

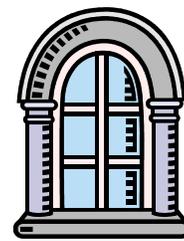
# Clean Home, Safe Home



Recipes for Non-toxic Cleaning  
And  
\$aving Money

## Glass

For lightly soiled windows, try 4 tablespoons of lemon juice in a gallon of water—works on greasy handprints. According to a “Consumer Reports” study (January 1992), this homebrew worked better than most commercial products.



Commercial cleaners leave a clear, waxy “polish.” A natural Cleaner will streak this polish, so you may need to wash the glass with an all-purpose cleaner to remove the polish before using the lemon homebrew. Neglected windows with baked-on soil may require an all-purpose cleaner first, as well.



Many commercial glass cleaners contain ammonia, butyl cellosolve and blue dye. Ammonia fumes are irritating to eyes and lungs. NEVER mix ammonia and bleach—this produces poisonous gas. Butyl cellosolve can damage the central nervous system, kidneys, liver, and the body's ability to make blood.

## Laundry



There are lots of laundry cleaners to choose from. Several powder and liquid alternatives to detergents in grocery and natural food stores claim to clean clothes without petrochemicals. Natural soap flakes are hard to find these days except on the web.

Most of us use more detergent than is necessary (especially the concentrates)—try using less to reduce residue in your clothes. You might “boost” a smaller amount of detergent or alternative cleaner with borax or baking soda. Or for simple freshening or perspiration removal, just add a cup of baking soda, white vinegar, or borax to a washerload without any detergent. Less is better!



Laundry detergents cause more household poisonings than any other product. Designed for synthetic clothing, detergents are made from petrochemicals and may contain bleach and synthetic whiteners and fragrance.



## Fabric Spot Removal

A pinch of powdered laundry detergent mixed with water to make a paste worked better than most commercial spot removers according to "Consumer Reports" (August 1993). Treat spots immediately for best results.

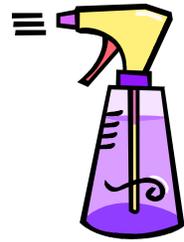
Many other recipes are available for specific spotting disasters. (See Resources list.)



Most commercial spot removers contain highly toxic solvents which emit harmful vapors and irritate the eyes. These fumes may cause light-headedness, nausea, disorientation, and cancer.

## All-Purpose Cleaner

Mix 1/4 cup white vinegar and 2 teaspoons borax in 32-ounce spray bottle with very hot water. Shake to dissolve borax and then add 1/2 cup liquid soap. Add 20-30 drops of essential oil such as lavender or lemon for scent, if desired. Careful—vinegar and soap will clump if mixed directly. ("Clean House, Clean Planet")



Commercial all-purpose cleaners may contain many chemicals including ammonia, butyl cellosolve, detergents, artificial fragrance, and aerosol propellants. They may cause burns and irritate mucous membranes.



## Bathroom Cleaners

A "Consumer Reports" study (September 1991) showed good all-purpose cleaners worked as effectively as specialized bathroom cleaners. The study also noted that using a disinfectant in an unsterile environment is futile. "As soon as you bump off some germs, they're replaced by others." Other resources point out that disinfecting can actually produce more resistant germs. Mildew can be removed with borax and water.



Bathroom cleaners are similar to all-purpose cleaners and may contain bleach. Do NOT mix with other cleaners. Mildew cleaners contain harsher chemicals. Disinfectants contain a number of chemicals dangerous to inhale.

## Scouring Cleaners



Bon Ami ranks highest in a "Consumers Report" study (August 1996) and does not contain chlorine. It is considered the most environmentally-friendly commercial scouring cleanser by several sources. Baking soda was not tested in this study, but many sources consider baking soda to be an effective cleanser. Stir 10-15 drops of essential oil into the box of baking soda for scent, if desired.



Most scouring powders contain chlorine bleach which can emit irritating fumes. Do NOT mix with ammonia.

## Drain Opener

Prevent clogs by using a drain strainer to catch food particles and hair. Keep drains clear by regularly pouring a cup of baking soda and 1/2 cup white vinegar down the drainpipe; cover tightly for a minute, then flush with hot water. A plunger or plumber's flexible snake may be used to dislodge a serious clog.



Commercial drain cleaner contact may cause severe eye and skin damage or even blindness. The fumes are harmful and it may be fatal if swallowed.



## Oven Cleaner

Use aluminum oven liners or foil to catch spills. If you don't use an oven liner, clean spills with baking soda, salt, and water while oven is warm. For baked-on spills, make a paste of baking soda and water, apply a layer to the spills, and leave overnight. Scour with a steel wool pad. Lots of persistence and a strong arm are required.



Commercial oven cleaners may burn skin on contact, have harmful fumes, and may be fatal if swallowed.

## Furniture



Oils and waxes do not penetrate most wood finishes developed after World War I. "Consumer Reports" (June 1993) concluded that cleaning furniture with a water dampened cloth was as effective as using commercial cleaners and polishes. For especially dirty furniture, add a little all-purpose cleaner to water. Be sure to dry with a soft cloth. Antique experts said antiques with original finish should be dusted frequently and a beeswax product applied once or twice a year. Products that claim to repel dust do NOT work according to this study.



Many furniture polishes are harmful or fatal if swallowed and residual fumes may also be harmful. Often contain hazardous ingredients.

## Notes & Stuff

**Baking Soda** (Sodium Bicarbonate) is a natural mineral from dried up lake beds. It absorbs odors, and is a mild yet effective abrasive cleaner. It's readily available in the baking section of supermarkets.

**Borax** is a natural mineral safe for the environment. However, it can be irritating to eyes and skin, and is harmful if swallowed. Some hospital studies show borax has disinfecting properties. Look for it in the laundry detergent section of stores.

**Essential Oils** make cleaning fun. Use pure essential oils which can be purchased at most health food stores.

**Liquid Soap** (Castile, Vegetable oil based, or glycerin) can be found in some supermarkets health food stores. Dr. Bronner's soaps are readily available.

**Spray bottles** can be found in the gardening section of many stores. One with an adjustable sprayer is handy.

## Resource List for Other Great Ideas and Information

Dadd, Debra Lynn. *Home Safe Home*. NYC: Tarcher/Putnam, 1997.

Kellar, Casey. *Natural Cleaning for Your Home: 95 Pure and Simple Recipes*. Asheville, NC: Lark Books, 1997.

Logan, Karen. *Clean House, Clean Planet*. NYC: Pocket Books, 1997.

Steinman, David & Samuel Epstein. *The Safe Shopper's Bible: A Consumer's Guide to Nontoxic Household Products, Cosmetics, and Food*. NYC: MacMillan, 1995.

The above resources were used to develop this brochure.

Prepared by  
Victoria Davis  
Planning & Zoning Administrator

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