



# Guide to Non-Toxic Cleaners

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Recipes for a Clean Home and  
a Cleaner Environment



## **Notes**

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# INTRODUCTION

Clean water is vitally important to all of us. We depend on our water resources for food, drinking water, recreation, and much more. Water resources that are polluted threaten our health, environment, and livelihood.

Clean-up efforts the past few decades have, for the most part, focused on industry. As a result, water quality has improved but significant problems still exist. Therefore, the focus must expand to include other sources of pollution, including households.

Households pollute our water resources in many ways. Few people realize that the cleaners we use around the home often contain hazardous or toxic chemicals. Many of these chemicals can not be treated at the treatment plant. Often these products end up in our lakes and streams. However there is hope,

This booklet contains easy, effective and inexpensive recipes for home cleaning and maintenance. These cleansers are non-toxic, safe and cost-saving. Vinegar, baking soda, lemon juice and salt, for example, can take the place of many expensive and dangerous cleaners.

Also in this guide are helpful tips on disposal of hazardous household products, suggested readings, and a list of organizations providing pollution prevention information.

Be part of the solution to water pollution. Make your home a "POLLUTION FREE-ZONE."



# GETTING STARTED

Using the following ingredients you can prepare most of the recipes in this booklet.

BAKING SODA

CORN STARCH

LEMONS/LEMON JUICE

SALT

VEGETABLE OIL-BASED LIQUID SOAP

VINEGAR

WASHING SODA

If your local grocery store does not carry any of these items, ask the manager to stock them.

**Note:** Several companies have introduced non-toxic cleaning products. Check the list of ingredients to make sure they are environmentally friendly.



# KITCHEN CLEANERS

## ALL-PURPOSE CLEANERS

4 tbs. baking soda  
1 quart warm water

Dissolve baking soda in water.  
Apply with sponge. Wipe clean.

1 tsp. vegetable oil-based  
liquid soap  
a squeeze of lemon  
1 quart of warm water

Combine ingredients in a small  
bucket. Apply with a sponge  
or rag and wipe clean.

1/8 cup washing soda  
1 tbs. vegetable-oil based  
liquid soap  
1/4 cup vinegar  
2 gallons hot water

Mix ingredients in a pail. Apply with a mop or cloth. Wipe clean  
(See floor cleaners for more recipes).

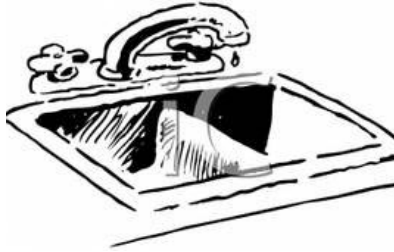
3 tbs. washing soda  
1 quart warm water

Mix ingredients in a small pail. Apply with sponge or rag.  
Wipe clean.

## GREASE CUTTER

1/2 tsp. washing soda  
1/4 to 1/2 tsp. vegetable-oil-based liquid soap  
3 tbs. vinegar  
2 cups hot water

Mix ingredients in a spray bottle. Spray and scrub.  
Wipe clean.



**OVEN CLEANER**

small box of baking soda  
water  
a few drops of vegetable oil-based liquid soap  
a mild abrasive pad

Sprinkle water over bottom of oven. Cover with baking soda. Let sit, preferably overnight. Wipe with pad. After bottom is cleaned, put a few drops of liquid soap on a sponge and wash the sides and top.

**TIP:** The most effective abrasive pads seem to be cellulose green scouring pads.

**DISH SOAP**

a non-phosphate soap

**TIP:** Try using only half the amount of automatic dishwashing detergent. It should make little or no difference.

**DRAIN CLEANER**

1/2 cup baking soda  
3 cups boiling water

Pour baking soda down the drain. Add boiling water. Let rest 10 to 15 minutes. Rinse. Repeat this process every month or so.

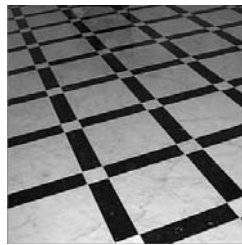
1/2 cup baking soda  
1/2 cup vinegar or lemon juice

Pour baking soda down the drain.  
Add vinegar or lemon juice. Let rest 10 to 15 minutes. Rinse with hot water.

