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SUGGESTIONS FOR VELVETEEN CARE

COLLECTING

Wear gloves when gathering used velveteens. Some labs collect used velveteens in an empty bucket or in a bucket of 2 to 4 quarts of water (half-full) plus a capful of Lysol. **DO NOT USE Clorox!** The dark color of the velveteens is necessary for seeing your cream-colored yeast prints. If the container is kept on the floor be especially wary of lab tools that may have fallen in, such as pasteur pipets, razor blades, toothpicks.

WASHING

Velveteens may be hand-washed or machine-washed. They may be hung up to dry or dried in a laundry dryer. The dryer is better because it fluffs up the velveteen and raises the nap. Velveteens collected from Lysol + water (and squeezed) need no soap or detergent. Otherwise, use as little detergent as possible. A double rinse is advisable in any case. A final rinse in purified water is probably not necessary.

STERILIZATION

Method I:

Aluminum foil. Arrange ten or fewer washed and dried velveteen squares in a stack with their nap facing upward. Invert the stack and place it in the center of a strip of aluminum foil. Close all the sides of the foil to make a package, keeping the nap on the bottom. Place the packages in a basket, arranging them to maximize their exposure to steam. Do not stack the packages. Steam has difficulty penetrating packages of dry goods, which are self-insulating. Autoclave for 35 minutes or longer on the dry (gravity) cycle.

After autoclaving, the velveteens inside may be damp. Air dry the sterilized packages for a couple of days, or bake them dry in a low oven (160° F).

Method II:

Paper wrapper. Wrap velvets in kraft paper (shopping bags work fine). Use a piece of paper nine times the size of the velvets. Put the velvets face down in the center of the paper. Fold the top down over the velvets, fold the bottom up over the velvets, fold the left over the velvets, etc. The final package is secured with a piece of autoclave tape. Autoclave on the "dry," fast exhaust cycle for about 35 minutes. If the velvets are dry when they go in, they will be dry when they come out--there's enough air exchange through the folds and through the paper to let the dry cycle work.

TIPS

1. The velveteen must be ALL cotton, both the nap and the supporting threads. A mix of cotton and synthetic (polyester, etc.) does not wick away the moisture adequately and contributes to a "muddy" print.
2. The nap varies from one manufacturer to another. A slightly heavier nap will deposit too many cells on print plates, making it harder to distinguish growth vs. non-growth.