

a wire coat hanger into a loop and crimps the edges of the foil pot or pan over the hanger. A portion of the hanger is left extended from the loop to serve as a handle. During cooking, he often wedges the handle between two rocks so he doesn't have to hold it over the fire. When the meal is finished, he places the foil behind his camper's lantern to intensify the light.

Not to be outdone, I recalled how I had gotten a head start on my summer suntan. I'd taken two pieces of cardboard (about 12 by 12 inches each), taped them together like the covers of a book, and stapled a sheet of foil on the front and back of each. I punched a hole in the center of the lower edge of each "page," drew a string through the holes and knotted the ends, then looped the string around my neck. The result: a V-shaped reflector that helped me get a glorious tan. (But beware: you know how well aluminum helps you cook.)

In gathering unusual uses for foil, I found men enthusiastic contributors. One man, who was using the roll-on method to paint his den, mentioned that he lined the roller pan with aluminum foil—and so eliminated the need of



cleaning the pan when he was finished. Instead, he just threw away the foil lining. Another do-it-yourselfer pointed out that foil also comes in handy when someone interrupts a painting chore. He wraps the roller or brush in foil to keep it moist while he's busy elsewhere, then later picks up where he left off.

Aluminum foil also foils rust. Men who garden or who have a workshop wrap their tools in foil to keep them from pitting. And one fellow in our office uses foil to repair broken toys or china. After gluing the broken parts together, he wraps the object tightly in foil. It holds the parts firmly in place until the glue dries. (By the way, the glue won't stick to the foil.)

Oh, yes—I also heard of a coin collector who keeps his coins bright by wrapping them in foil.

A friend of mine loves growing window plants, but her home is heavily shaded by big elm trees. She solved the problem by stretching a sheet of foil inside her window sill so that it reflected sunlight onto the seedlings. This gave them more evenly distributed light so she didn't have to turn the seedlings to the sun every day or so.

And when mailing some plants recently, she wrapped the roots in foil. This enabled her to leave plenty of dirt on them. When they arrived at their destination, they were fresh and ready to grow.

And here is a suggestion for cut-flower buffs. Crumple some foil, place it in a vase or bowl, and mold it to the bottom of the container. Insert flower stems into this foil holder, alternating from front to back and side to side to keep the holder from tipping over. If necessary, punch holes in the crumpled foil so stems can be inserted more easily.

This way you can have a wonderful flower holder of almost any shape or size! (See photo at far left.)

If you live in a television fringe area, try boosting your signal strength by crimping an oblong piece of foil around



the antenna lead on the back of your set. Slide the foil up and down so that you can determine the most efficient placement. Those who've tried it say they get better reception and eliminate a lot of "snow."

If you have major tv interference, get a repairman to shield the inside of the tv cabinet with foil, lapping all the joints and grounding the foil securely to the set's chassis. Caution: unplug the set first!

Of all the uses for foil I discovered, this one takes the prize. Last June, a bride was frantic when she couldn't buy shoes to match her expensive gown—but her mother soon



came to the rescue. She used aluminum foil to make a pattern so she could cover a pair of her daughter's shoes with left-over fabric from the wedding dress—and everyone lived happily ever after.

I'm still collecting unusual uses for aluminum foil—and obviously have just scratched the surface. Just the other day, I was sitting in my doctor's office when a silvery glint under a chair caught my eye. It was a tight little ball of aluminum foil, and I asked the doctor what it was.

He harumphed in embarrassment and, with reluctance, reached beneath his desk and pulled out a golf club—a putter, I think. "That little wad of foil," he said, "makes a wonderful practice golf ball. Just the thing to putt around between patients' appointments."

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gardener—and bird lover

By ROSALYN ABBREVAYA