



Taking care of it

- Avoid folding or rolling your paper hat, as this will damage it.
- To reshape the hat or remove small wrinkles, place a damp cloth over the hat and then iron it.
- Do not wear your hat in rainy weather as it will lose its shape.
- To clean dirty spots use a damp cloth and mild soap.

5 Vegetable-dyed leather

Dress (R1 140) and burnt-orange beads (R120 each) from Lunar. Leather belt (R429) from Country Road at Woolworths. Multi-coloured beads (R49) from Truworths.

Natural dyes have been around for hundreds of years but are regaining popularity as people become more eco-aware. Natural dyes are not only kind to the environment but also produce vibrant colours that look better the longer they are worn.

Using natural dyes is not necessarily the easiest or quickest way to colour a fabric, but avoiding chemical dyes is a way to help to reduce the amount of toxic by-products from the dyeing process that could end up in the ecosystem.

Taking care of it

Make sure the leather is sufficiently water-proof by applying a leather protector to it. You can buy protection products from any hardware shop or shoe repair outlet. Also try Woodhead's, which has branches in Cape Town and Durban, and agents countrywide.

6 Hemp

Brown bag (R149) from Hemporium. Cream-coloured bag (R229) from Veldt. Beads (R20) from The Bead Shop.

Hemp is similar to linen in both feel and appearance. It is eight times stronger than cotton, making it one of the most durable textiles around. Hemp withstands water quite well, is UV-resistant, absorbent and has good insulating properties. Blending it with organic cotton makes it softer and more comfortable to wear.

Hemp is a bast fibre (a plant fibre made from the inner bark of the stalks or stems of the plant) produced from the *Cannabis sativa* plant. The stems are processed to dissolve

the gum and separate the fibres, which, after more processing, are woven into a fabric.

It is a self-sustaining plant that grows easily and with minimal water. It also does not require the use of pesticides, chemicals or fertilisers. It can be replanted and harvested each year with minimal damage to the soil. In fact, it actually gives more back to the soil than it takes out.

Taking care of it

Like linen, hemp creases easily and the fibres may start to break after repeated creasing in the same area. Hemp naturally gets softer with each wash and will last much longer than most textiles, so frequent washing is actually good for your hemp garment.

- Test the colourfastness of dyed hemp fabric before you wash it. If the colour fades, rather dry-clean the garment.
- After purchasing do a wash test to test for shrinking. If the garment shrinks by 5% or more, rather take it to a dry-cleaner.
- Use the gentle cycle when washing the garment in a washing machine.
- Do not use bleach as this weakens the fabric.
- Hemp cleans easily so you can use less washing powder than for other fabrics.
- Always wash undyed and colourfast hemp fabric at 50°C.
- For best results dry hemp clothing in a tumble dryer until it is still slightly damp and then hang it on the line.
- To iron, turn clothing inside out and iron on the lowest setting.

7 Soya

Soya fabric is made from soya protein fibre using a by-product of soya bean production. No chemicals are used in the production or growing processes, as it is a self-sustaining and renewable plant. It has antibacterial and UV-protection qualities and absorbs moisture easily, leaving you cool and dry in summer and warm in winter. Similar to silk in look and feel, it is often called the 'vegetable cashmere'. It absorbs dye easily and quickly, so less dye is needed than with other textiles.

Taking care of it

- Wash in cold water and tumble-dry.
- Any stains should be dealt with immediately.
- You can iron soya at any heat.
- Dry at a low setting to avoid shrinkage.

