

The Wardrobe of Bleurette

Spring Dress – 21 April, 1938 – *Robe Pour Le Printemps*

A very pretty new dress for the elegant Bleurette. It is a soft wool with pleated mouseline trim. In spite of the elegance, it is very easy to accomplish. . .

Sewing suggestions:

It is a shame that we have no color suggestions from the designer of this dress. My mother, who grew up in the thirties, always thought that one's spring dress or coat should be navy blue, so perhaps that is what the drawing's darker color was meant to represent. I do not believe that the pastel colors we now associate with spring were fashionable in the 1930s for dress-up clothing.

As we all lament so often, it is very difficult to find the sort of light, dress-weight wool fabrics that once were so common. This dress needs a drapeable fabric; acceptable substitutes for light wool might be rayon challis (or wool challis, if you could find that), various kinds of silk, faux silk, faux georgette, or faux crepe. (By faux, I mean polyester or a blend of modern fibers. Some of these are now made to look and act quite a lot like the old fabrics.) For mouseline, use a handkerchief linen, handkerchief cotton, silk, or other more crisp fabric that will hold pressed pleats, or use a fabric that has the pleats pre-set. A chiffon or faux crepe that was crinkle-set rather than pleated might be effective, too.

When working with the pleated panels, baste the top of the panel to hold the pleats in place while applying the panels to the dress. If you hem the sleeves and dress after the panels are set in, you will need to re-press the pleats at the hems. Another option would be to pre-hem each panel before pleating, hem the dress and sleeves separately, and when the panels are set into the dress, finish the seam allowances nicely.

The back has had a self facing added to it, so that it is easier to dress Bleurette. You could sew a short seam up the back and use the rest of the facing as the opening. Or you could make the dress open all the way up the back. That would look nice with little buttons all the way down the back, to match the front buttons. As always, lap the right side over the left, as you are looking at the back.

You will need six $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide decorative buttons for the front of the dress. The neckline is meant to be hemmed, but you could also face it with a narrow strip of very light bias-cut fabric.