

Useful Items for Your Green Cleaning Kit

Bicarbonate (or Baking) Soda (Sodium Bicarbonate)

Excellent odour absorbent and mild abrasive. Found in the baking section of the supermarket.

Borax

A naturally derived product in its concentrated form, borax disinfects, deodorises and inhibits mould growth. A strong alkaline, an eye irritant and toxic if swallowed. Keep all borax-containing cleaners out of the reach of children. Found in the laundry detergent section of the grocery store.

Essential Oils

Mostly used for deodorising or scenting 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.

Liquid Soap

Vegetable-based soap sometimes referred to as castile soap. Found in most health food stores.

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 deodoriser. 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), fibreglass or aluminum. Found in the laundry detergent sections.

Note - these ingredients may be toxic in their concentrated form. When used in the small amounts in these cleaning recipes, they are non-toxic.

Commercial Cleaning Products

There are many environmentally responsible cleaning products on the market. If you are going to purchase commercial cleaning products, look out for these qualities:

- Phosphate free
- Low sodium content - less than 20 grams per wash
- Plant-based ingredients
- Synthetic fragrance free
- Petrochemical free
- Microfibre cloths – they use only water and many can be recycled through the manufacturer.

Avoid Potentially Harmful Ingredients

Triclosan

Commonly used in commercial soaps, toothpastes and cleaning products with 'anti-bacterial' claims. An eye irritant that is moderately toxic by ingestion, and may cause vomiting and diarrhoea.

Formaldehyde

Highly toxic and a known carcinogen. Commonly found in air fresheners.

Ammonia

A very volatile chemical. Damaging to eyes, respiratory tract and skin. Commonly found in bathroom cleaners.

Bleach

A strong corrosive. May irritate or burn the skin, eyes and respiratory tract.

Chlorine

Can affect the throat and lungs if inhaled. Commonly found in dish detergents, bleaches, plastics and paints.

Hydrochloric Acid

Corrosive, eye and skin irritant, damages kidneys, liver and digestive tract. Commonly found in drain cleaners and toilet bowl cleaners.

Sodium Hydroxide (Lye)

A caustic, strong irritant that can burn both skin and eyes. Inhibits reflexes, can cause severe tissue damage if swallowed. Commonly found in oven cleaner.

Sodium Hypochlorite

A corrosive substance commonly found in mildew and mould cleaners. May burn the skin and seriously damage the eyes. Swallowing can result in nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain and chemical burns to the gastrointestinal tract.

Phenol

A moderate to highly toxic corrosive commonly found in air fresheners. May cause severe burns to skin, and if ingested in high concentrations can cause burns to the mouth and throat, convulsions and even death.

Hypochlorite Bleach

A corrosive substance. It irritates or burns the eyes, skin and respiratory tract. May cause lung damage, vomiting or coma if ingested. Commonly found in bathroom cleaning products.

Sodium Lauryl Sulphate

A strong and harsh detergent and a powerful wetting and foaming agent. Repeated use can accumulate SLS in the body. Found in shampoos, toothpaste, and soaps. Note that Sodium Laureth Sulphate is a higher foaming version of Sodium Lauryl Sulphate.

Phosphates

Naturally occurring compounds in waterways, but causing algal and weed growth when they reach abnormally high levels. Commonly found in soaps and washing detergents.

This information was taken from manufacturer's material safety data sheets.

Dirty Little Household Secrets

Tips for a squeaky clean, green & healthy home

Are you waging chemical warfare against household grime? Powerful cleaners that zap household grime can contain ingredients you'd really rather not be breathing, wearing or washing in.

Choice Magazine tested bathroom cleaning products and found that 43% of testers reported skin irritations from a popular mould remover. Nasty cleaning chemicals can be absorbed through our skin or inhaled. Here is a better way that's healthier for you, your family and our planet.

The following pages contain easy, natural cleaning recipes for your home, starting in the kitchen. There are easy-to-make recipes for cleaning windows, deodorising sneakers, removing mould and making antibacterial sprays plus much more.



Warringah Council

For more information on sustainable living issues, contact Customer Service on:

9942 2111 or visit
www.warringah.nsw.gov.au

The information provided in this brochure is to be used as a guide only and is by no means conclusive.

KITCHEN

Light Surface Cleaner

1 tsp lavender oil
1 cup water

Pour the water and lavender oil into a spray bottle. Shake the mixture. Spray mixture onto surface and wipe off with soft cloth.

Antibacterial Spray

1 cup water
20 drops lemon essential oil
10 drops lavender essential oil
10 drops eucalyptus essential oil

Pour the water into a spray bottle. Blend the essential oils in a glass jar with an eyedropper, and then add eight drops of the oil mixture to the bottle of water. Spray on surface and leave for 15 minutes. No need to rinse. This recipe is great for surfaces where you really do need an antibacterial concoction – such as chopping boards and toilet rims. Many essential oils contain antibacterial properties including lemon, clove, eucalyptus, tea tree, thyme and lavender oils.

Oven Cleaner

Bicarbonate soda
Vinegar

Sprinkle a little bicarbonate soda over oven surface. Spray vinegar over bicarbonate soda (watch it sizzle!) then leave overnight. Wipe off with a cloth dampened with water. Wipe over one final time with vinegar on your cloth.

Dishwasher Detergent

1 tbsp washing soda

Use 1 tbsp washing soda instead of commercial dishwasher detergents. Caution – use this one at your own risk as dishwasher manufacturers are quite strict about what you should use.