**TILE FLOOR CLEANERS**

1 cup vinegar  
1 pail hot water

Mix and apply. Wipe Clean.



**WOOD FLOORS**

1/8 cup vegetable oil-based liquid soap  
1 gallon water

Mix and apply. Wipe clean.

1/4 cup olive oil  
1/4 cup vinegar  
drop or two of lemon oil

Mix and apply. Wipe clean.

**NO-WAX FLOORS**

1/4 cup vegetable oil-based liquid soap  
1/4 cup lemon juice  
2 gallons hot water

Mix and apply. Wipe clean.



**FLOOR WAX**

1 part lemon juice  
2 parts food-grade linseed oil

Apply with rag. Let rest until the floor is dry.  
Buff completely smooth.

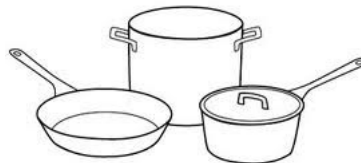
6 tbs. beeswax  
3 cups food-grade linseed oil

Put ingredients in the top of a double boiler (over water), and heat slowly until wax is melted. Stir and pour into a heat-resistant container. Apply.

**POT AND PAN CLEANER**

3 tbs. baking soda  
salt  
water

Mix ingredients in a small bowl to form a paste. Dip a sponge into paste and rub on the metal.



Let dry. Rinse with hot water.

# BATHROOM CLEANERS

## TUB AND TILE CLEANER

1/2 tsp. washing soda  
1/4 to 1/2 tsp. vegetable oil-based liquid soap  
3 tbs. vinegar  
2 cups hot water

Mix ingredients in spray bottle or pail. Apply and wipe clean.

baking soda  
water

Sprinkle baking soda on surface. Scrub with a damp sponge.  
Rinse well with water.



baking soda  
vinegar

Sprinkle baking soda on a sponge, and add vinegar and apply.  
Rinse.

## TOILET BOWL CLEANER

baking soda

Sprinkle baking soda in and around toilet bowl.  
Let sit for a few minutes. Scrub clean.

washing soda  
baking soda

Sprinkle these ingredients into bowl. Let stand for 10 minutes.  
Brush.

## SCOURING POWDER

1 cup baking soda  
1/4 cup vinegar

Mix in small bowl and rub on surface with damp sponge. Let stand  
for a few minutes. Rinse well.

## SOFT SCRUBBER

1/4 cup baking soda  
vegetable-oil-based liquid soap

Mix ingredients to form a paste. Apply with sponge. Wipe clean.

# LIVING ROOM CLEANERS

## GLASS CLEANER

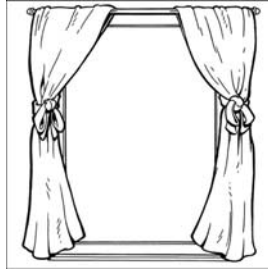
1/8 cup vinegar  
1 cup water

Mix ingredients in a spray bottle. Shake and apply. Wipe clean.

1/3 to 1/2 tsp. vegetable-oil-based  
liquid soap  
3 tbs. vinegar  
2 cups water

Mix and spray. Wipe clean.

3 tbs. cornstarch  
1/2 cup water



Mix ingredients in a small bowl. Dip a cotton cloth into mixture and wipe. Film will disappear, so keep rubbing.

lemons

Wet a rag with lemon juice and rub.

## CARPET DEODORIZER

box of baking soda

Sprinkle baking soda over carpet and let rest overnight. Vacuum.

## CARPET STAIN REMOVER

club soda

Apply to stain and scrub.

1/4 vinegar  
1/4 cup water

Mix and rub. Rinse with water.

**WOOD FURNITURE  
CLEANER**

1/8 cup linseed  
1/8 cup vinegar  
1/4 cup lemon juice

Mix ingredients. Using a soft cloth, rub into wood.

1/4 cup olive oil  
1/8 cup lemon juice

Mix and apply a thin coating. Rub well with cloth.

**LEATHER CLEANER**

1/4 cup olive oil  
a few drops of lemon oil

Mix ingredients. Saturate cloth and apply.

**VINYL CLEANER**

1/4 cup vinegar  
1/4 tsp. vegetable-oil-based liquid soap  
water

Mix ingredients. Saturate cloth and apply.

