

NON-TOXIC HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS

WINDHAM SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT



WHY BOTHER WITH ALTERNATIVES? WHAT NON-TOXIC REALLY MEANS

Many commercial cleaners contain substances that are toxic and can burn skin or eyes on contact. Without proper ventilation, their use can also cause injury from harmful fumes. According to the Poison Control Center, in 1997 there were approximately 230,000 overexposures nationwide to household cleaners of which 7 were fatal.

Thoughtless disposal of hazardous products can have harmful impacts on people and the environment. Disposal in trash, or pouring them down the drain, can disrupt wastewater systems, seriously injure waste handlers, and contaminate drinking water.

This brochure offers non-toxic cleaning recipes for a safer home and cleaner environment. Non-toxic cleaners are cleaners that you can use relatively safely, as compared to other commercial cleaning products (which range from fairly safe to extremely dangerous). This does not mean that you can safely eat non-toxic cleaners or spray them in your eyes. Always label your home-made cleaners and keep them out of the reach of children.

These recipes generally work just as well as commercial cleaners and are less expensive. With the use of essential oils, non-toxic cleaners can smell more pleasant than commercial cleaners.

Many of the recipes in this brochure are from Clean House, Clean Planet by Karen Logan. For more recipes and information on household cleaners, this is an excellent resource well worth reading.

INGREDIENTS

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

BAKING SODA (sodium bicarbonate): Excellent odor absorbent and mild abrasive. Found in the baking section of the grocery store.

BORAX (known as 20 mule team Borax): A strong alkaline, eye irritant and toxic if swallowed. Keep all borax-containing cleaners out of reach of children. Found in the laundry detergent section of the grocery store. Disinfects, deodorizes and inhibits mold growth.

ESSENTIAL OILS: Mostly used for deodorizing or scented cleaners. Essential oils, such as mint, eucalyptus, lavender, lemon and tea tree, can be found in health food stores or herbal supply shops. Tea Tree oil* is currently in the process of being registered as a disinfectant in this country.

GLYCERIN: Found in pharmacies or health food stores. An ingredient in stain removing recipes because it helps oil mix with water.

HYDROGEN PEROXIDE: Use the household concentration (3%) typically found in pharmacies. An antiseptic, useful in kitchens and bathrooms.

LIQUID SOAP: Vegetable-based soap sometimes referred to as castile soap. Found in most health food stores. Dr. Bronners is a popular one.

LIQUID DETERGENT: Detergents are made from synthetic materials that form less soap scum when combined with minerals in hard water. Most dishwashing liquids are detergents. Try purchasing vegetable oil-based detergents, which can be less toxic than petroleum-based products. Vegetable oil-based detergents can be found in health food stores.

VINEGAR: Removes soap scum, grease and mineral deposits and acts as a deodorizer. Use only white distilled vinegar for these recipes.

WASHING SODA (sodium carbonate): It is slightly caustic and a great grease cutter. Don't use it on waxed floors (unless you want to remove the wax), fiberglass or aluminum. Found in the laundry detergent section, made by Arm & Hammer.

***NOTE:** These ingredients may be toxic in their concentrated form. When used in small amount in these cleaning recipes, they are non-toxic.

LAUNDRY

LAUNDRY SOAP

- ▶ Use non-phosphate detergent.
TIP: Add 1/2 cup borax or washing soda to the wash cycle to boost cleaning for heavily soiled clothes.

FABRIC SOFTENER

- ▶ Vinegar
Add 1-2 cups of vinegar to rinse cycle to deodorize & soften fabrics.

BLEACH



- ▶ Hydrogen peroxide (3%)
Spot clean. Let dry. Repeat if necessary.

or

- ▶ 1/2 cup borax
Presoak in mixture of 1/2 cup borax in 2 gallons of hot water.

DIAPER PAIL DEODORIZER

- ▶ 1 cup baking soda
1 teaspoon tea tree oil and/ or other essential oil
Mix and work out all lumps with a fork. Sprinkle in bottom of pail after liner is removed. Periodically rinse pail with vinegar and water and dry in the sun.

STAINS

- ▶ 1/4 cup liquid detergent
1/4 cup glycerin
1 1/2 cups water
Mix and pour into a squirt bottle. Use sparingly and run on stain. Wash.
TIP: Do not use hot or warm water on sugary stains. Wash and rinse in cool water only.
- or ▶ Equal parts vinegar and water
Mix and use to remove tough stains including grass, perspiration, rust, jam, coffee, orange juice, wine, beer, ketchup, barbecue sauce, chili, urine and pet stains.

