance will keep their original appearance longer.

Cost differences among different carpet styles are determined by density, or the amount of face yarn used. This is the single most important price factor, Foulke says. In general, the more tufts per square inch in a tufted carpet, the more dense it will be. And the denser the carpet, the better it will look, feel and wear.

Remember, the same rule applies to buying carpet as for any other quality product — you get what you pay for. Fortunately, however, technology has made it possible to offer today's consumers high quality carpeting at affordable prices.

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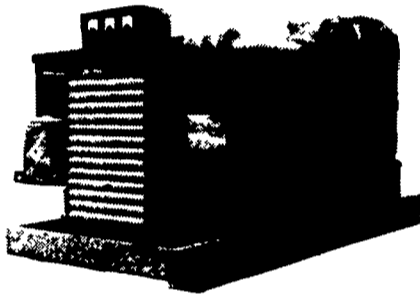
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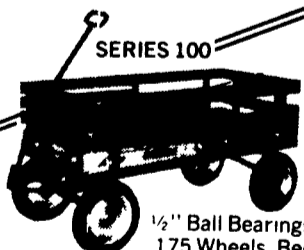
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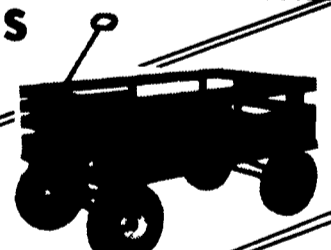
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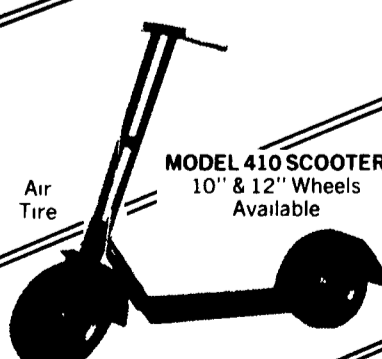
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