Sink Cleaner

1 cup vinegar
1 cup water

Fill a spray bottle with half water and half white vinegar. Spray on any surface where there is soap scum and leave for 5 minutes. Wipe off.



Drain Cleaner

1 cup bicarbonate soda
1 cup vinegar
1 litre boiling water

Sprinkle bicarbonate soda down offending drain. Pour vinegar in and watch the reaction. Follow with 1 litre of boiling water. Wipe over drain plate with essential oil to leave a fresh fragrance. Baking soda (or bicarb) and salt can be used instead (½ cup each).

All Purpose Cleaner

Borax
Bicarbonate soda
Vinegar
Eucalyptus oil

Place borax and bicarbonate soda into a recycled glass jar. Mix in enough vinegar and water to make a paste. Add a few drops of eucalyptus oil. Wipe mixture onto surfaces to be cleaned and wipe off with a soft cloth. A note on borax - this can be harmful to children and pets if swallowed, you can make a milder version of this paste without the borax.

LAUNDRY

*Laundry detergent

½ cup grated pure soap
1 cup hot water

Grate soap using a kitchen grater. Melt soap flakes in hot water. You can add a few drops of your favourite essential oil if you like. Pour into washing machine and wash as normal. Alternatively, soapflakes are available for purchase in supermarkets.

***Caution – use this one at your own risk as manufacturers’ warranties are quite strict. Pour directly into the washing machine with your wash. Do not pour into soap dispensers.”

Dirty Collar Cleaner

Vinegar

Simply spray vinegar onto the collar before putting item through wash as usual. Hang item in the sun to dry. The combination of the sun and the vinegar should remove the offending collar mark.

Fabric Stain Removers

Vinegar
Cold water
Pure soap flakes

In general, protein stains (meat, blood etc) leave a dark outline. Never use heat to remove them. Instead, treat with cold water and pure soap. Carbohydrate stains are normally dark in the centre. Treat with water, a spray of vinegar and wash as normal in pure soap.

BATHROOM

Liquid Handwash

250ml boiling water
2 tsp glycerol or glycerine
2 tbsp grated Sunlight soap
2 tsp rosewater

Add the grated soap to boiling water, stir and then let sit for about 10 minutes until it melts. Stir in glycerol and rosewater. When mixture is smooth, pour into dispenser bottle. Do this while it is still warm as it will set to a jelly when cold and be difficult to pour.

Air Freshener

8 drops lavender oil
4 drops each bergamot & clove oil
2 drops peppermint oil
½ cup vodka
½ cup distilled water

Combine ingredients in spray bottle and shake well. Spritz into air four or five times in area that needs freshening, being careful to avoid your eyes. A basic room spray can be made by mixing four drops of any essential oil with 300ml of warm (but not boiling) water.

Mould Remover

Vinegar
Salt

Mix equal parts vinegar and salt into a spray bottle. Spray onto mouldy surface, leave for a few minutes and then wipe off using a soft cloth.

Bath & Shower Cleaner

1 cup vinegar
1 cup water

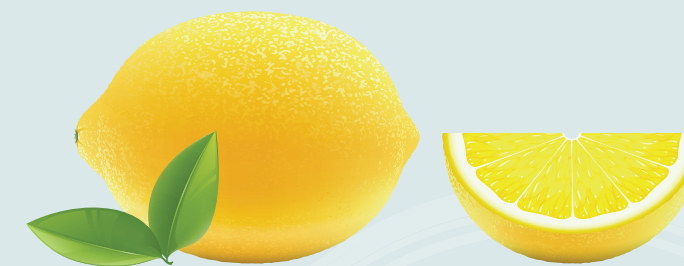
Fill a spray bottle with half water and half white vinegar. Spray on any surface where there is soap scum and leave for 5 minutes. Wipe off.

Toilet Cleaner

1 cup bicarbonate soda
1 cup vinegar

Sprinkle bicarbonate soda into toilet bowl and pour vinegar on top. Watch it react. Leave it for ten minutes then clean with a toilet brush and flush.

To finish, put a few drops of tea tree oil on a cloth and wipe around the bowl and seat to provide some anti-bacterial protection (or use the antibacterial spray recipe).



GENERAL

Carpet Cleaner

2 tsp eucalyptus oil
2 tsp glycerine
2 tbsp vinegar
2 tbsp bicarbonate soda
2 tbsp methylated spirits

Mix ingredients together into a spray bottle. For spot cleaning, spray the mixture onto the spot and gently rub with pantyhose. For a bigger spill – place pantyhose over the head of a broom, spray lightly with your carpet cleaning mixture and sweep over the spot.

Smelly Sneaker Saver

2 tbsp bicarbonate soda
5 drops eucalyptus essential oil

Mix bicarbonate soda and essential oil (you can use any one you like) into a container with small holes in the lid. Sprinkle mixture into your offending shoes and leave overnight.

Tiled or Timber Floor Cleaner

1 cup vinegar
1 bucket hot water
5 drops eucalyptus essential oil

Add vinegar and essential oil (you can use any one you like) to a bucket of hot water. Lightly mop or wipe over surface.

Window Cleaner

1 part vinegar
4 parts water

Mix vinegar and water into a spray bottle. Spray onto windows and wipe off with newspaper, window squeegee or a soft cloth.

Squeaky Clean Baby Steps

Do your best to learn about whatever you clean with in your home. Scrutinise the labels on your cleaning products and then go on a product diet.

Phase out harmful commercial cleaning products and replace them with healthy alternatives.