

CLEAN AND GREEN HOME

With minimal effort, you can make your own cleaning products from inexpensive and common household ingredients. Essential oils are an optional way to add fragrance to homemade cleaning products, but many oils also have antifungal and antibacterial qualities. Tea tree, lavender, eucalyptus and peppermint are all good options.

Alice's Wonder Spray™

Use this recipe for sink, tub, toilet, tile and floors.

- ¼ cup white vinegar
- 2 teaspoons borax
- 32 ounces hot water
- ¼ cup liquid dish soap (added last)
- 20 drops essential oil (optional)

Dissolve borax in hot water (otherwise the spray will be grainy). Add the borax and water and the vinegar to a 32-ounce spray bottle. Add the liquid dish soap and essential oil, if desired. Shake ingredients to mix.

Scouring Powder

- 1 cup baking soda
- ¼ cup borax
- 20 drops of essential oil (optional)

Mix baking soda and borax together in a bowl or plastic tub with optional essential oil. Store mixture in a container with a lid or put the powder in a shaker and shake onto the surface to be cleaned.

Drains

For slow drains, pour one cup each of baking soda and vinegar down the drain and put the stopper in. Wait 15 minutes and flush drain with boiling water. Repeat if necessary.

Glass Cleaner

Add ¼ cup of vinegar to one quart warm water in a spray bottle. Spray windows, rub with a clean rag and dry with newspapers.

Your local co-op carries many quality cleaning products as well that are made with nontoxic and biodegradable ingredients, and not tested on animals.



Resources

Environmental Working Group Guide to Healthy Cleaning

www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) guide
epa.gov/epp

Co+op, stronger together

Shopping for Cleaning Products
strongertogether.coop/food-lifestyle/shopping-for-cleaning-products

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StrongerTogether.coop is a place for people to gather on their food journeys. It's a place to find out more about what's in your food, where it comes from, where to find great food, how to prepare it and a whole lot more.

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ALL ABOUT

Natural Cleaners



Provided by your food co-op

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Natural cleaners

are a great way to limit chemical exposure in your home. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that over 6 billion pounds of cleaning chemicals are used in the U.S. each year. These chemicals, most of them toxic and petroleum-based, have negative repercussions for our health and environment.

Some of the worst culprits are found right under our kitchen sinks. Conventional household cleaners, most of which rely on harsh petrochemicals, contribute to air and water pollution during manufacturing and disposal as well as while in use in our homes. What is more, exposure to these noxious chemicals has a range of effects on our health, from irritating eyes, nose and throat to a negative effect on your mood.

A cleaner environment, indoors and out

Luckily there are alternatives to petroleum-based cleaners that are safer, cheaper and just as effective. Vegetable-based detergents containing acetic acid (vinegar) or citric acids (from citrus fruit) have been used successfully for centuries and are based on renewable resources. These ingredients also biodegrade quickly and are gentle on the environment.

On the reverse side of this brochure, we've provided recipes for you to try making your own natural cleaning products at home, but your co-op also carries quality, ready-to-use natural cleaning products. Look for options that are made with nontoxic and biodegradable ingredients that are not tested on animals. Some brands offer a wide range of cleaners for the laundry, kitchen and bath.

Read the label

Learn to identify the worst environmental offenders and avoid them. A few of these ingredients are detailed below.

Ammonia, found in all-purpose cleaners, glass cleaners, laundry detergents and metal polishes, is toxic by all routes of exposure and is a hazardous waste.

Chlorine is found in bleach, dishwasher detergent, bathroom and toilet bowl cleaners. Chlorine products produce dioxins which are persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in our oceans and waterways. Dioxin builds up in the fatty tissue of fish and other marine life and is ingested when we consume large predatory fish like tuna. Dioxins are known carcinogens¹.

¹ "Dioxins and Furans," US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), www.epa.gov/pbt/pubs/dioxins.htm

Glycol ethers, a category of ingredients commonly found in degreasers, cleaners and aerosol paints, is a central nervous system depressant and can cause damage to the kidneys and liver².

Oxalic acid is added to abrasive cleansers, toilet bowl cleaners and metal polishes. It is caustic and corrosive to skin.

Phosphates are added to dishwashing and laundry detergents as a water softener. Phosphates are not removed by sewage treatment systems and are released into the environment through waste water. Phosphates contribute to algae overgrowth and suffocation of aquatic life.

Sodium hydroxide, or **lye**, is in most oven, bathroom, toilet bowl and drain cleaners. It is a corrosive poison and hazardous waste.

Sodium lauryl sulfate/ sodium laureth sulfate is a common surfactant and detergent used in a large number of products such as shampoos and conditioners, body washes and soaps, toothpaste and cosmetics. It is an irritant and environmental pollutant.

² "Glycol Ethers," US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/hlthef/glycolet.html

³ "Triclosan factsheet," Center for Disease Control (CDC), http://www.cdc.gov/biomonitoring/Triclosan_FactSheet.html

Triclosan is an antibacterial agent found in antibacterial soaps, detergents and plastics. Although evidence suggests it is a persistent chemical in our environment, long term health effects are still unknown³.

