

LOW-COST FURNITURE

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There are many satisfactions in designing and creating your own furniture from materials that are ordinarily thrown away. Every material that is reused helps prevent a pollution problem. This

circular contains some ideas, and there are many more possibilities awaiting invention by those who would rather use imagination than money.

GOLD IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

- **Fabric, plastic film, and paper** are all useful to decorate furniture creations. Rummage sales and thrift shops are sources of pleated skirts, bedspreads, draperies, and clothing items large enough to cover furniture. Sewing scraps can be made into quilt blocks, which are now used as upholstery fabrics on expensive furniture.

Plastic draperies cost less to buy than self-adhesive vinyl film. Gift-wrapping paper is now plastic coated, which makes it more easy-care for furniture coverings.

- **Wood crates** are becoming hard to find, as more fruits and vegetables are shipped in cardboard and plastic containers. Check with grocery clerks to find out what is available in lettuce, cantaloupe, tomato, and other crates and flats.

Flower bulbs still come from Europe in sturdy wood boxes with partitions and lids. Garden supply stores give these away to those asking for them.

- **Polyfoam plastic** in rigid forms is used as a packing material for office equipment and radio and electronic items. Ask store owners for it, along with boxes. Although lightweight, this material will hold up a heavy load.

- **Cardboard boxes and flat pieces** are available at all kinds of stores. Look in the garbage bins behind appliance, furniture, and office equipment stores for extra-heavy boxes and big, flat sheets. Several layers of cardboard glued together have a lot of strength, and can be used somewhat like plywood. Ordinary laundry starch mixed with boiling water makes an inexpensive glue to brush on the cardboard layers. Weight down the cardboard until dry to prevent warping.

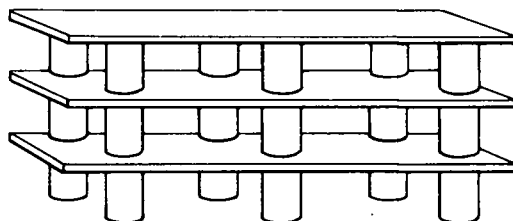
- **Wire spools** are discarded by telephone, electric, and television cable companies after the wire has been strung. Visit their storage areas, where many different sizes of spools are usually available at no cost.

- **Newsprint rolls** are available at newspaper offices in the print shop. They may be sold with some newsprint still around them, or given away. The rolls can be cut with a regular wood saw.

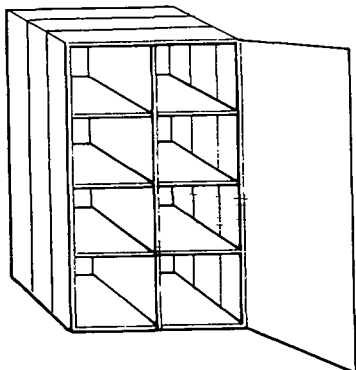
- **Inner tubes** that are too patched to be safe for automobiles, but will still hold air, can be used for cushioning purposes. Ask at tire repair shops for their throwaways.

IMAGINATION IS HOW YOU USE IT

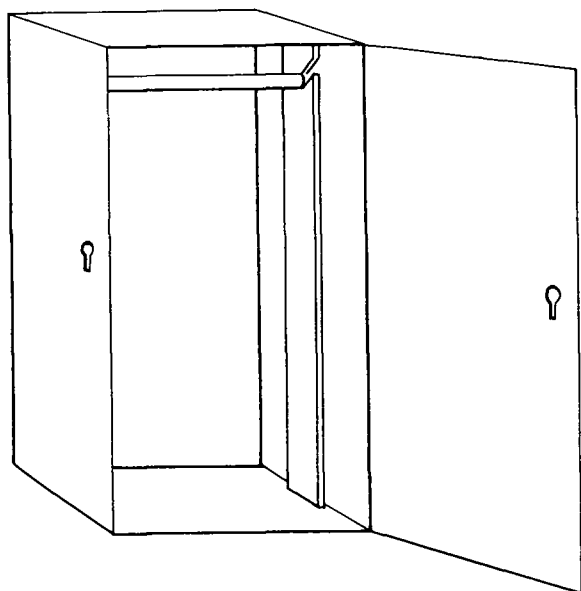
- **Shelves** can be made by glueing together four layers of corrugated cardboard. Cover the shelves with fabric, plastic, or paper. For upright supports use tin cans (on end), newsprint rolls, wood crates. Boxes can be placed on shelves for drawer-type storage.