**LAUNDRY CLEANERS**

**LAUNDRY SOAP**

Use non-phosphate liquid detergents or laundry soaps.

**LAUNDRY  
BLEACH**

1/4 cup lemon juice

**LAUNDRY  
STARCH**

1 tbls. cornstarch  
1 pint cold water

Place in spray bottle and shake  
to dissolve cornstarch.



# METAL CLEANERS

## ALUMINUM CLEANER

2 or 3 halved lemons or 1 grapefruit cut four ways  
water

Put citrus and water in the tarnished pan and stew on low heat for an hour.

2 tbs. cream of tartar  
vinegar (enough to make a paste)

Mix ingredients to make a stiff paste. Rub on metal and let dry. Wash paste off with hot water and dry with a cloth.

## BRASS AND COPPER CLEANER

flour (enough to make a paste)  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/2 cup vinegar

Mix ingredients to form a paste. Rub onto the brass and let sit for 30 minutes. Rinse with water and dry with a cloth dampened with a little vegetable oil.

2 tbs. salt  
1 tbs. lemon juice  
1 tbs. vinegar  
sponge  
hot water

Mix salt, juice, and vinegar in small bowl. Rub with sponge and let dry. Rinse with hot water.

## CHROME CLEANER

3 tbs. baking soda  
water (enough to make a paste)



Mix the baking soda and water to make a paste. Apply. Rinse.

1/8 cup cider vinegar  
sponge

Saturate a sponge with vinegar. Rub and rinse.

**SILVER  
CLEANER**



1 tbs. baking soda  
a few sheets aluminum foil  
water

Put foil in the bottom of a big pan. Add 2 to 3 inches of water (enough to cover the silver), baking soda and salt. Bring to a boil. Add silver pieces and boil 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from pan. Rinse well and dry.

baking soda  
water (enough to make paste)

Mix ingredients to form a paste. Use a soft, wet sponge to apply the mixture to the silver. Rinse in hot water and dry with soft cloth.

toothpaste

To clean off tarnish, coat silver with toothpaste. Run under warm water and work into a foam. Rinse.

**STAINLESS STEEL  
CLEANER**

3 tbs. baking soda  
water

Mix ingredients to make a paste. Apply with green scouring pad. Rinse well to remove all residue.

vinegar

Saturate a sponge with vinegar. Rub the metal. Rinse and polish dry with soft cloth.

olive oil or club soda

Rub with a sponge dampened in olive oil or club soda to remove streaks or stains.

# AIR FRESHENERS

## GENERAL FRESHENERS

baking soda

Place a couple of tbs. of baking soda in a dish and leave on the counter.

citrus (lemon, grapefruit or orange)  
water



Place slices of your favorite fruit in a pot. Add enough water to cover fruit. Simmer over low heat for an hour or two.

cinnamon and cloves  
water

Boil these spices in a pot of water

## POTPOURRI

Make your own potpourri from your favorite herbs and spices.

## KITCHEN AND COOKING ODORS

1 tbs. white vinegar  
cup of water

Boil ingredients in small pot.

vanilla

Place pure vanilla on a cotton ball in a small saucer. Place where needed. **NOTICE:** Vanilla contains alcohol and should be kept away from children.

baking soda

Open a box of baking soda and place in the refrigerator to eliminate odors.

# PEST CONTROLS

## ANTS

dried bay leaves

Crumble and place in doorways and window seals.

vinegar and water

Wash countertops with equal parts vinegar and water.

lemon

Find where ants are entering and squeeze lemon juice in the hole or crack. Put the peeling around the entrance.



## COCKROACHES

powdered sugar

baking soda

Mix equal parts of the two and sprinkle where cockroaches might live.

boric acid

Use where the cockroaches will walk through it.  
(KEEP AWAY FROM CHILDREN AND PETS).



## FLEAS

vinegar (amount depends on the weight of pet)

water

Use a ratio of one teaspoon of vinegar to 1 quart water (per 40 pounds of pet weight in their drinking water).

vacuum

Vacuum, remove the vacuum bag, seal it, and dispose immediately outside of home.