FLOOR & METAL CLEANERS

FLOOR CLEANER



▶ All Purpose
2 tablespoons liquid soap or detergent
1 gallon hot water
Mix, mop and wipe clean.

▶ No-Wax Floors
All Purpose Recipe (above)
¼ cup vinegar
Mix, mop and wipe clean.

▶ Tile Floors
1 cup vinegar
1 gallon hot water
Mix, mop and wipe clean.

TIP: To remove scuff marks, sprinkle with baking soda and spray with equal parts vinegar and water. Wipe clean.

WOOD FLOOR POLISH

▶ ¼ cup olive oil
¼ cup vinegar
10 drops essential oil (optional)
Mix and apply. Wipe clean.

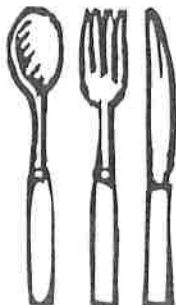
BRASS & COPPER CLEANER

▶ ⅔ cup vinegar
⅔ cup flour
½ cup salt
In a glass bowl, mix vinegar and flour. Add salt and stir. Spread on tarnished metal. Wait 1-2 hours. Rinse, dry and polish with a soft cloth and a dab of olive oil.

CHROME CLEANER

▶ ½ cup baking soda
1-2 tablespoons water
Mix to form a paste. Apply with sponge and rinse well.

SILVER CLEANER



▶ 3" square aluminum foil
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon baking soda
1 cup warm water
Dissolve salt and baking soda in warm water. Submerge the foil and silver in the solution. Wait one hour. Rinse silver and wipe dry with a soft cloth.

or

▶ *Use a non-gel toothpaste and rub tarnished spots with soft cloth and rinse.*

BATHROOM

TUB & TILE CLEANER

- ▶ 1½ cup baking soda
 - ¼ cup liquid soap
 - ¼ cup water
 - 2 tablespoons vinegar
 - a few drops essential oil (optional)
- Mix soda and soap. Add water; then add vinegar. Store in a squirt top bottle and shake before using. Rinse thoroughly to avoid leaving a residue.*

MOLD & MILDEW

- ▶ equal parts vinegar and water
- Spray and wipe clean*

PLASTIC SHOWER CURTAIN

- ▶ 2 cups water
 - laundry detergent
- Machine launder along with a few towels. Air dry. To keep clean, spray weekly with a mixture of borax and water.*

ANTISEPTIC SOAP SPRAY

- ▶ 3 tablespoons liquid soap
 - 20-30 drops tea tree oil
 - 2 cups water
- Mix in a spray bottle and apply.*

TIP: Hydrogen peroxide (3%) by itself may also be used as a mild antiseptic.

BATHROOM DEODORIZER

- ▶ one pound box baking soda
 - 10-20 drops essential oil
- Mix oil in baking soda. Place open box under sink or near toilet. Add more essential oil as needed. Replace baking soda every 3 months. Use the old baking soda in cleaning recipes.*

TOILET BOWL CLEANER



- ▶ Tub & Tile Cleaner (above)
 - ¼ teaspoon tea tree oil (optional)
- or*
- ▶ ¼ cup borax
- Sprinkle on a wet bowl brush, scour and rinse. Clean bowl thoroughly and often.*

TIP: Drain water from toilet bowl for better cleaning. For serious stains or rust, empty water out of bowl and scrub with a wet pumice stone. When wet, the stone will not scratch porcelain.

LIVING ROOM

GLASS CLEANER

- ▶ ¼ cup vinegar
1 cup water
*Mix ingredients in a spray bottle.
Shake and apply. Wipe clean.*

or

- ▶ 2 tablespoons borax or washing soda
*Mix ingredients.
Apply to surface. Wipe clean.*

LEATHER CLEANER

- ▶ ½ cup olive oil
¼ cup vinegar
*Mix in a squirt bottle and shake before each
application. Rub with cloth into leather for
cleaning and conditioning.*

DO NOT USE ON SUEDE.

