

Ask the Experts



Pride of Persia Rug Co.

Persian Rugs

How important is the fringe on a rug?

On a hand-woven rug, the fringe is very important because it's part of the rug's foundation. This means that its function is structural rather decorative. Is the foundation made of cotton, wool, silk or goat hair? The original fringe tells us about the construction of the rug.

Fringe is susceptible to damage, especially on older rugs. Vacuuming, bleaching and wear can affect both the appearance and the lifespan of the fringe. An old rug without fringe is fine as long as the ends are secured by overcast stitches or a row of tight knots. We do not recommend adding artificial fringe to handmade rugs, unless it is a matter of replacing a few strands.

Personal taste often dictates the length and color of fringe. Long fringe may need a simple trim.

Bright white cotton fringe can be toned down by staining it with coffee or tea. In general, it is best not to alter the fringe on older rugs. On certain antique tribal rugs with handspun wool foundations, such as Qashqai pieces, collectors usually prefer to leave the fringe long. Smaller silk foundation rugs suitable for hanging should also be left with intact fringe.

For more than a decade, Mehdi Abedi and Lisa Slappey have taught "The World of Persian Rugs" through Rice University's Glasscock School of Continuing Studies. They are the owners of Pride of Persia Rug Co., which specializes in older Persian rugs along with high-quality newer rugs from around the world.

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