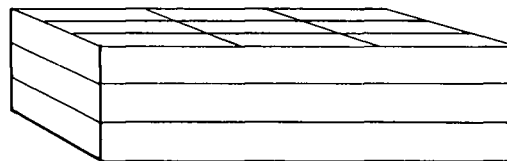
- A **cupboard** can be made from a tulip bulb or other flower bulb box. Stand the box upright. If the shelves do not seem sturdy enough at the center divider, prop them up with cardboard, which is very strong when used vertically.



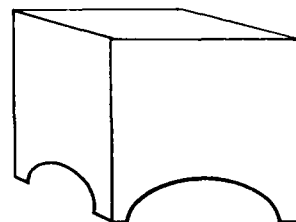
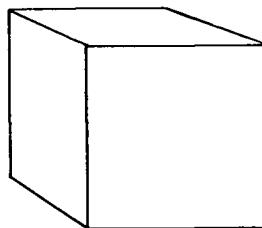
- **Armoire (closet)** comes almost ready-made in a refrigerator or freezer carton. Cut out one side for a door. Attach the door with a sturdy fabric hinge from top to bottom. Use a short piece of rope for a door handle and latch. Cut a hole in the door, and a keyhole-shaped opening just around the corner in the side of the carton. Poke the rope through the door and knot it on the back side. Tie another knot in the opposite end. This knot can be poked in and out of the keyhole and the knot will catch in the narrow bottom part. Glue heavy cardboard upright supports inside to hold a broom-handle clothes rod, with down-slanted slot.



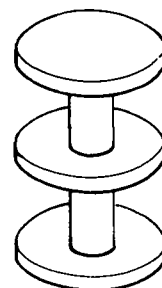
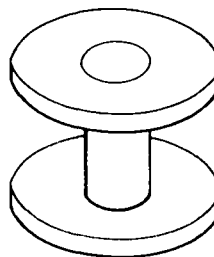
- A **seat-chest** can be made with a tulip bulb box. Use the lid as the seat. An old leather belt can be cut and nailed on for hinges. The wood can be stained or painted a dark color to hide the printing on the wood.



- **Boxes as tables**, covered with fabric, plastic, or paper, can be used for dining tables or as end or coffee tables. The "cube" is high style, but if legs are desired, simply cut out the bottom of the box and as much of the sides as desired. Glue extra cardboard to the inside of the legs if more rigidity is needed.

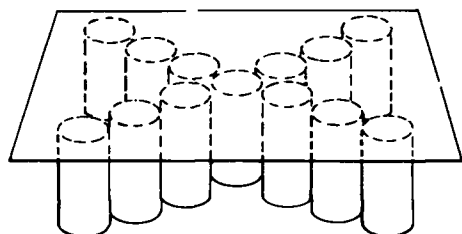
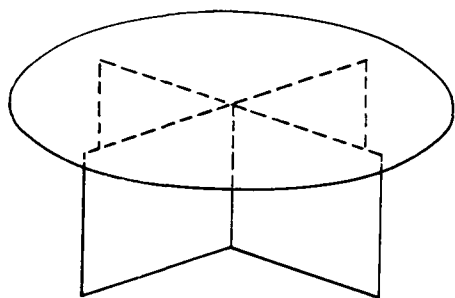


- **Wire spools** are ready to use as tables. Stain, paint, or cover with fabric, plastic, or paper. A layer of cardboard may be needed before glueing on a cover. Small television-wire spools can be stacked to make a tier table.

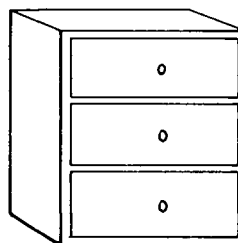


- Table and desk tops can be made by glueing together four or more layers of cardboard from big boxes such as refrigerator or mattress cartons. Cut lightweight cardboard in strips and glue to the sides to smooth over the corrugated edges. Cover with fabric, plastic, or paper.