**HOUSEFLIES**



citrus  
cloves

Flies are repelled by these ingredients. Scratch the skin of an orange and leave out. Hang cluster of cloves.

mint or basil

Mint planted around the home repels flies. A pot of basil on a table or windowsill repels flies.

flypaper

Use yellow paper and honey to make your own.

**MICE AND RATS**

mashed potato powder or buds  
water

Place instant mashed potato or buds in strategic places with a dish of water.

mouse traps



**MOSQUITOES**

Burn citronella candles

Plant basil around the house.

**MOTHS**

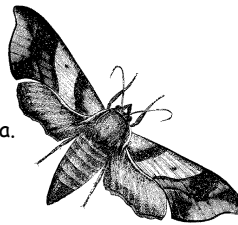
cedar chips  
dried lavender or equal parts  
dried rosemary and dried mint

Place wherever clothes are stored.

**SILVER FISH**

1 part molasses  
2 parts vinegar

Place this mixture near the problem area.



# CAR MAINTENANCE

## CAR SOAP

1/4 cup vegetable oil-based liquid soap  
warm water

Mix ingredients in a pail.  
Use sponge to apply to outside of car.



## VINYL CLEANER

1 tsp. to 1/4 cup washing soda  
1 cup boiling water

Dissolve the washing soda completely with boiling water.  
The more washing soda, the more rinsing is required.

## CHROME CLEANER

1/4 cup baking soda  
water

Mix to form a paste. Apply with sponge and rinse well  
with warm water.

## CAR WAX

1 cup food-grade linseed oil  
4 tbs. carnauba wax  
2 tbs. beeswax  
1/2 cup vinegar

Put in gradients in top half of a double boiler (set over water) or  
saucepan. Heat slowly until wax has melted. Stir. Pour into a  
heat-resistant container. After wax has solidified, take it out of  
container and rub on the car. Saturate a corner of a cotton rag  
with vinegar and polish the wax to a shine.

## TAR REMOVER

food-grade linseed oil

Wet rag with linseed oil and rub.

# AROUND THE HOUSE

## **PAINT**

latex paints

Whenever possible use latex instead of oil-based paints.

**TIP:** Avoid using spray paints. Apply paint with a brush.

## **PAINT BRUSH RENEWER**

hot vinegar

Soften hard paint brushes in hot vinegar for 10 minutes. Wash in warm water and soap and let dry.

## **PAINT THINNER**

water

Water is a paint thinner for latex paint.

## **PAINT STRIPPER**

heat gun

sand paper



## **LAWN FERTILIZER**

grass clippings

Let the grass clippings lie where they fall. A mulching mower is recommended.

## **WEED CONTROL**

## **DANDELIONS**

long-handled weed fork

The key is to get them when they're blooming. Dig out 4 to 5 inches of the root.



## **CRAB GRASS**

Don't cut grass low. Mow at about a 2 1/2" length.

# **POLLUTION PREVENTION TIPS**

## **PROPER DISPOSAL OF HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS**

- Avoid dumping chemicals down the drain. These substances may end up in surrounding rivers and lakes since sewage treatment plants and septic tanks don't filter out all toxins.
- Don't dump chemicals down storm sewers.
- To avoid improperly disposing of a hazardous household product, it is generally suggested to use it up (or give to someone who will) and avoid buying the product again.
- In some locations, there are collection centers for certain hazardous materials. Items collected include: Paint thinners and solvents, oil-based paints, lacquers and varnishes, gasoline and kerosene, strippers and degreasers, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides.
- Paint thinner and solvents; oil-based paints; lacquers and varnishes; gasoline and kerosene; strippers and degreasers; pesticides, herbicides and fungicides.
- Bring used MOTOR OIL, TRANSMISSION FLUID and ANTIFREEZE to a service station or reclamation center. **DO NOT** pour down the drain or storm sewer.
- Turn in used car BATTERIES to the dealer that sold you the new battery.



# SHOPPING FOR SAFE HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

Before you buy a product **READ THE LABEL**. If you must buy a toxic product, choose the least hazardous one. For clues, look for these signal words.

## **With pesticides:**

**DANGER** means highly toxic,

**WARNING** means moderately toxic,

**CAUTION** means slightly toxic.

## **With house-hold products:**

**POISON** means highly toxic,

**DANGER** means extremely flammable, corrosive or highly toxic,

**WARNING** or **CAUTION** means less toxic.

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