

Flax to Fabric - Do you know? (Answers)

Linen is made from the flax plant. Another name for flax is **lint**. The plant blooms with a blue flower. It is planted in **April** and harvested in August. Harvesting is done by **pulling** the flax plant. The harvested plants are gathered into bundles called **beets**. The bundles are soaked in a dam. This is known as **retting**. After that they have to be dried. They are broken with a wooden mallet. A bundle of broken flax is called a **strick**.

After breaking the flax is ready for **scutching**. This is to get rid of the **woody** parts. A long wooden **blade** is used for this. It causes a fine dust called **pouce** which is bad for the **lungs**. The hackle makes the bundles look like smooth, long blonde hair. For spinning on a wheel you need three things: a distaff, water and a treadle.

After spinning the flax is called yarn. It has to be boiled and then woven on a **loom**. In weaving the threads run the length of the cloth and from one side to the other. The threads running lengthwise are called the **warp**. The threads which are drawn through are called the **weft**.

After weaving, the brown linen has to be bleached by being soaked for days in water. It is laid out on a bleach green for this. Bleach greens were often near **rivers**. Once the linen has been bleached it can be made up into clothes or other goods. If necessary it can be dyed to make it brightly coloured.