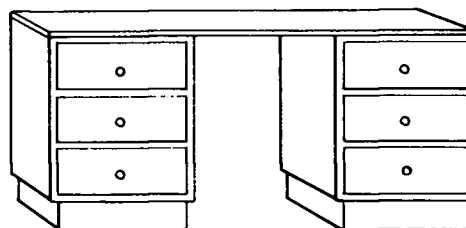
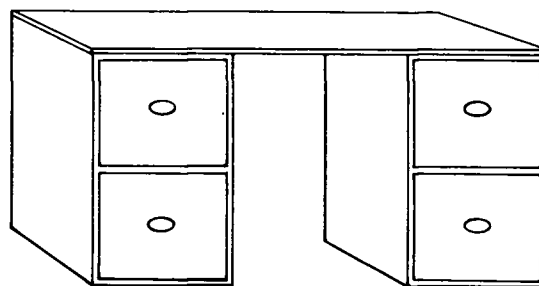
- Table legs can be made from newsprint rolls, tin cans stacked and wrapped with layers of heavy paper, boxes, or sheets of cardboard glued together and used vertically in an X shape. Notch the centers so the two sheets can be slid into one another. Strips of cardboard will need to be glued between the newsprint rolls or tin cans to hold them upright and keep them from wobbling. The tabletop can be "loose laid" on the legs if extra strips of cardboard are glued on the bottom to keep the top from moving around. A floor-length tablecloth is fashionable for round tables and hides the inside truth.



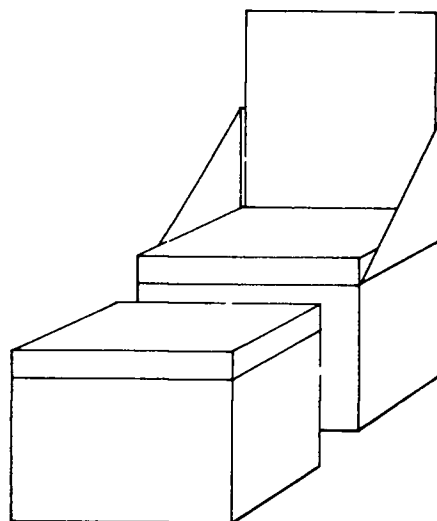
- Chest of drawers can be made from a lettuce crate and three tomato (or grape) flats that fit the width of the lettuce crate. The flats frequently have extra wood strips nailed on the side, which can be pried off and used as drawer runners. Nail and glue the drawer runners into place. Cover the outside of the lettuce crate with cardboard, and use cardboard to line the drawers. Glue on fabric, plastic or paper. Make drawer pulls out of detergent bottle lids, sewing thread spools or other material. Attach with heavy twine brought through two nail holes in drawer front, then through holes in a button to hold drawer pull.



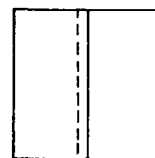
- A desk requires storage space. The chests of drawers previously described work very well for a child-height desk. They can be set on two tomato flats turned upside down to make the desk higher. Cardboard apple boxes are the right size for file folders. Heavy cardboard can be used to manufacture the frame, using the apple boxes as drawers. Put a top across two sets of drawers to make the desk.



- **Armchairs** can be made from two large, matching boxes, measuring about 22" square and 14"-to-15" high. Electric typewriters come in boxes this size. The rigid polyfoam plastic forms used to protect typewriters and other equipment make a sturdy filler for the box that is used as the bottom of the armchair. Also, tin cans could be used for filler. The other box, set on top, provides the arms and back. Cut the front down at both corners, then cut the sides at a slant from back to front. Turn the cut-off pieces and fit down inside "arms" to make two thicknesses of cardboard. The front should be folded about an inch above where it attaches to the box along the front. A roll of newspaper under this fold will provide a slanted seat for more comfort. The lid of the box can be pushed down to the back, with some wadded paper to hold out the back in a slant. For a higher back, pad extra cardboard and set in place. Fasten the top box to the bottom box with old nylon hose. Cut matching slits at the four corners in both boxes, so the hose can be run down to the outside of the bottom box, across to the other side and back up to the seat. One pair of hose should be tied across the front of the seat under the newspaper roll, the other across the back under the paper that holds out the back. Make a slipcover and cushion.



- **Cushions** can be made from inner tubes (not fully inflated) stuffed into covers. Bed pillows can be stored during the day in covers designed to go with the chairs and ottomans. Plastic bags can be crumpled and stuffed into a simple pillow cover made with an overlap opening in the middle. Use enough bags to make a soft cushion.



- **Stools and ottomans** are simply boxes with stuffing inside to make them sturdy. Rigid polyfoam plastic, stacked tin cans, and vertical sheets of cardboard are three ways to do this. Cover the outside with fabric, plastic or paper.

CREATIVITY IS TURNING JUNK INTO JOY



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