

JUTE

WHAT IS JUTE?

Jute is a bast fiber like flax, hemp and ramie. First used hundreds of years ago, jute is now one of the most widely used fibers in the world and, as it is a low cost fiber, it is of special importance to developing countries. Jute is processed into fabrics in Asia, Scotland and the United States.

Jute is obtained from the stem of the *Corchorus* plant. Crude fabrics made from jute are often called “burlap” or “hessian”. Jute is difficult to bleach to a pure white, thus, many jute fabrics are naturally beige to brown in color. It is difficult to achieve colorfastness of dyes on jute fabrics -- any dyed jute should be very carefully tested.

More often encountered as a secondary backing for carpet, jute is not often used for upholstery fabrics in the United States. The fabric shown on this page is a blend of 60% jute and 40% cotton (the jute is the light brown fiber). It is by Clarence House and is imported from France.



Though jute is an inexpensive fiber, not all jute-containing fabrics are inexpensive. This one retails for \$132 per yard.

FIBER PROPERTIES

Jute is a cellulosic fiber and, as such, can be weakened by repeated use of acidic cleaners such as ColorRenue. Though the fiber has good resistance to alkalis, these may cause cellulosic browning in raw jute yarns.

MANUFACTURER'S CLEANING RECOMMENDATIONS

Clarence House recommends only dry-cleaning for all of their fabrics. They do not subscribe to the typical colorfastness codes used by most of the industry.

Unfortunately, dry-cleaning does not work well on heavily soiled or water-based spots and spills.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

This fabric was tested for colorfastness to both water-based and solvent-based cleaners. The red dye wet crocks and bleeds with water-based cleaners, though it is stable to solvents. Interestingly, the jute does not seem to be a problem -- no browning was noted in the testing. Because of the red dye, however, this would be considered a true “dry-clean only” fabric.

Our general recommendations are as follows:

1. Always pre-test. Never assume that similar-looking fabrics will react the same. Fabrics can vary from one dye lot to the next (we've seen this more than once).
2. Avoid rubbing as much as possible. The coarse jute yarns are easily abraded.
3. Light brushing with the fabric sponge is acceptable.
4. Kleen-Tec is a suitable cleaner.
5. Where water-based cleaners are necessary, they should be used very sparingly (from a towel) and the area should be force-dried as quickly as possible. High-pH cleaners are not recommended.

CLIENT CARE

Clients should be made aware of the difficulties they may encounter when spot cleaning. The Fabric Sponge is acceptable

on these fabrics as long as it is used gently and in one direction at a time. Kleen-Tec is generally safe and is recommended for damp dusting. PHnominal could be used sparingly, but in all cases the product should be applied to the fabric from a towel.

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

Jute fabrics can be treated with solvent-based fabric protectors with little chance of dye migration. Protection products can also help to minimize dye bleeding in some situations.

The Fiber-Seal Fabric Care System can benefit these fabrics by reducing absorbency, helping to resist permanent staining and ultimately increasing the useful life of the fabric.

ALWAYS TEST CHEMICALS AND/OR PROCEDURES FIRST ON AN INCONSPICUOUS AREA OF THE FABRIC.