WOOD FURNITURE POLISH

- ▶ ¾ cup olive or mineral oil
¼ cup vinegar
½ teaspoon lemon oil (optional)
*Mix thoroughly in a squirt bottle. Shake well and
squirt on furniture or rag and rub into wood.*

CARPET DEODORIZER

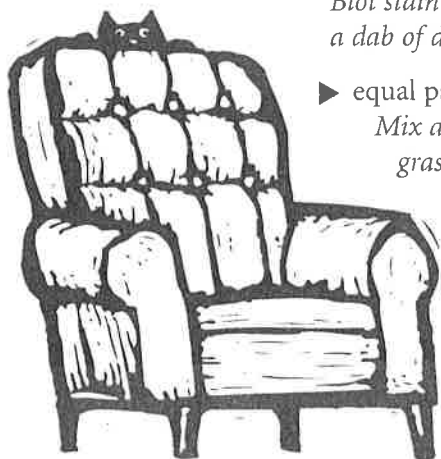
- ▶ 1 pound box baking soda
1 teaspoon essential oil
*Mix using a fork to work out lumps.
Sprinkle on carpet. Vacuum after 1 hour.*

CARPET & UPHOLSTERY STAIN REMOVER

- ▶ ¼ cup liquid detergent
¼ cup glycerin
1 ½ cups water
*Mix and pour into a squirt bottle.
Use sparingly and rub on stain.*
- ▶ club soda
dish detergent
*Blot stain with club soda then scrub with
a dab of dish detergent.*

- ▶ equal parts vinegar and water
*Mix and use to remove tough stains including
grass, perspiration, rust, jam, coffee, orange
juice, wine, beer, ketchup, barbecue
chili, urine and pet stains.*

TIP: Never use warm or hot water
on stains containing sugar!



KITCHEN



ALL PURPOSE CLEANER

- ▶ 2 tablespoons vinegar
 - 1 teaspoon borax or washing soda
 - 2 cups hot water
 - ¼ cup liquid soap
- Mix everything but soap in a spray bottle and shake. Add 1/4 cup liquid soap last. Mix gently. Apply and wipe clean. Good for counters, wood work, appliances, etc.*

DISH SOAP

- ▶ use non-phosphate detergent
- TIP: use half the recommended amount of detergent in your automatic dishwasher.*

SCOURING POWDER

- ▶ baking soda
- Pour in shaker and sprinkle in sink or on pans. Scrub with a rough pad and rinse.*

SCOURING PASTE

- ▶ ⅔ cup baking soda
 - ½ cup liquid soap or detergent water
 - 2 tablespoons vinegar
- Mix everything except vinegar to form a paste. Add vinegar and stir. Keep paste in a tub at the kitchen sink for scouring pots and pans or the sink itself.*

STAIN REMOVER

- ▶ salt
 - juice of lemon or lime
- Sprinkle surface with salt and squeeze lemon or lime juice over the area. Let sit and rub out. This can even remove rust if allowed to sit a few hours.*
- TIP: A wet pumice stone can remove tough stains from porcelain or enamel without scratching.*

DRAIN CLEANER

- ▶ ½ cup baking soda
 - ½ cup vinegar
- Pour baking soda down drain followed by vinegar. Let it bubble for 15 minutes, then pour down a teakettle full of boiling water. For stubborn clogs use a mechanical snake.*

GARBAGE PAIL DEODORIZOR

- ▶ 1 teaspoon tea tree oil
 - 1 cup baking soda
- Mix and work out all the lumps with a fork. Sprinkle in bottom of pail after liner is removed. Periodically rinse pail with vinegar and water and dry in the sun.*

OVEN CLEANER

- ▶ 1 tablespoon liquid soap
 - ½ cup water
 - ¼ cup salt
 - ¼ cup baking soda
- Spray oven surfaces with soapy water. Mix salt and baking soda and sprinkle on wet surface. Spray again so that the mixture is damp and pasty. Let stand overnight. Scrape off with putty knife or wet pumice stone.*

TIP: Prevention is the key to a clean oven. Line your oven with foil or aluminum oven liner found in the baking section of grocery stores.

WHAT'S OUT THERE

CHOOSING THE BEST ALTERNATIVES

HOW TO CHOOSE WISELY

Adopt a new way of thinking about hazardous household products. Try to buy less or use non-hazardous products as much as possible. The best way to tell if a product is hazardous is to read the label.

DANGER indicates the product is extremely hazardous: a taste could be fatal. WARNING and CAUTION signal a somewhat lesser hazard. Select products with a CAUTION label over those with WARNING or DANGER. The best selection is one with no hazards.

PROPER DISPOSAL OF HAZARDOUS HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

If you decide to purge your home of toxic cleaners or other hazardous products, such as paint and pesticides, please dispose of them properly. The Windham Solid Waste Management District holds at least three household hazardous waste collections per year. It's a one day event, in 4 locations, usually held in autumn. Got paint products? We have an ongoing paint collection program that is open all year, Monday through Friday, 8am- 4pm, and Saturdays, 8am-noon.

For more information, contact WSWMD, 802-257-0272, or visit our website, www.wswmd.org.

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